The THRILLER
THE PAPER WITH A THOUSAND THRILLS
2d.

The STORY OF A DEAD MAN
by Leslie Charteris

Thrills! Mystery! Adventure!

MAGNIFICENT BOOK-LENGTH COMPLETE STORY WITHIN!
Behind the big iron gate, Jimmy and the girl were prisoners of a madman. They could expect no mercy. The room was rapidly filling with gas.
Chapter 1.

TEAL OF THE "YARD."

When Long Harry came out of Pentonville Prison, he was not expecting to be welcomed by a cohort of friends. At the worst, he had reckoned an emissary of the Prisoners' Aid Society would be the most he would have to deal with, and consequently the sight of the plump and ponderous Inspector Teal lounging somnolently against a lamp-post a few yards from the prison gates was an unwelcome surprise.

Pulling his hat down over his eyes, Harry tactfully began to stroll in the opposite direction, but Inspector Teal was not so lightly to be deprived of the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with an old customer.

He hitched himself off his lamp-post, and came up with Long Harry in a few slothful strides that nevertheless managed to convey him over the intervening ground in a surprisingly short space of time.

His hand fell on Harry's shoulder, and the yegg pulled up and faced about uneasily.

"I want you, Harry," said Mr. Teal, whose sense of humour was sometimes lacking in good taste.

"You've got nothing on me, Mr. Teal," he said defensively.

"I want you, Harry," repeated Mr. Teal sleepily, "to come along to the Corner House and have some breakfast with me, and then we'll have a little talk."

Harry said that he had had breakfast, but Mr. Teal was not so easily to be put off.

"If you won't eat yourself," he said, "you can watch me—and listen," he added, with unconscious humour.

As he spoke, he was gently shepherdng Harry back past the prison gates to a diminutive car that was drawn up by the kerb.

They passed down Caledonian Road in silence. Mr. Teal had the gift of investing his silences with a peculiarly disturbing quality, and Long Harry became more and more unhappy as the miles ticked over on the speedometer in front of him.

"I suppose," said Harry, breaking a period of almost intolerable suspense as they turned round Park Crescent into Portland Place, "I suppose you aren't thinking I had anything to do with that Regent Street job?"

"I've stopped thinking about that," said Mr. Teal, "since I became certain."

"That's like you flatties," complained Harry bitterly. "Let a man do his time and not say a word, and then wait for him outside the prison to shop him for another stretch."

Mr. Teal said nothing. They whizzed down Regent Street in another spell of silence.

"It isn't even a fair charge," said Harry presently with an injured air. "I've got a beautiful alibi for you."

"You always have," said Mr. Teal, without resentment. "I've never known you disappoint me yet!"

They sat over bacon and eggs in Coventry Street, and Inspector Teal then confided to relieve some of Harry's apprehensions by explaining the reason for his hospitality.

"I want you," said Mr. Teal, in his sleepy way, "to tell me a little story about a man
named Connell. "I've got an idea he's a particular friend of yours."

"The other's face twisted up in a vicious grin."

"Connell," sneered Long Harry, "is a——"

"Yes?" prompted Mr. Teal drowsily.

Harry's clenched fist opened slowly. His vicious grin became cunning, then masklike.

"Connell," said Harry softly, "is a man I've met occasionally. I can't tell you more about him. Mad that Mr. Teal."

"The detective sighed.

"Sure you can't?"

Harry shook his head.

"You know I'm always ready to help you when I can," he said in a deep voice. "But I don't know anything about Connell."

Mr. Teal looked sceptical.

"Except," said Harry slowly, "that I've got a good idea he was the squealer who shot Scott for three thousand."

"You let me down over Bayswater," said Mr. Teal reproachfully. "I never thought you carried a coxh around with you."

"Now do I," said Harry. "Listen!" He leant forward across the table.

"You and me, Mr. Teal," he said, "I've got it all, and you can't say anything about an alibi? You know I didn't. Now, you ask me. Mr. Teal, have you ever known me to pull in for a job of work that I really did and me not have an alibi?"

Mr. Teal's eyes were half closed, and he appeared to be taking no notice. That pose of lazy boredom was his one affectation.

"The whole thing was a frame-up from start to finish. I'm not going to say anything about an alibi. Did I say anything about an alibi? You know I didn't. Now, you ask me. Mr. Teal, have you ever known me to pull in for a job of work that I really did and me not have an alibi?"

Mr. Teal's eyes were suddenly opened very wide.

"What are you going to do to Connell?" he asked.

Harry relaxed.

"Well, when I see him," he said, "maybe I'll stand him a drink, and maybe I won't. Who knows?"

"And when you take me again," said Mr. Teal, "maybe you'll get a lifer, and maybe you'll hang. Who knows about that, either?"

It was an unsatisfactory interview from all points of view, and Mr. Teal, who had dragged himself out of bed at half-past five that morning in order to bring it about, was perversely annoyed.

He got a room at the Sporting Club about half-past nine, and his assistant found him in an unpleasant mood.

"I've been thinking," began the recently-promoted Sergeant Barrow, and Mr. Teal cut him short with a ferocious glare.

"Why on earth did you demand Mr. Teal unkindly.

"I'm sure it hurts you, and you know I've always told you to take care of yourself."

"I've been thinking about the Camberwell Post Office hold-up," insisted the younger man angrily. "I couldn't that man Horning have been in it?"

"He could," agreed Mr. Teal carefully, "if they hadn't hanged him at Wandsworth the week before. Go away and rest. You'll be needing a brain fever if you go on thinking like this."

After that, Mr. Teal felt better.

"And on your way down," he called after the retreating figure without the cloaked in that, "tell Sergeant Jones I want him!"

There is a special department at Scotland Yard whose sole function is to indulge its curiosity, and the facts which it brings to light about how the police are organized and them are gleaned from the reports of patrolling constables, who are instructed to note down any unusual happenings which they observe on their beats. Others are gleaned from painful specification and investigation.

No plain van draws up outside a house at night and proceeds to discharge its cargo without the fact being reported; no man suddenly from a bed-sitting-room in Bermondsey to a service flat in Jermyn Street without arousing the interest of this inquisitive department; no men becomes a regular frequenter of the hotels and restaurants in the West End, which are shared as a meeting-ground by London society, foreign millionaires, crooks, both home-bred and imported, and that curious animal, the man of science. To come into conflict with the laws, contrives to live in luxury by its wits and the generosity of its relatives, without this prying department interposing. I suppose of this department, Sergeant Jones was an esteemed ornament. He spent his life in a maze of card indexes, turning over the disjointed and apparently insignificant reports which came in to him from time to time, sometimes with the feeling that the seemingly unimportant had been detected.

"Sit down, Jones," said Mr. Teal, seating himself comfortably in the big swivel chair behind his desk and closing his eyes, "and sing me a little song about Sergeant Jones sat down. He was a long, lanky man, with sandy hair and a large nose."

"The directors," said Sergeant Jones, "as follows: President and managing director, James Arthur Vanney, 48, of 52, Half Moon Street; secretary, James Traill, Esquire, 26, of 113, Cheyne Walk; director, Malcolm Steadman, Esquire, 34, in that that."

"Do we know anything about these men?"

"Not much. Standish we know. He's behind half the criminal cases that are defended at the Old Bailey—a lot more than his assistant, Jock. He's supposed to have landed he sends for Standish at once. We've never had anything on him, but I shouldn't be surprised if he'd made a tidy pile out of this."

"The man," said Mr. Teal, "built the new house at the bottom of Half Moon Street about nine months ago. Two cars—a Rolls and a Daimler. Four servants. Does himself pretty well on the whole."

"Where was he before he moved into Half Moon Street?"

"He stayed at the Savoy while the house was being built. His address was registered there as Melbourne, Victoria. Trail commissioned the architect and got the building and a couple of months before Vanney arrived. Trail is a man we'd like to know a lot more about. Stebbing took him on as his private secretary about six months before he was killed in that motor smash. Trail was one of the witnesses at the inquest, if you remember. Before that he divided his time between the West End of London, Paris, and the Riviera. He always had plenty of money, but nobody knew where it came from, and he certainly used to go around with a bunch of pretty doubtful characters. The French police wanted him for a big jewel robbery at Nice three years ago, and Belgium that his name was mentioned in connection with a big bank fraud in Paris. A few months before Stebbing took him on you were after him yourself for the Gregory case."

"I know all that," said Mr. Teal. "The French police wanted him, and I wanted him, and we're all still wanting him. He's a clever lad, is Jimmy."

Mr. Teal fingered his chin thoughtfully.

"Would you like to see me?"

"Very small. Girl secretary, name of Pamela Marlowe, and two clerks. Pamela Marlowe was Stebbing's ward."

The man nodded faintly. The signally that the interview was at an end, and Sergeant Jones rose.

He was leaving the room when a man brought a small parcel.

"Ow, what's this?" exclaimed Mr. Teal, and the sergeant stopped by the door.

Inspector Teal examined the parcel carefully and then held it to his ear. Then he blinked, and the ghost of a smile crossed his lips.

"How surprisingly unoriginal," remarked Mr. Teal mildly.

Sergeant Jones came back to the desk, and Mr. Teal laid the parcel on the table. He took it doubtfully.

"Walk that round to the Explosives Department," said Teal, "and mind you don't drop it. You can also spend your spare time proving that it doesn't go off before you get there!"

THE MYSTERIOUS OFFICES.

There were four rooms looking out on to the Strand. A private corridor ran the length of the suite, and each room opened separately on to it, while a system of communicating doors permitted access to any room at any time without entering the passage. The first room was a waiting room, in the second room worked two clerks, and in the third were Traill and Miss Marlowe. The fourth was the sanctum of Mr. James Vanney.

Vanney was a thick-set man of medium height, though he actually looked short by reason of exceptional breadth of shoulder. He was dark and bearded, sparring of speech, and quick on.

Inspector Teal knocked on the door marked "Inquiries" one afternoon, and was told by the clerk who opened it that Mr. Vanney was busy.

"I'll wait," said Mr. Teal philosophically, and the clerk appeared to be nonplussed.

The door communicating the clerks' room with the secretary's office was open.
Through it Mr. Teal perceived a familiar back. He flowed irresistibly past the clerk, passed through a swinging door, and tapped Mr. Traill's shoulder.

"Good-morning, Jimmy," said Mr. Teal drowsily.

"Good-afternoon to me," said Mr. Traill easily, and rose. "I'm sorry you've had this journey for nothing. Didn't the clerk tell you that Mr. Vanney was engaged?"

Mr. Teal nodded.

"He did," admitted Mr. Teal, "and I said I'd wait.

"Mr. Vanney," persisted Traill, "will be engaged all the afternoon.

"I've got a lot of time to spare," said Teal calmly. "I get bored with waiting, you can come and talk to me.

"Mr. Vanney," continued Traill pointedly, "will not be able to see you until to-morrow morning.

Teal extracted from his pocket a small packet done up in pink paper. From it he took a smaller packet, from which he took a thin wafer of chewing gum. With his jaws moving rhythmically, he cast a singly speculated eye round the room.

"I can dose down in a corner," he said.

"Or have you a camp bed?" Traill inspected a row of buttons on his desk, selected one, and pressed it.

Mr. Teal masticated in silence until a knock on the door accosted the bell.

"In," said Traill briskly.

The door opened, and a man in a plain blue serge suit and a bowler hat stood framed in the aperture.

"Is it-- Teal," in the same brisk tone, "show this gentleman the way out?"

Mr. Teal shifted his gum round so as to give the other side of his face its full share of exercise.

"Suppose," he suggested languidly, "that I just had a word with you in private first?"

Traill shrugged.

"I can give you two minutes exactly," he said. "You can wait outside the door, Mr. Teal. Mind you mind?"

Mr. Teal lounged into a chair.

"Nice girl that," he remarked.

"Very," agreed Traill. "I'm sure you're not a friend of hers.

Teal stretched his arms lazily.

"Ever heard of the Duc de Mondeumont, Jimmy?" asked Mr. Teal.

"An old friend of mine," said Jimmy.

"We met in Paris years ago.

"His wife has never found her necklace since you said goodbye," said Teal to the ceiling.

"Anyway," said Jimmy Traill composedly, "she was a mean old camel, and as for the dear--well, I was a very nice man. Possibly they desired it."

"Possibly," agreed Teal. "But what I really came to tell you was that they got hold of a floor waiter who left the hotel the next day before the theft was discovered, and he says that he saw someone extraordinarily like you coming out of the duke's room the night before the necklace was taken."

Traill permitted himself to smile.

"That's interesting," he said, "and so I suppose the Stérrtic are clamouring for my extradition?"

Teal nodded.

"That's about the idea." Traill shook his head.

"It won't wash, Teal," he said sadly.

"You know I can't be extradited from England. You ought to know better than to try to put a bluff like that over on me.

"You could be tried here," said Teal.

"Even that won't wash," said Traill gravely. "I'm sure that if I just said a little word to the duke he'd be only too pleased to tell me that I had his full permission to keep the necklace, if I happened to have it in my possession. I know a lot of things about His Grace which would make him awfully sorry to get me into trouble.

"Have it your own way," said Teal languidly. "Now why can see your boss?

"I'm afraid not," said Jimmy. "I've told you he's engaged.

Teal looked across at the opposite communication door. The upper panel was of frosted glass, and across this was painted the word Private.

"Does he always see his visitors in the dark?" asked Teal gently.

"Always," said the bland Mr. Traill. "It's one of his many peculiarities.

Mr. Teal's eyes were half-closed.

"And does he, pursued Mr. Teal, in his same tired voice, "always hang his hat and coat hanging up in the corner there, and there three hats and coats in the room I came through."

"That," said Jimmy pleasantly, "is another of his eccentricities. He says he hates to have his hat and coat hanging up in his own room."

Mr. Teal nodded, and then he moved.

It has already been mentioned that, for such a large and slothful man, he could, when he so desired, cover ground with a surprising turn of speed.

He had flung open the communicating door marked Private before Jimmy could stop him, and the lights clicked up under his thumb as Jimmy reached his side.

The room was empty.

It was sparsely, but comfortably furnished, with a big knee-hole desk set crosswise in the corner by the window, a safe in the opposite corner, and a filing cabinet against the wall. There were two armchairs upholstered in leather, and a plain wooden armchair behind the desk. Facing the communicating door was a fireplace, and on either side of this was a tall cupboard built into the wall. There was no sign of Vanney.

Teal leaned back against the jamb of the door, looking at Jimmy's blank face and chewing unemotionally.

And," said Mr. Teal, without changing the tone of his voice, "does Mr. Vanney automatically vanish, together with his visitor, when this door is opened?"

Traill put his hands in his pockets and settled himself comfortably in the doorway.

"Looked quite the detective."

"I've never known him do it before," he replied calmly. "But great men are always slightly erratic in their habits. It will be an interesting little problem for you to take home with you."

Mr. Teal removed a speck of dust from his bowler hat.

"On second thoughts," he said, "I don't think I'll spend the night here. Bye-by, Jimmy. See you later, I expect."

"I'm coming so," said Jimmy affably.

Mr. Teal opened the door to find the porter standing patiently outside.

"You may go, George," said Teal. "I'll find my own way out."

He was sanitation down the corridor when a thought struck him, and he returned. He opened the door a few inches without the formality of knocking, and poked his head in.

"Mr. Traill was writing at the desk, and the girl was tapping the typewriter in the corner."

"Good-bye, Teal," said Jimmy pleasantly, without looking up.

"When Mr. Vanney comes back," drawled the unperturbable Inspector Teal, "you might tell him, with my compliments, that if he makes any more childish attempts to kill me, I shall be seriously annoyed."

He closed the door again and resumed his leisurely progress towards the stairs, humming gently to himself.

Mr. Teal had never been able to overcome a weakness for playing the magazine detective.

CRIMINAL NONSENSE.

JIMMY TRAILL put the finishing touches to the letter he was drafting. Then, settling himself back in his chair, he reached out a long arm to the neat row of bell-pushes which occupied the corner of his desk. Selecting one with a thoughtful air, he pressed it. The small brass plate beside the knob was engraved with the word "Secretary," and the bell rang in the opposite corner of the same room, over Pamela Marlowe's head. The outsider would have failed to see the point of this arrangement, but Traill had not been in business long enough to get tired of playing with the mechanical gadgets provided in all up-to-date offices for the amusement of the staff.

Mr. Teal lighted his cigarette and gazed reflectively at the ceiling.

"Take a letter," he said. "This is to Stanforth and Watson: Dear Sirs,—With reference to our telephone conversation this morning. Stop. Something seems to be eating you."

Pamela Marlowe looked up from her pad in surprise.

"Do you want me to put that down?" she asked.

"No," replied Jimmy, taking his eyes off the ceiling. "The remark was addressed to you."

When Long Harry emerged from Pentonville Prison, he found Inspector Teal waiting for him.
He was regarding her keenly, and after a few seconds silence she looked away.

"You may tell me all," remarked Jimmy gently. "I hold that I am Master of the Order of Father Confessors."

She met his eyes, again, and the question with which she took advantage of his invitation did no one else as a surprise to him.

"Who was that man who came in just now?"

"That," said Mr. Traill, "was the worthy Inspector Claude Emest Teal, of the Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard. He has a prying disposition, and he isn't anything like the fool Lc looks. I grant you that would be difficult."

The girl hesitated, fidgeting with her pencil. But Mr. Traill, unruffled himself, made no attempt to fluster her.

"Mr. Traill," she said at length, "I wasn't trying to hear the conversation that went on after you sent me out of the room, but the partition investigation department is too thin."

"It's these jerry-building methods," sighed Mr. Traill. "I'll dictate a letter to the 'Times' about it in a moment."

The girl's lips tightened a little.

"I couldn't help hearing what Mr. Teal said," Jimmy said.

He said nothing.

He, who should by rights have been the one to show embarrassment, registered nothing on the face of his thin face.

"You didn't deny his charges," said the girl.

"Naturally not," said Jimmy. "George Washington was an ancestor of mine, and I cannot tell a lie."

"Well," said the girl bluntly, "I shall hate doing it, but doesn't it occur to you that it is my duty to say something to Mr. Vanney about it? That is, if you can't give me some sort of explanation."

Jimmy smiled without mockery.

"Of course it is," he agreed cheerfully; "and I should like to say that I appreciate the nobility of your impulse. I shall draw Mr. Vanney's attention to it. But as for the other matter, I'm afraid you won't be able to tell him anything that he doesn't know. Try it to-morrow morning, if you don't believe me."

He dictated a number of letters, waited while she typed them, and took them into Mr. Vanney's private office. He was back in a few moments with the shawl duly signed.

"You can go as soon as you have addressed them," he said. "George will take them down to the post."

She ventured to be inquisitive.

"Why do we need a special porter for this office?" she asked.

"One should always," said Jimmy impressively, "surround oneself with all the evidences of prosperity that one can afford. It creates a good impression. George will have his initials on the uniform with brass buttons to-morrow, and I shall expect to see an immediate jump in our turnover."

It was an invaluable rule at Vanney's that Mr. Traill was the last to leave the office. On that particular evening, however, Pamela Marlowe, with her hat and coat on, appeared to be uncertain whether she should take Mr. Traill at his word.

"I've told you you can go," said Jimmy, without looking up from the letter he was perusing. "She made a demur."

"Are you sure Mr. Vanney won't want me again?"

"Mr. Vanney," said Traill carefully, "never wants you. You know that perfectly well."

It was true. All instructions to the office staff were given by Mr. Traill, and he dictated all the letters that were sent out, and opened all that came in. The rest of the staff were never allowed to pass through the door marked "Private."

"I've told you that I shall not want you any more this evening," said Jimmy, "and you may take that as official. Mr. Vanney has already left."

She stared.

"He hasn't come through for his hat and coat," she objected.

"He left by his private entrance," said Jimmy shortly, "without a hat and coat. He has just joined the Ancient Order of Kangaroos, and one of their rules is that no member is allowed to take his hat and coat home with him on Friday."

There was no use for her but to leave without further argument, but the incident found its place in her memory beside a number of other extraordinary things which she had noticed during the few months that she had worked under Traill.

Mr. Traill was in every way an ideal employer. His manner, without being brusque, was at all times irresproachably impersonal, but she had never been able to understand his mentality. Whenever she ventured to comment on any unusual happening, he was never at a loss for an explanation, but the reasons he gave so glibly would have been an insult to the intelligence of an imbecile.

There had been a time when she had wondered if he fancied himself as a wag and was expecting her to laugh, but he made the most outrageous statements without smiling, and if she showed any emotion at all it was one of concealed delight at her annoyed perplexity.

She found another enigma to interpret when she arrived at the office the following Monday, for Mr. Traill, with his coat off, was supervising the finishing touches which were being put by two workmen to a curious erection which had appeared at the far end of the private corridor.

Jimmy greeted her in his usual affable manner, and invited her to admire it.

"This is George's new home," he said.

It was, in fact, no more than a partition which turned into a sort of cubicle the blind end of the passage beyond the door that opened into Vanney's private room. It would have been nothing but an ordinary janitor's box but for an unusual feature in the walls. He had covered all the glass all the way to the ceiling, and there were only two small windows—one in the partition itself, and one in the door which the workmen were at that moment engaged in putting in position.

Furthermore, each window was obscured by a row of steel bars set close together.

Coming closer she made another surmise.

"But why is it lined with steel?" she asked in amazement.

"Because," said Jimmy, "a half-inch deal board is no protection against a bullet. We should hate to lose our one and only George."

The girl was silent, but Jimmy was perfectly at his ease.

"Observe, too, the strategic position," he prattled on, with the enthusiasm of an artist. "No one can reach George without having to cover the whole length of the suite, either through the offices or from the corridor. Consequently, it'll be his own fault if he doesn't hear them coming. Besides, we've got another little safety device. I'll show you if you wait here a moment."

He went down the corridor, and as he got near the door a low, burring noise came to her ears. Staring blankly about her, she eventually located its source in a small metal box screwed to the wall inside the cubicle.

Jimmy passed on to the door, and the buzzing stopped. He turned, and it recommenced; then he came back down the corridor, and it stopped again.

"What is it?" she asked, "a burglar alarm?"

"The very latest," said Jimmy. "Come and have a look."

He led her down the passage, and when they were within a yard of the door the low buzzing made itself heard again. She stopped and gazed round puzzledly, but she could see nothing.

"I saw it demonstrated in a shop the other day," explained Jimmy, "and I promptly ordered one. It's worked by a ray that's passed through those two to a selenium cell. It's invisible, but if you get in its path the buzzer gives tongue. It's impossible to put it out of action until it's too late, because only James Traill and the electrician who fitted it know exactly where it is."

He was amused at her bewilderment.

"Don't you think it's rather neat?" he asked.

"It seems a lot of trouble to take over a porter."

Jimmy smiled.

"George," he said virtuously, "is a member of Vanney's just as much as you or me and we all have a right to expect that he is thoroughly protected against the dangers of his position."

In her astonishment she forgot the lesson whose experience should have taught her.

"But why should George be in any danger?" she said, and Jimmy's face instantly assumed its gravest expression.

"Haven't you read about all these armed robberies?" he demanded severely. "Haven't you heard of the Black Hand? And do you mean to say that I never told you that the Union of Porters, Commissionaires, Care-takers, Undertakers, and Glue Receivers have threatened to put two more than the regulation number of buttons on his uniform?"

She turned away in despair, and went into the office.
Evidently Traill feared arrest. He was packing his trunk when Inspector Teal arrived.

UNDER POLICE OBSERVATION.

The memory of Inspector Teal’s visit had occupied a prominent place in Pamela Marlowe’s thoughts ever since the afternoon when Jimmy Traill had so shamelessly acknowledged the truth of that lethargic detective’s accusations. But when Mr. Traill arrived one morning and told her that he had arranged for her to pay the tale to Vanney, she felt a paradoxical reluctance to go to her employer with a charge against his manager’s honesty, even while she welcomed the opportunity of testing the truth of Jimmy’s statement that Vanney knew the whole story of his misdeeds.

Mr. Traill, however, appeared to have no doubts as to what the outcome of the interview would be.

“He said that everything you heard, he encouraged, when the bell rang from Mr. Vanney’s office to summon her. ‘He will be interested.’”

She told Jimmy at his word, but it was a prolixless conversation.

Vanney listened attentively to her story, but when she had finished she could have sworn that he was smiling behind his beard. His voice, however, was quite serious.

“I appreciate your high sense of duty, Miss Marlowe,” he said, “but what Mr. Traill told you is quite correct. I know everything about him, and in spite of that he has my complete confidence.”

He had a stiff manner of speaking, and appeared to think each sentence out carefully before he uttered it. He did not once look directly at her, but kept his eyes fixed on a point in space a foot or so away from her left shoulder.

“I didn’t wish to do Mr. Traill any harm,” she felt compelled to explain. “But I had to remember that you were in a position to be employing me.”

“I quite understand,” said Vanney.

He continued to gaze past her in silence for some seconds, stroking his beard. Then he said:

“Did you know that your late guardian’s last request to me was that, if anything happened to him, I should look after you?”

“But you were in Australia.”

“I know,” said Vanney, rather testily.

“Why did he do it?”

The girl nodded.

“I see. But I never knew much about him, and I never heard him speak of any

of his friends. My father knew him a long time ago— they were boys together, but they hadn’t met for ever twenty years. Just before father died, he happened to meet Mr. Stenning again, and the chance came to get to know each other. It was fairly natural that he should appoint Mr. Stenning guardian. But I only saw Mr. Stenning three times, and that was when I was quite young. He discharged all his duties through his solicitors.”

He often mentioned his name to me when he wrote to Vanney. “I believe that, behind the scenes, he took a great interest in you.”

He began to fidget with a pencil on his desk, and she could not help noticing his hand. They were rough and ill-kept, and not at all the hands that one would have associated with a millionaire—for Vanney was reputed to be no less. He appeared suddenly to become aware of their defects, for he dropped the pencil and hid his hands in his pockets.

“I had a very rough life in Australia before I made my fortune,” he volunteered. And I hear that, as guardian, I should be of very little use to you. Now, of course, you are old enough not to need looking after. But if you would honour me with your company at dinner one evening, Miss Marlowe, I should appreciate the compliment.”

She hesitated.

“If you want me to—”

“You don’t seem very keen,” he said.

She had to pause to think of a reply.

“I hardly go out at all,” she said at length, and was conscious of the flinching of the excuse as soon as she had uttered it.

But Vanney did not appear to be at all put out by this. He seemed to be perfectly at ease and had begun to turn the pages.

“Very well, Miss Marlowe,” he said, with a return to the gruffness of tone which had softened for a moment. “That will be all, then. You may go back to your work.”

She returned to Mr. Traill’s room feeling vaguely uncomfortable. She knew that her refusal of Vanney’s invitation had not been an expression of tact, and that realization was not a congenial one. There was no logical reason that she could see why she should have been so perverse, and she was ashamed of herself for having given way so readily to the unaccountable feeling of revulsion.

Mr. Traill was scribbling away industriously, as usual. He had never discovered what it was he was closeted with Vanney or dictating letters to herself. The sheaves were stowed away in a drawer of his desk, which he locked whenever he left the room.

“You are subdued,” remarked Jimmy, without taking his eyes off his work.

“Therefore I deduce that you have been unwillingly forced to admit that I am more truthful by nature than you had believed.”

She smiled, but he was not looking at her.

“I owe you an apology,” she said. “You warned me that I was making a fool of myself, but I refused to be convinced.”

Your apology is accepted,” said Jimmy amiably.

He covered half a page of manuscript while she transcribed a letter.

“You did,” said Jimmy, “if you’re thinking that one day I shall be revealed as the brilliant and noble detective who masquerades as a criminal, caring nothing for his own reputation and matrimonial prospects, in order to nab the crook of crooks, it is my duty to warn you that nothing so romantic will happen. I’m all that Teal could call me, and more, and the fact that I love you will never alter that.”

He said this without the least change of tone, so that it was fully a minute before she realised the meaning of the declaration contained in his last sentence. When the astounding point dawned upon her she stopped tapping the typewriter and stared at him.

Mr. Traill seemed blissfully ignorant of the fact that he had in any way departed from his usual style of conversation. While she watched him in amazement, he wrote three more lines, and then laid down his pen and gazed at the ceiling with an air of furious concentration.

She did not know what to say, and so said nothing. This was not difficult, for he did not appear to be expecting her to make any comment. After a short period of scowling ruminaton, he picked up his pen again and continued writing.

Pamela gazed hopelessly at a blank sheet of paper. The situation was impossible, but Jimmy gave no sign that he perceived any incongruity in it.

You are still subdued, Miss Marlowe,” he murmured, laying a closely-written page aside and drawing a fresh sheet towards him. “I hardly imagine that the discovery that I am in love with you would affect you so deeply, so I am left to conclude that Vanney has asked you to meet him in a social sort of way.”

“I don’t think it’s any business of yours, Mr. Traill,” she began, and then he looked up at her.

“Did he or did he not?”

She flushed resentfully at his insistence.
GEORGE IN EVENING DRESS.

The lot of a policeman has become a happier one since a recent brain discovery that crimes can be classified according to the method of their commission.

There are men who are accustomed to enter houses other than their own by way of the first floor window, having scaled the pillars of the portico, while others are wont to clamber up a drain-pipe and admit themselves on the same level at the back. Confronted with a closed and fastened window, one man will use the flat of a thin-bladed knife, while another will cut out a pane of glass and insert his hand for the same purpose. For opening locked drawers and cupboards an instrument, known to the lay public as a jimmy, and to the trade as a "stick," is used, and this may be of many patterns, according to the ingenuity of the owner, ranging from a simple chisel to a beautifully-finished collapsable claw-ended lever of tension steel.

A glorified and super-efficient "stick," designed to the profile of the tin-opener, has been successfully employed to open the flimsier kind of safe. Other safe experts favour the wedge system; others, in suitable circumstances, will blend the lock with a small charge of nitro-glycerine; a number of skilled and painstaking individuals are able to solve the riddle of a combination lock with the aid of a stethoscope; and the potential of the oxy-acetylene blow-lamp have not been overlooked by the elite of the profession.

Having skillfully entered certain premises, there are men who work cautiously in the hope that they will not make enough noise to disturb the rightful inhabitant, whereas others prefer to knock him on the head, tie him up, and gag him. There are many who always include an expedition to the pantry in their raid, and they are betrayed by their taste in food and drink; more than once a marked fancy for marmalade or cheese has been the clue that has sent a man away for a compulsory sojourn in the country.

Accordingly, when a grocer in South London was found lying, shot through the heart, behind his counter, and the assistant came to open up the shop in the morning, with the till broken open and the previous three days' takings missing, the man in charge of the case, before he allowed anything to be moved, sent for the police photographers. The pictures they took were developed and printed in a few hours; and these, together with the inspector's own conclusions, were sent to the Records Office, where are catalogued in one gigantic card index all the known forms, variations, and trimmings of crime, with force-back the - the - the men who are known to practise them.

There then began a scientific process of elimination. The extra heavy sentence which is always received by a criminal who uses firearms in his work means that comparatively few burglars go armed. From the list of these men were eliminated those whose known method of entering a house did not correspond with the method used in that case. The list was reduced again by removing the names of those who, without a serious divergence from their old habits of planning an ordinary criminal - would have solved the problem of the locked till in a way other than that in which it had been solved. The list diminished steadily as the names contained were in turn tested by other characteristics of the crime in question.

Even with these precise methods, it is usual for several names to be left over for each instance the accumulated evidence pointed with the most convincing certainty to one man.

"You mentioned his name to me only the other day," said the man from the Records Office. "So I thought you would be interested." Mr. Teal, said Mr. Teal. "But I'd be still more interested if you could tell me where he is.

It was in a pessimistic spirit that he telephoned to Mr. Teal. "I refer you to the inspector in charge of F Division, and therefore he was not disappointed when it proved fruitless.

"The last time anything was seen or heard of Connell, F Division informed him concisely, "was in July, two years ago."

Mr. Teal, remembering his breakfast of a fortnight ago, took his hat and coat and we left the house.

He ran his victim to earth in a public-house near Victoria Station, and took the next place at the bar.

"This is a pleasant surprise, Harry," said Mr. Teal. "I thought you would know anything about him."

Harry knew of old that when Mr. Teal made such a request it was useless to refuse.

"But he did a job in Battersea last night," said Mr. Teal. "I thought you'd have heard of it."

"Good Lord," said Long Harry. "Now I thought you would," said Teal. "I told you once I don't know anything about it."

Long Harry shook his head.

"I don't know anything about it, Mr. Teal," he said.

"Now, I thought you would," said Teal. "I told you once I don't know anything about it."

Mr. Teal, said Mr. Teal. "I thought you'd have heard of it."

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"Good Lord," said Long Harry. "I told you once I don't know anything about it."

Long Harry shook his head.
Harry grinned.

"If you’re thinking I pulled that job to frame Connell, you’re right up the spout. I’ve got an alibi."

The torpcesent Mr. Teal felt in his waistcoat pocket for a fresh bar of chewing gum.

"Then," he remarked pensively, "it seems as if you must have done it."

"But this," said Harry, "is a copper-bottomed alibi. I spent last night in Marlborough Street Police Station. I’d been entertaining some friends, and we’d had what you might call a sticky evening. It took three policemen to get me there."

Mr. Teal raised a reproving eyebrow.

"Drunk, I suppose," he murmured.

"All three of them," said Harry.

Inspector Teal ruminated in silence for some moments, and then he said:

"Do you get drunk easily, Harry?"

"I can knock back a tank full and not show it," Harry bragged.

"Entertaining friends, were you?" said Teal slumbrously. "Then you must have come into some easy money. I know how fond you are of work, and you haven’t been out of stir long enough to earn that much honestly."

"I got a remittance," said Harry glibly.

"An uncle of mine, who went out to Australia years ago, suddenly remembered his poor, persecuted nephew in the old country, and sent me a tenner."

Mr. Teal went back to Scotland Yard very little wiser than he had been when he left it.

hurried on, but something in the business-like tone of his address stopped her, and she looked round.

She saw a big, red-faced, sleepy-eyed man, of considerable girth, wearing a rather noisy tweed suit, with a soft felt hat tilted to the back of his head.

"I am Inspector Teal, of Scotland Yard," said that same, "and you might be able to help me a lot. Miss Marlowe, if you’d just step into that tea den with me and have a chat.

Over a cup of tea, at his request, she repeated the history of her association with Stenning and Vanney, in much the same way as she had told it to Vanney himself. Mr. Teal appeared to doze during the recital, but as soon as she had finished he was ready with a question.

"How did you get your job at Vanney’s?"

"Mr. Vanney wrote to me off his own bat. He knew Mr. Stenning, and he says that Mr. Stenning had often spoken of me."

Jimmy Traill advanced threateningly on the driver of the other car.

"Clear off!" he ordered.

"and don’t come here again."

"If you remember, the fraud was shown up two years ago, when Stenning died, and the company went smash."

"I remember," said Teal.

"Claravox Gramophones was one of Stenning’s companies. I guess that man must have held the dud company record for this country."

He drank some tea, and cogitated, with his eyes closed; and his next query was a surprising one.

"Does Jimmy ever make love to you?"

"No," she replied at once, and wondered how she came to lie so spontaneously:

Teal, however, seemed to have been anticipating that answer.

"He wouldn’t," he said. "Jimmy’s a clean crook. But what about Vanney?"

"I’ve only seen him once, and then he asked me to have dinner with him."

"Is that so?" Teal opened one eye. "Did you go?"

She shook her head.

"It was only the other day. I put him off, and he hasn’t mentioned it since."

With that he seemed to have come to the end of his intended interrogation, and she took advantage of his silence to make an inquiry of her own.

"What did you mean when you said that Jimmy is a clean crook?"

"Well," said Mr. Teal judicially, "he’s a crook all right. He doesn’t make any bones about it. The reason he’s at large is because on the few occasions when he’s left any evidence behind him that could be used in court, the injured parties have refused to kick. Jimmy always makes pretty sure of his man before he robs him. To give him his due, none of them have been particularly desirable citizens, as far as one can make out, but that doesn’t make him an honest man."

"Why do you think he does it?"

"For fun, I suppose. There are men with a kink that way. Certainly not for money—he’s got a very good income of his own."

She was astonished at this revelation.

"Then why does he work at Vanney’s?"
The girl put her ear to the door. In the circumstances she had no compunction about eavesdropping.

"And why, for that matter, did he work for Stenholm?" she asked. "If you could answer those questions, Miss Marlowe, you'd save my mind a lot of hard wear. All I know is that I smell trouble wherever Jimmy's hanging around."

The implication did not make itself plain to her at once, but when she had grasped it, she stopped with her cup half-way to her lips, and stared.

"Do you mean Vanney's isn't straight?" she said.

"I've a good idea," said Teal, "that Vanney's one of the crookedest shows in the history of commerce. If Vanney's is straight, I'm going to ask the Commissioner to call in all the rulers in Scotland Yard, and supply the clerical department with corkscrews."

He gazed at her in his drowsily placid way while she digested this startling piece of information, and his air of heavy-lidded weariness did not prevent him taking in every detail of her appearance. She was a little pretty—Mr. Teal, who by no stretch of imagination could have been called a connoisseur of feminine beauty, would have been blind if he had not recognised that fact. Nice eyes and mouth. A trim figure, and well-chosen clothes that suited her to perfection. Mr. Teal thought that there would have been some excuse for Jimmy, anyway.

He thought of Jimmy. Jimmy was dark and good-looking, an entertaining companion and a personality. Jimmy knew how to wear clothes, and he had a most engaging smile. Maybe there would have been some excuse for Pamela Marlowe.

"You seem to be rather interested in Jimmy," murmured Mr. Teal. "Are you in love with him, by any chance?"

"No," she replied promptly. "Whatever made you ask that?"

"It just occurred to me," said Inspector Teal vaguely.

After a few minutes more desultory conversation he left her. Those were turbulent days for her under her superficial calm, and she was beginning to feel the strain. Consequently, it was a most welcome relief for her when, after dinner, the girl who occupied the next room in the house where she lived came in, and suggested a visit to the pictures.

They went by bus to Piccadilly and walked up Regent Street. As they passed the back entrance of the Piccadilly Hotel, two men in evening dress came out, and one of them hailed a passing taxi. They stepped in and were driven away.

One of the men she had recognised at once, for it was none other than Jimmy Traill. His companions had been a big, heavy-featured man, with a small military mustache, whose face seemed curiously familiar.

It required some minutes of concentration before she could place him, but when she had done so her involuntary gasp of amusement startled her companion.

It was not surprising that she had not been able to identify him at once, for the last time she had seen him he had been wearing a purple and gold brocade with buttons and braid of gold, and he was no longer a stranger to her.

Pamela walked on with her brain in a ferment. She felt strangely disinclined to embark on a lengthy explanation of what had startled her, and the other girl, after some futile attempts to start a chat, gave way, muffled in amazement.

It seemed that she was destined to become more and more lost each day in the network of mystery of which Vanney's was the centre, and to add complication seemed to be nearer to a solution.

What was the closely guarded secret of Vanney's, and what part was Jimmy Traill playing in it? Everything she had seen or heard pointed to Vanney being a sinister one, and yet, however suspicious a character Jimmy Traill might be, he had one of the least sinister personalities that she had ever met. But why did so many irregular things mark the conduct of the office which was under his supervision, and why, to cap it all, had he been dining with the Piccadilly with the porter—George?

Pamela's brain was assailed with unanswerable questions for the rest of the evening, and the entertainment, which should have been a means of forgetting the perplexities which had weighed her for days, was spoilt for her; but her adventures were not yet finished for that night.

She got home to find a note on the hall table informing her that a man had rung her up twice without answering. While she was reading it, the telephone bell rang again.

She went to the instrument with an instinctive certainty that the call was for her, and she was right.

"Mr. Traill asks me to say that he is very sorry you had to wait an hour, but he must ask you to come immediately. A closed car is waiting for you at the corner of the street. Please come at once!"

Before she could reply, a click from the receiver told her that the man at the other end of the line had rung off. Pamela put the telephone down slowly, biting her lip. In one sense there was nothing extra about the request. The circumstances were plausible, and it was not unusual for important business negotiations to be concluded over dinner, although such a thing had never happened before while she had been at Vanney's. And Inspector Teal had said that Traill was a clean crook. She might easily have excused further deliberation, but she did not.

There were one or two things which she could not understand, and they made her pause. First, the message which awaited her when she had come in from the dance, in which she had been called at 9.30 and 10.30. If it was so important that papers should be made out without delay, would they have waited so long? Another thing she should have been able to obtain; and, besides, Traill was perfectly capable of working the typewriter efficiently himself—she must have seen him do it more than once. Secondly, when she had last seen him, he had been with George; and whatever the reason for that intimacy, it was not likely that the janitor would be present when business was being discussed. And then, what was the reason for the car? Apparently it had been sent much earlier in the evening, so that its arrival would coincide with the first attempt to get her on the telephone, and yet there was no reason for Traill to have suspected a sudden death of taxis in Kensington. Finally, why had he not spoken to himself?

Picking up her mind, she picked up the telephone book and found Traill's number. She called it, and his voice answered her almost immediately.

"Yes?"

"It's Miss Marlowe speaking, Mr. Traill. Did you ring up just now?"

"Certainly not," said Jimmy."

She told him that the message she had received, and he whistled.

"You can take it from me, it was a fake," he said. "I don't know who sent it, but I'll try to find out. You say a car is supposed to be waiting for you at the corner?"

"Yes."

"Is it still there?"

"I'll go and see."

Her room was in the front, on the first floor, and she ran quickly up the stairs. Crossing to the window, she looked down, disturbing the curtains as little as possible. There was a car drawn up kerb two doors away—a racy-looking saloon.

"It's still there," she said, returning to the telephone.

"Good," said Jimmy briskly. "Now, you run along off to bed, Miss Marlowe, and forget it. And if you get any more messages like that, give yourself the benefit of the doubt and don't make a move until you've confirmed them. Incidentally, I don't know how you get the office in the morning, but I should stick to the tube or bus if I were you. Funny things have happened to taxis before now. Good-night."

She went upstairs, but she did not undress at once. Instead, she put on a heavy coat, lit a cigarette, and sat down beside it with a book. She read attentively, with one eye on the car in the street below.

Ten minutes later, a sports coupè drove round to the street, passed the waiting car, and pulled in to the pavement directly under her window. A man stepped out, and stood for a moment lighting a cigarette, and she recognised Jimmy Traill.

He stepped up to the other car and opened the door.

"Marmaduke," said Jimmy clearly, "you're a bad boy. Go right home and don't do it again."

The driver's reply was inaudible, but she
heard Jimmy speak again, and there was a
hard, metallic note in his voice.
"You lie," said Jimmy. "You are afraid of me, because you know that if I get
annoyed there isn’t a graft in the world
that’ll stop me smashing it—unpleasantly.
Do what you’re told!"
There was a muttered colloquy which she
couldn’t hear, and then Jimmy closed the
door and stepped back.
He watched the auto out of sight, and
then walked back to his own car.
He stood beside it, scanning the windows
above him, and Pamela leaned out.
"It’s all right, Miss Marlowe," called
Jimmy cheerfully. "You won’t be disturbed
again. Good-night, for the second time."
He climbed into his car and drove off,
and she closed the window.
The next morning he seemed to have for-
gotten the incident, and when she thanked
him for disposing of the mysterious driver,
he appeared to have to concentrate intensely
before he could place the reference.
"Oh, that!" he said at length. "Do you
know you’ve broken a record?"
She showed her bewilderment, and he
smiled.
"If I put you in a book," he said, "you’d
be the first heroine in the history of thick-
car fiction who has not entered blithely
into the first trap that was set for her.
Tell me how you did it."
She told him, ending up with the informa-
tion that she had seen him leaving the
Piccadilly with George, but he did not
seem at all upset by this discovery.
"George and I are great friends," said
Jimmy airily. "But perhaps you didn’t
know that I was a practical Socialist?"
"But he was in evening dress!"

It was no accident. They
sought Teal’s life. The big
car forced him into the
smash.

passage, because the walls in this office are
very thin.

Long Harry sat down, and put his hands
on his knees.
"Mr. Traill," he said, "you know who I’m
looking for."
"I don’t," said Jimmy.
"Connell," explained Harry tersely.
Jimmy frowned.
"Is there a catch in this?" he demanded.
"Am I supposed to say: ‘Who is Connell?’
—whereupon you say: ‘Connellady eat
asparagus without dripping the melted
butter down her neck?’—or something soft
like that. Because, if so, I’ll buy it—but
let’s get it over quick."

Long Harry leaned forward.
"Traill," he said, "you know me, and I
know you, and we both know Connell. But,
did you know that I’d just come out of
stir?"
"I read in the papers a couple of years
ago that you’d just gone in," said Jimmy.
"How’s the old place looking?"

But Harry was not feeling conversational.
Connell put me there," he said. "I
never did that Bayswater job. Connell
shopped me, and I’m looking for Connell."

Jimmy rose.
"Well," he said briefly, "I’m afraid I
can’t help you. Nobody’s seen Connell for
two years. Good-afternoon."

He held out his hand, but Long Harry
ignored it.
"Next time you see Connell," said Mr.
Garrot, rising, "you can tell him I’m lay-
ing for him."

"Good-afternoon," said Jimmy again, and
opened the door. "Call in any time you’re
passing, but don’t stay long."

He returned to his desk with a worried
air, for the return of Long Harry seemed to him to presage the beginning of troublous times: for the firm of Vanney’s, Ltd.

A LIAR—AND DEATH:

Talking of disappearances, Mr. Teal,” said Sergeant Barrow, “I’ve been thinking.”

Inspector Teal fixed his subordinate with a basilisk eye.

“Not again?” he drawled with heavy sarcasm.

“What’s more,” said Barrow, “I’ve been talking to Jones and Records Office, and I’ve got on to something that might interest you.”

Teal waited.

“About the time that Connell disappeared,” said Barrow earnestly, “Red Mulligan also vanished. The last thing we heard of Red was he was supposed to be dying of pleurisy. Red was the man who worked the Finchley bank job. He and Long Harry used to run together, and they shared a room in Deptford. Connell made a trio when it suited him. Well, Connell disappears, and a few days after that we stop hearing anything about Red. I went down to Deptford and made a few inquiries, but all they could tell me was that Harry gave out a story that Red had got better and gone out to Australia. Since when, nobody’s seen or heard of him. Now, does a man who’s been given up for dead get better as quickly as that, and would he jump right off his bed into a steamer, and shoot off without saying a word to anyone? It’s not as if there was anything against him at that time—he had a clean sheet.”

Teal nodded.

“That’s worth thinking about,” he conceded.

But it was not Inspector Teal’s practice to make his thoughts processes public, and he switched off almost immediately on to a new line.

“Go out into the wide world, Barrow,” he said, “and find me an Australian.”

After some search an Australian was found, and Teal took him out, bought him beer, and invited a geography lesson. Then he bought the Australian more beer, and left him.

He went to Vanney’s, and Jimmy saw him at once.

“Mr. Vanney is engaged,” said Jimmy, “but I’ll ask him.”

“I’m looking for a man named Connell,” said Teal.

Everybody seems to be doing it,” sighed Jimmy. “Only yesterday, we had a man in looking for him.”

“Long Harry?” asked Teal, and Jimmy nodded.

“It’s surprising how popular a man can become, all of a sudden.”

“Connell’s wanted for the Battersea murder,” said Teal.

Clearly Jimmy was surprised at this item of news, but his surprise did not make him any more helpful.

“Connell is the mystery man of the twentieth century,” said Jimmy. “Sorry, Teal, but you’ve come to the wrong shop. We broke off our partnership with Macklyne’s years ago.”

“There’s another thing,” said Teal. “We’ve got a man in for a bit of work in Curzon Street, and he’s made a confession that all my time is ours to a man we’ve been looking for for years. I won’t go into details, but I will tell you that I’m temporarily stuck, and you might be able to help.”

“Anything within reason,” Claude Eustace,” said Jimmy.

Teal winced.

“The point is,” said Teal. “That is this case lives up with one man in Australia. The trouble is, we haven’t got the name of the man who was robbed, and I’m wondering if Mr. Vanney could save me the trouble of cabling out to Australia for it. I believe I spent some years in Melbourne.”

“That is so,” said Jimmy.

“Then he might know the name. He’s one of the richest men in Melbourne, and he’s one of the men who is in the place.”

The man I’ve got couldn’t remember the name, but he thinks it began with an “S.” He remembers that it’s a big, white stone building at the top of Collins Street, about five minutes from Brighton Beach.

The family used to dash down to the sea for a swim every morning before breakfast, and it was while they were out on one of those early swimming parties that the jewels were taken.

Jimmy looked doubtful.

“It’s some time since Mr. Vanney was in Melbourne,” he said.

“Surely not,” said Teal, “you couldn’t help knowing the place.”

Teal replied that Collins Street was one of the big thoroughfares, and everybody knew Brighton Beach, and this man’s house was a show feature of the city.

Jimmy shrugged.

“I’ll ask him,” he said, “but I doubt if I can help you. Shall I write and let you know what he says?”

“I can get a reply telegraphed from Melbourne quicker than that,” said Teal. “Couldn’t you ask him now?”

“I’ll see,” said Jimmy, and went.

He was back in two minutes.

“Mr. Vanney is very sorry, but he can’t remember the name of the man. He knows the house, of course, but he thinks that the man’s name began with ‘M.’”

“Thanks,” said Teal, and heaved his vast bulk out of the chair. “Sorry to have troubled you.”

“Sorry to have been troubled,” said Jimmy genially.

Teal stopped by the door.

“By the way,” he said, “why have you got such a funny feel in your hand there? Are you all right?”

Jimmy smiled appreciatively.

“That was clever of you, Teal,” he admitted. “I didn’t find out till a couple of days ago that you were watching the place.

No, I don’t have luncheon these days.”

“I see,” said Teal. “Give up lotteries, leeks, leprosy, lynching, lamentation, lavender, and life preservers.”

“I,” said Teal, “give up lotteries, leeks, leprosy, lynching, lamentation, lavender, and life preservers.”

“It was the first time that Mr. Teal had held his own with Mr. Trail in a verbal encounter, and that, in the auspicious circumstances, put him in a very good humour.

He returned to Scotland Yard, and sent again for Sergeant Barrow.

“Did you look out all the papers connected with the Stenning case, as I told you?” he asked.

Barrow pointed to a bundle recently placed on Teal’s desk, but Teal preferred to cut his work down to a minimum. If he had told Jimmy that he had given up labour through the year, irrespective of Lent, where possible, he would have been very near the truth.

He leaned back, clasped his hands in an attitude of prayer, closed his eyes, and said: “Have you studied the case?”

Sergeant Barrow intimated that he had done so.

“Tell me about it,” said Teal.

Stenning’s death had caused a considerable sensation at the time. His name was well known in the City, and the derogatory rumours which circulated persistently among the cognoscenti were not printed in the newspapers, which were restrained by the law of libel, and therefore did not reach the majority of the public. It was not until after Stenning’s death that all the facts of his nefarious career were made public, and then there was a panic among the small investors.

Stenning was clever. For years he had sailed perilously near the wind, and had found it a profitable procedure. But, with

Before Stenning could fire, the gun was sent flying by a shattering kick.
the passing of time, the encouraging re-
collection of past successes and the tem-
ptation to increase his income still further
by risking sailing manoeuvres closer and
closer to the wind, had led him to form
companies of increasing instability. He
had ended up by organising and man-
aging a project which, for the first time in
his career, was frankly fraudulent.
The result had been to raise his con-
jectured profits to the seven-figure mark,
although at his death his estate was valued
at no more than £10,000.

"No man," said Sergeant Barrow,
"ever died at a more convenient time."

Stenning had passed over with all
his sins with the last, and more ambi-
tions, scheme was tottering on the dizzy
pinnacle of success. Ultimate discovery
was inevitable—though whether Stenning
realised that, he was banking on being
able to leave the country before a warrant
was issued for his arrest, or whether he
was too swayed with vanity to see his
danger, would never be known. Cer-
tainly, drunk with confidence, he had
ended up by over-reaching himself; but
then he had died. As Sergeant Barrow
remarked, he couldn’t have timed his death
for a more suitable moment.

One night he had set out from London
in an open car, accompanied only by his
secretary and his chauffeur, to keep a busi-
ness appointment at Bristol. According to
the evidence at the inquest, the chauffeur,
Arthur Wylie, had attempted to take a
corner too fast on a lonely stretch of road
between Stewartry and Auchen. The car had
skidded and overturned. The secretary
and chauffeur were flung clear, but Stenning
had been pinned underneath the wreckage,
and before either of the other two could
go to his assistance the car had burst into
flames, so that it was impossible to approach
it. The car was reduced to a heap of twisted
scrap-iron, and of Stenning there remained
nothing but a charred beyond recognition,
and identified only by a ring, a watch,
and a bunch of keys. The chauffeur
pledged incompetence, and it was found that
he had only held a driving licence for six
months.

On the evidence of James Traill and the
chauffeur a verdict of "Accidental death"
was returned, and Stenning was buried in
dishonour with his death the full story of
all his shady transactions was made
public. But, of the millions he was reputed
to have amassed in the course of his career
as a swindler, no trace could be discovered.

"That’s a fact," said Sergeant Barrow.
"But what’s it got to do with Connell?"

"Nothing, and at the same time every-
thing," answered Mr. Teal enigmatically.
"And now, if you will listen carefully, I’ll
tell you a little joke." Sergeant Barrow
produced a smile.

"The joke," said Mr. Teal, "is about a
man who says that he lived several years
in Australia, and who gives Melbourne as his
last address. I asked him if he could
identify a house at the top of Collins Street,
five minutes from Brighton Beach, and I
told him how the people who owned the
house used to run down to the sea for a
battle before breakfast."

Sergeant Barrow’s forehead puckered.

"I’m very sorry, Mr. Teal," he said, "but
I don’t see it."

"Suppose," said Mr. Teal dreamily, "that I
told you that I’d got a beautiful house in
Kensington Gardens overlooking the Em-
bankment. What would you say then?"

"I should say you were a liar, Mr. Teal,"
said Sergeant Barrow diffidently.

Inspector Teal seemed to smile in his
sleep.

"I said nothing so insulting," he mur-
mured. "In fact, I said nothing at all. But
since the Australian you found me gave me
his word that Brighton Beach was at least
ten miles away from the top of Collins
Street, Melbourne, I think I was justified in
thinking a lot."

DANGER COMING.

"Take a letter," said Jimmy.

"To the Editor of the Times, Sir. The
impudent presumption of the modern employer is a
menace to the morals of the community.
Stop. The other day, I was applying for the post of secretary
to an American business man who was
opening a branch in London. Stop. Finding
my qualifications and references satisfac-
tory, he then asked me how much I
wanted. Stop. ‘Four pounds a week,’ I
said. Stop. ‘With pleasure,’ he replied. Stop.
Certainly not,” I retorted. Stop. Can nothing be done about this? Stop. I am,
et cetera, Harassed Stenographer. I
wonder why they never print my letters,”
added Jimmy.

"Because," said Pamela Marlowe calmly,
"I never send them."

Jimmy regarded her seriously.

"Why not?"

"Because, although they are amusing, I
don’t feel justified in wasting Mr. Vanney’s
stamps sending out letters which the Editor
would certainly put in his waste-paper
basket."

"Are you the manager?" inquired Jimmy
frostily.

"No."

"Well, don’t talk like a fool."

Pamela said nothing, and he wondered
why. Five minutes later he caught her
smiling a smile of secret delight, and dis-
covered the reason.

But towards lunch-time there was a slack
period, and during that she risked losing
the advantage she had gained.

"What did Mr. Teal mean by talking
about Mr. Vanney making childish attempts
to kill him?” she asked, and Jimmy put
down his pen and leaned back comfortably.

"Owing to the recent boom in detective
fiction," he explained elaborately, "the
public have come to regard it as essential
that their detectives should lead dangerous
lives, in imminent peril of crafty assas-
ination. To meet the popular demand, the
proprietors of the leading newspapers have
been compelled to organise private squads
of thugs, who at intervals attempt the life
of a well-known detective, and thereby
provide headlines for the front page. The
detectives, of course, being public servants,
take this all in good part, but they do
insist on a certain standard of efficiency
about the murders, and when the attempt is
below par they feel annoyed. Naturally,
any self-respecting detective would object
to being killed in any of the crude,
old-fashioned ways."

"Very amusing," said Pamela tartly, "but
I am not a child, Mr. Traill."

"You deprive yourself of an excuse," said
Jimmy. "Inquisitiveness is pardoned in
children."

Pamela flushed.

"I suppose then, you plead infancy as an
excuse for yourself?"

"I am no ordinary man," said Jimmy.
She raised her eyebrows.

"Does it occur to you that I may be no
ordinary girl?"
"It had occurred to me," said Jimmy coolly. "Extraordinary is the word."

He resumed his writing, and she regarded him coldly for some moments. Then—

"I don't know what you are, Mr. Traill," she returned, "but I do know you're the only one of it. If you lose your job here you ought to be able to get a job from any circle of muggers."

"It has occurred to me," said Jimmy, without looking up. "I've often wanted to travel around with a freak show. Will you go into partnership with me and be the exhibit?"

Pamela Marlowe went back to her table, slammed back the typewriter carriage, rattled a sheet of paper, and began to pound away with unnecessary violence.

Mr. Traill finished the page he was working on, with a flourish, read it through, and placed it at the end of a thick wad of papers, which he drew from a drawer. He replaced the bundle, locked the drawer, put his feet on the desk, as was his usual habit when he had nothing to do, lighted a cigarette, and smoked meditatively.

"Miss Marlowe," he said presently, "are you very annoyed?"

"No," said Pamela. "I never expected anything better from you."

Jimmy took his feet off the table suddenly and smiled pleasantly that he had a most engaging smile. He left his chair and came and stood beside her.

"Pam," he said, holding out his hand, "let's call it a day."

"Very well, Mr. Traill," said Pamela, and went on with her work.

Jimmy looked at the hand she had studiously ignored, sighed, and returned to his desk.

After that he did no more writing, and spent his idle moments with his feet on the table, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and staring at a corner with a frown indicative of furious cerebration.

He had lunch that day with two friends, and the conversation was not particularly inspiring. It was not until the end of the meal that things up.

Then he pushed away his plate, lighted a cigarette, and blew out a long stream of smoke.

"Boys," he said, "we have fortified ourselves with an excellent lunch. Our friend Connell has demonstrated a hidden talent for chaffery which has been a most delightful surprise; and the brandy is on the sideboard, in case anyone wants brandy and hangs up another notch. Help yourselves, if you think you need it, because I've got a shock for you."

He paused, inhaling comfortably.

Connell accepted the suggestion, but the other man did not move.

"The first point," said Jimmy, settling himself, "is that now is the time for all good men and true to realise that this party is liable to break up without notice. I know it was a hilarious thing, but I never saw that it was going to turn out as big as this. Frankly, I think we've bitten off a lot more than we can chew, and this is where the wise bird starts thinking about his getaway."

The other two said nothing. Clearly, Jimmy had only voiced their own thoughts.

"The second point," Jimmy went on, "is that, after all the trouble we've taken, we should go down to history as a set of prizefighters if we beat it now. The boodle should all be in within a week now, and if we can only keep our nerve and hang on, we've got a sporting chance of scooping the kitty. The pool isn't as large as it might have been, but that's not our fault. We're being rushed on the last lap, and we've got to make the best of it."

He blew two smoke rings and watched them float upwards. Maynoy haven't realised how short our time's getting," he said. "Teal's on to us—that's a cert. He caught us all nicely on the hop the other day over that Melbourne inquest. I had to let it go through because if I'd tried to shut him off it'd only have made him hotter and it wouldn't have made any difference in the long run. It was only a matter of turning a suspicion into a certainty. Tommy knows now that Vicky's a factor as far as his Australian career is concerned, anyway, but that's not a crime in itself. But there are one or two other things."

Jimmy Traill stood up. He had taken over the chairmanship of the meeting quite naturally.

"There's been some funny stuff about Connell and Long Harry, and it's new on me. Harry was shopped for bustling a house in Bayswater. Anyway, Harry said he was shopped, and he said it in a way that makes me want to believe him. He's just out of Pembroke, and he thinks Connell shopped him, and he's looking for Connell. And Teal told me the other day that Connell was wanted for a job in Battersea. Now, that doesn't have a thing to do with that job. Therefore Connell's been framed, too. Now, what's the point of all this framing business?"

He looked straight at Connell, and Connell groveled.

"Harry must have shopped me," he said. "Get that idea right out of your head, Connell," advised Jimmy. "Teal knew Harry thought you shopped him in Bayswater, and the first thing he'd think of would be that Harry might have tried to return the compliment and shop you. Teal must have had something to make him quite certain that Harry didn't do the Battersea job, or else he'd have had Harry inside in a brace of shakes."

Jimmy canted up his cigarette between his lips, and set his hands deep in his trouser pockets.

"Even that," he remarked, "is no particular affair of mine. I just put it up to you to take your spare time. But the last two points are personal. First of all, this business of trying to bump off Teal has got to stop. Don't know how it was arranged, but Teal said it had been tried, and Teal doesn't bluff that way. I may be all sorts of crook, but I don't fancy swinging at dawn. Get that. If Teal makes any more complaints of that sort, James Traill goes out of this partnership at once."

The other two said nothing, but Jimmy had not been expecting a reply.

"Finally," he said, "any monkeying about with Miss Marlowe will also stop. I've let you off once, James Arthur Vannay because I didn't know if I made it quite plain, then, that the next time it happens you will not be let off. That's all."

The bearded man came to his feet slowly.

"Are you running this show by yourself?" he asked.

"At the moment—and in this matter—yes," said Jimmy.

He found Miss Marlowe struggling desperately in Connell's arms.

He gripped his pistol and pointed it at Connell's head. He turned and addressed the bearded man.

"And what have you got to say?" he demanded.

"I agree with Jimmy. It's too dangerous."

The bearded man's fist came down on the table with a crash.

"And I say," he blustered, "that if either of you interfere with my private dealings with that girl, I'll cut the show."

The third man got to his feet also.

"And if you quit the show," he said quietly, "I might have a little tale to tell Inspector Teal about the mysterious Mr. Vannay."

The bearded man looked round, savage-eyed.

"If it comes to telling tales," he said, "I guess I could tell as many as anyone. You wouldn't dare risk it."

Jimmy flicked his cigarette into the fireplace.

"Nor would you dare risk it, my man," he said coldly. "'Think it over, and while you're thinking just remember that it isn't only Inspector Teal you've got to be afraid of. I might get you first."

Jimmy's tone was perfectly quiet, but he never took his gaze off the other's face, and the bearded man saw murder in Jimmy Traill's eyes.

A CUNNING MOVE.

M r. Teal had discovered long ago that he was the plaything of a peculiar destiny. Whenever he was engaged on a big case, when once the preliminary skulking and forering about was
done, things had a habit with him of moving with well-oiled precision and alarming swiftness. Mr. Teal, in his leisure moments, attributed to this fact his ponderous and somnolent disposition—for, he pointed out, nobody less stolidly constituted could have stood the strain.

It was so with the Vanney case.

There came a day when Mr. Teal felt that he had disposed of every detail of the preliminary investigation, and there was nothing left for him to do but sit down and wait for the other side to make a move, which would provide him with a way out of this temporary impasse.

He said as much to the Chief Commissioner, Sir Brodie Smeethurst, and the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. William Keneally, at a private conference, which lasted until the small hours of the morning; and they agreed with him, for the Criminal Investigation Department is jealous of its reputation. Evidence upon which a layman would act without hesitation, is sifted and contemplated with a suspicious and cautious eye, for Scotland Yard prefers to bide its time and take no action until the possibility of failure has been brought down to an irreducible minimum. The net is spread, and it is spread so effectively that only a genius could find a way out of it. There have been geniuses in the history of crime, but they are rare, and the police routine is not designed to cope with them.

"I think I've got Vanney's where I want them," said Teal. "If I have, they are safe, anyway. I'd rather not risk making a fool of myself and the Department by acting before I've got all the threads in my hands, and I can afford to lay a thousand to one on getting my conviction."

"What's their graft at the moment?" asked Kennedy, and Inspector Teal produced
The THRILLER

several typewritten sheets of paper which he handed over for perusal:

"That's a confidential report from Stanforth and Watson," he said. "Stanforth and Watson are handling a lot of Vanney's business. They'd had their doubts about it for some time, and when I started making inquiries they wanted to chuck it up altogether. I asked them to carry on to help us, and promised them we'd see that every-thing was all right for them when it came to the show-down. Eventually they agreed. You will find all the particulars here—It's the old bucket-shop game, but done more brilliantly than it's been done for years. Steenning was the last expert we had, and this is in the old tradition.

The Chief Commissioner looked up from the report.

"It's very reminiscent of Steenning," he agreed.

"Teal nodded.

"It's Steenning to the life," he said.

"He died right on his cue, that man," put in Kennedy.

"He did," said Teal grimly. "It suited some people I could mention, down to the ground. I've got a feeling that if Steenning came to life again it'd mean a lot of trouble for the firm of Vanney.

He left the Commissioner's house at Regent's Park as the clocks were striking three, and drove away in his miniature car towards his own modest lodgings near Victoria.

The grotesqueness of association of his mammoth bulk with that microscopic automobile had never struck him, but a more practical argument against it was forced upon his notice ten minutes later.

Peculiarly, at that hour, there was almost deserted, and Inspector Teal, in defiance of speed limits, betrayed his satisfaction with the way the Vanney case was going, by allowing the lightness of his heart to manifest itself in the heveness of his foot on the accelerator.

He was doing nearly thirty-five miles an hour as he came level with the Ritz, but even so a big limousine spurred up level and passed him effortlessly.

Inspector Teal had been guilty of allowing his thoughts to wander, and he was brought rudely back to earth by a sudden vision of the big car sheering in to the kerb directly across his front wings.

Faced with the alternative of crushing into the side of the car in front, Teal wrenching the steering round to the left, forgetting that he had no more than two feet of road on that side in which to maneuver.

He realized his mistake as he crossed the road, his head just clearing the front of the hotel over the pavement to the edge of the road, leaping towards him. He tried to swing the
car round again, but it was too late; and

in an instant the near front wheel touched the kerb and the steering wheel was wrenching out of his hands, and the car piled itself up against the stone with a crash.

Sharply, Teal picked himself up out of the road, wherever the force of the collision had hurled him, and the crushing miracle he was unhurt, though the car was a wreck.

The car which had caused the accident was vanishing in the direction of Hyde Park Corner, but the tail light was out and it was gone.

He saw his car removed, with difficulty, to a nearby garage, and went home in a taxi. It was not the first time that an attempt had been made on his life, and he was inclined to take these things philosophically. But on this occasion he was annoyed, for the accident, and the consequent necessary arrangements for the disposal of the ruins, had deprived him of two hours' sleep.

The next morning, however, found him in a good humour, for his escape of the night before seemed to him, by all precedent, to mean that the case was entering on its last hectic stages; and he was almost cordial to the long-suffering Sergeant Barrow. The telephone of the hotel Vanney's are tapped out now," said Teal. "I've made a list of them in chronological order, and the list spells something to me.

He took a small notebook from his waistcoat pocket, marked a place with his thumb, and handed it over.

"Take a look at that," Sergeant Barrow read the neatly tabulated entry:

1927 Trall wanted at Nice.
1928 February. Trall engaged by Steenning.
1928 July. Connell and Mulligan dis- cover a back-length mystery story on the market.
1929 August. Steenning killed.
1929 April. Trall commissioned house for Vanney.
1929 June. Vanney arrived from Melbourne, took possession of hotel, and named the firm of Vanney.

"You seem to connect Vanney up with Steenning," remarked Barrow, "when he had that incident, and Inspector Teal closed his eyes, and smiled beatifically.

"I didn't do that," he replied. "Steen- ning did it himself.

"I see your next development came some hours later,

Teal had returned to his office after dinner, and he was still working at ten o'clock, when a messenger entered.

"There's a question through from 'C' Division," said the man. "Connell's been seen in Soho to-night, and they want to know whether they're to pull him in or let him alone.

"Tail him till I arrive," said Teal briskly. "I've got an idea.

He spent twenty minutes in another room, and when he emerged the change in his appearance was amazing. The modern detective does not rely on such crude disguises as false beards. Instead he pins his faith on the change of his shoes. In a certain room at New Scotland Yard is kept a file of photographs of representative men of different trades, and the minutest details of their habits and characteristics are chronicled.

Teal, suiting his disguise to the framework on which he had to build, had adopted the character of a shady racecourse hanger-on. He changed his sober blue serge suit for a loud check, hung a massive watch chain across his middle, selected spats, and

GOOD NEWS! THE EDITOR GREETS YOU

Good News! Good news! Another
new novel-length story by EDGAR WALLACE is in with us now! I am delighted to be able to make this announcement. Mr. Wallace's work is eagerly sought after by the world's keenest publishers, and even he—for prolific writer that he is—has his limit. For one cause and another he has to refuse any commissions.

So it is good news for every reader of THE THRILLER that the Mystery of Mastery is to be with us once more. As a matter of fact, Edgar Wallace has a soft spot for our new journal. He feels it fits a gap in the ranks of periodical publications, and puts him in contact with a new and wider public.

WALLACE'S high circulation figure reached by our early issues proves that it finds favour with every section of the community.

Next month, the Editor will give you more details—possibly the actual date—of the reappearance of Mr. Wallace. I will ask J. G. Reeder to investigate the matter and ascertain all the facts.

Meanwhile, how about this "Story of a Dead Man"? Isn't it splendid? I have just been lunching with Leslie Charteris, and telling him that when this issue has been perused by my readers he will have secured a legion of friends and admirers.

I do not ask you if I am right. I know it! Nevertheless, I shall be glad to have your exact opinions if you care to write to me.

About next week. In our fifth issue I am going to introduce yet another author. His name may be unknown to most of you, but not to me. He has for years past written mystery stories of consistently high standard, but until now has hidden his identity under a nom-de-plume. In "The Man Who Quit," you will be apprised of this gigantic circulation figure reached by our early issues proves that it finds favour with every section of the community.

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Let us hear from you. Be wise. Write now.

Yours sincerely,

The Editor

Letters to the
Editor should be
addressed to
"The Thriller"
Office, The
Fleetway House,
Ewingston Street,
put them on over a pair of pointed, yellowish shoes. On each hand he put a ring, and fixed a diamond pin in the wrong part of a flashy tie. To his face he did little—a skilful darkening of the eyebrows, a broadening of the nose. There by the insertion in the mouth of rubber pads designed for that purpose, and the attachment of a bristly moustache, was sufficient.

Regrettably he discarded his chewing gum, and put four cigs in a pocket of his waistcoat. He took a bowler hat of the wrong kind, a pair of lemon-coloured gloves and a silver-knobbed ebony walking-stick, and inspected the ensemble in a full-length mirror. Certainly, he was transformed.

At Marlborough Street Police Station he was told that the last report from the men who were keeping track of Connell had placed him in a public-house in Shaftesbury Avenue. Arriving there, Teal was met by a detective, who told him that their man had moved on to a night club.

The other detective was lounging against the side of a taxicab outside, talking to the driver. The sign he gave Teal would have been unnoticed by a casual observer, but it was sufficient. Teal went in. He had no difficulty in this, for in his pocket was a collection of membership cards, which would have gained him admittance to any night club in London.

He saw his man as soon as he entered the room and established himself in a corner a few tables away.

Sipping the drink which was brought him, he watched Connell covertly.

Connell was there without any attempt at disguise. Gathered together at his table were three or four men whose appearances were decidedly against them. Two of them Teal recognized as the usual levanging of "dancing partners."

The party was a hilarious one, and Connell was leading every outburst of merriment. Every drink was on him—one round had hardly arrived before he was shouting for another—and he paid for them from a huge roll of Bank of England notes.

"Drink up!" he shouted at intervals. "I'm on a good thing, and this is my night out."

Teal watched for an hour, and when the party quietened down into a sodden stupor he judged that it was his turn to take a hand.

Taking a pencil and an envelope from his pocket, he scribbled a note: "If you want to make some more easy money, don't say anything to anybody, but follow me out of here."

"Slip that to the gentleman over there," said Teal to a passing waiter, and pointed out Connell.

Connell read the note, and Teal caught his eye. Then the detective rose and walked towards the exit.

Connell caught him up in the street.

"What's this?" he demanded thickly, brandishing the envelope.

"I want you to do a job for me," he said.

"There's a place just up the road where we can talk without being disturbed. It's worth a hundred to you. Are you on?"

Connell swayed and steadied himself.

"Let's hear," he said, and Teal took his arm and walked him up the road.

In half an hour Connell was back at the club calling for more drinks, but Teal did not return. He went back to Scotland Yard, changed into his ordinary clothes and went home to bed.

"I want every man you've got, armed and at the double," rapped Teal.

He retaliated the encounter to Sergeant Barrow the next morning.

"I asked him if he could drive a car, and he said he could. Then I asked him if he could do tricks with one, and he asked me what I meant. I told him I'd get a down on a man and I wanted him messed up in an accidental sort of way. This man's given his chauffeur notice," I said, "and I can get you the job, references and all, in any name you like. If you're a fool, you'll land yourself for dangerous driving; but if you're clever, maybe, you can get away with it and draw the hundred I'm offering." He was in a boastful mood, and he said he could make a car cut out of his hands turn somersaults, just when he wanted to. I arranged to meet him at the same place in two days' time, with the money, and that was that.

"And?" prompted Sergeant Barrow.

"And," said Mr. Teal, with languid satisfaction, "I think that tells me all I want to know about the past history of Mulligan; and how cunningly managed to die so successfully."

Altogether it was a successful twenty-four hours for Mr. Teal, for a few minutes late the man he had to tail Connell home arrived with his report, and another mystery was well on its way to solution.

Mr. Teal now had a very good idea why Jimmy had stopped going out to lunch, and this further progress increased his conviction that things would shortly commence to hum.
The THRILLER

"I said a good lawyer," replied Jimmy. "I've got to find a man who can tell me how to be legally dishonest, if I have to knock on every solicitor's door in London!"

He chose the simplest expedient of opening the telephone directory at random, and running the columns for the name of a solicitor. He found one very quickly, and telephoned. "Mr. Vanney? Sing me a song about this and that," said Jimmy cheerfully, and the solicitor was visibly shocked.

"Explain your business in terms that I can understand," the solicitor stiffly, and I might be able to help you."

Jimmy sobered down and put his hypothesis case briefly and clearly.

"All the laws in the book. Jimmy listened carefully, made some notes, asked one or two questions, and was satisfied. He paid the fee in cash.

"Thanks very much for your help," said Jimmy, rushing. "Not at all," said the legal authority. "But—a slight frown crossed his forehead, as he looked at Jimmy—"if you will forgive me saying so, your question is rather extraordinary. You appear to be a most unusual young man, and I should be sorry to see you in trouble. I wonder if you will allow me to give you a word of advice."

"Carry on," said Mr. Thomas, whom Jimmy had found before to be a conveniently incompotent person.

You appear to wish to sail as near the wind as possible," said the solicitor. "In the question you have asked me, you have given me some indication of your motive for doing so. It is one that I can understand, and also that, at the same time I feel that I ought to warn you that, even with the best of moral justification, the game is rarely worth the candle. It is so easy to make mistakes, and if you make a mistake, you will be very much worse off than you can possibly be at present."

Jimmy nodded.

"Thanks again," he said frankly. "I know that I take a risk, and I think it worth taking. I came to consult you in order to cut down the chances of my making such a disastrous mistake as you have hinted at. If you've got any more practical advice on this matter, I should be glad to take another quarter of an hour of your time."

"I've told you everything there is to be told," said the solicitor. "The fate of your enterprise now rests entirely with yourself."

Jimmy went back to the office feeling more light-hearted than he had felt for days. He entered the room, whistling, spread his hat adroitly to its peg, plumped down in his chair, and rang the bell marked "Secretary."

"Take this letter," he said. "This is to Rovos & Batterby, 240, Threadneedle Street. Dear Sirs,—With reference to your advertisement of a thousand-ton ocean-going motor-cruiser, in the current issue of Yachting and minorities, as the price mentioned. Paragraph, I understand that the said hooker is at present lying in Southampton Water. Stop. You will kindly rake up a crowd, shoo away all board, and then burn the old tub along to Gravesend. Stop. This must be done immediately, as I am likely to be leaving with a party on short notice. Stop."

Jimmy dropped down blank with his first guess. The letter was also empty, but instead of the wooden back, which one might have expected to see, there was clearly a large gap through which a man could easily pass. On the other side of this gap was a curtain, which had been drawn across the hole in the wall could be seen a room.

Jimmy stood still for a long time. Then he took out his cigarette-case and, very slowly and calmly, selected and lighted a cigarette. With this in his mouth he strode forward, and through the doors of the right-hand cupboard, ducked through the aperture in the wall, and came out into the room beyond. It was furnished as one could expect, a writing-desk and a writing-desk in another. The safe had been smashed by an expert, and its heavy door stood wide open—a battered and drunken-looking apology for a door. Jimmy was looking about the floor, when he noticed something behind the rest of the flat, and found that part of it which might constitute a hiding-place had been overlooked.

JimmyTrailil, said Jimmy, and the letter failed to exasperate his tidy instincts. Moving very slowly and maintaining his one grip upon the door, he examined the rest of the flat, and found that part of it which might constitute a hiding-place had been overlooked.

Jimmy Trailil, said Jimmy, and the letter failed to exasperate his tidy instincts. Moving very slowly and maintaining his one grip upon the door, he examined the rest of the flat, and found that part of it which might constitute a hiding-place had been overlooked.

"Perfectly," said Jimmy. "But the firm you work for isn't. Later on in the day I shall be giving myself notice, so you needn't think you are the only victim. You will receive notice in the usual course of events; however much later notice you thought you were entitled to, and a further three months' salary instead of a reference. The situation is rather a severe one, but it is dictated by my wishes for your welfare. You could have a reference if you wanted one, but it would be quite useless. The money I spoke of has already been paid into the company, and you will receive confirmation of that from them as soon as the cheque has been passed through."

"But surely," said Pamela blankly, "six months' salary is very necessary in lieu of notice and a reference?"

"The firm of Vanney," answered the old Jimmy, "although eccentric to the point of being crooked, has a reputation for paying its bills. I have just started to give it that reputation to the first beneficiary."

She hesitated.

"It's very kind of you, Mr. Trailil," she said, looking hard. "But, since the money has already been paid over, you must have known that this was going to happen."

"I did," he replied. "But I wasn't sure exactly what. I discovered this morning that it was going to happen today."

Pamela looked straight at him.
“Mr. Traill,” she said, “since I am leaving Vanney’s, and this looks like being the last eccentricity I shall have to puzzle over, is it any use asking you to give me the real reason for it—and that would be the first serious answer you had made to me since I met you.”

Jimmy stood up. He was quite serious.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “I’ve stopped playing the fool, from this moment. So I’ll just say that it’s impossible to answer your question.”

The last words were spoken almost in a whisper, and he was standing quite still with his head bent slightly forward, as though listening.

“One moment,” he said, and went quickly into Vanney’s office.

“George,” said Jimmy Traill quickly to the porter, “yours not to reason why, yours but to promptly fly. In English, pull out of here right away. You also, my king beaver—this to Vanney.” Go away and sit down, and open your hearts to each other. And wait till I come back—it will be within two hours.”

He returned to his own office, taking no notice of Pamela, jerked his hat down from the rack, and went out.

A taxi took him to his flat in Cheyne Walk. It was there that Teal found him an hour later. There was a half-filled suitcase on the table, and Jimmy, having admitted the detective, returned unconcernedly to the task of trying to close the lid of a trunk that was already crammed to bursting point. A selection of clothes was laid out on the bed, and every chair in the room was similarly loaded.

Teal surveyed the disorder thoughtfully.

“Where are you going, Jimmy?” he inquired.

“Where am I going? Well, it isn’t decided yet. I may be going abroad for a long holiday, or I may be staying quite near London. There’s a good selection of prisons around London, I believe.”

“And what,” said Teal mildly, “do you expect to be going to prison for?”

“Perjury,” said Jimmy cheerfully.

NO QUARTER.

Teal did not seem surprised.

“That’s what I came to see you about,” he remarked.

“It may not be necessary, or, at least, it mayn’t delay your departure for foreign shores for very long.”

Jimmy nodded.

“King’s Excellence.”

“Something like that,” said Teal.

“I’ll remember the suggestion,” said Jimmy, smiling. “You’re not a bad fellow for a busy, Claude Eustace, and if there should be anything doing I’ll let you know. But by the time that chance comes there may be another charge against me, and then I’d have to think very carefully. So would you.”

Teal picked up his hat.

“There are some men who say ‘No,’ ” he observed, “and you wonder whether they mean ‘Yes.’ You don’t say yes or no, but one always knows what you mean. Sorry to have troubled you.”

“The last man who said that to me,” remarked Jimmy, mischievously, “is one of the only two possible starters for the Great Burglary Sweepstakes. Tell me, do the police ever indulge in what you might call judicially sanctioned crime?”

“Not that I know of.”

“I just wondered,” said Jimmy. “Now I know. It must have been Harry.”

Teal put down his hat again. If he had not been so obviously incapable of such contortions one would have said that he pricked up his ears.

“Harry?” he repeated.

“The same,” said Jimmy. “But if you think you’re going to get anything out of me before you’ve got me in the dock, you may have another guess free. Good-morning, Claude—and don’t forget to close the door as you go out.”

Obediently, Teal went to the door.

“By the way,” he said from the threshold, “you were working late at the office last night, Jimmy.”

“I was,” said Jimmy, folding a dinner-jacket. “What about it?”

“I made some inquiries, and I found that the rule in those offices is—that everyone must be out of them by eight o’clock.”

“True,” said Jimmy. “But, since Mr. Vanney owns not only the offices, but the whole block of flats also, and since he made that rule, I think one may say that he and his staff were allowed to break it. Goodbye.”

“See you again soon,” said Teal, and went.

The two hours which the gentlemen known as George and the King Beaver had been told to wait had expired to the minute when Jimmy Traill returned. He knew that—
"Right," said Jimmy. "If you maintain your refusal, I shall be compelled to inflict divers unpleasant forms of physical violence upon your person. But, before I start, I'll tell you what I do to people who you may not make you sign. But if my methods of persuasion fail to convince you, I have one argument up my sleeve. Do what you like with it, I don't care."

"What's that picture and saying nothing. Without my assistance the firm of Vanney will probably be seriously handicapped, but I can't help that. I'll get out, and nothing will be said. But don't you worry, Jimmy. Vanney will be shown up within an hour. Teal's on to you already, but if he's got to make his own way he can't get going in time to stop you. That's the spirit."

"And I hope you're quite enough! But if I help him, there'll be a long, long good waiting for you, Stenning.

Stenning sat down. He seemed to be enjoying the joke.

"Jimmy," he said, "that's one too old for me. I know the game as well as you do, and I tell you it won't work. There are two things to stop you squawking. One is that if you squeal you'll be in the same boat with the rest of them. The other is that even if you squeal, that won't make me sign.

"Granted," said Jimmy. "There are two answers to that. One is that I planned this little meeting, and everything is plotted out on my time-table to the last minute. Within one hour Teal could have all the evidence he needs, and I can be away and out on the high seas. Can you say the same?"

Stenning made no answer.

"The second," said Jimmy, "is that even if putting you away for at least ten years' penal servitude won't make you play Miss Marlowe back that money, it'll be the least I can do for her by way of compensation. I'll do it cheerfully—don't make any mistake about that!"

The other showed his teeth.

"You rat!" he snarled.

"Possibly," said Jimmy coolly. "I've got an idea lately that I'd like to go straight, and I'm going to use force, if necessary, to get what I want."

"I've gone out to buy a bottle of whisky, if you want to know."

"Jimmy's eye fell on the table.

"I see well. We'll come to that in due course. I'm getting it off because I think that when I've finished my interview with you you'll be more disposed to tell me all the things I want to know about Connell."

He flung some papers on the table.

"Take a look at those," he said.

Stenning looked.

"A cheque for twenty thousand pounds, which only needs your signature to make it worth that amount, payable to Miss Pamela Marlowe. That is the sum of twelve thousand pounds which you swindled off her father, plus a sum of interest which I grant you in extortiation, but which you will pay all the same. A receipt for that sum, signed by Miss Marlowe. I know it will pass in a court of law, because I forged the signature myself."

Stenning's mouth twisted.

"And how do you think you're going to make me sign?"

"Moral persuasion," said Jimmy. "Reinforced, if necessary, by physical. Take your pen and follow the dotted line."

Stenning laughed.

"You're mad," he said.

"Absolutely," agreed Jimmy cordially.

"Suit you," said Stenning.

"I refuse."
you don’t come up again quickly I’ll break that rule, too.”

Stenning came to a sitting position.

“I’ll nigh,” he moaned.

Jimmy took him by the collar, yanked him to his feet, and pushed him into a chair.

“Here’s your pen, and here’s the cheque,” he said briskly. “Get on with it, because I’m in a hurry. And mind you don’t drip blood all over it, because the bank might ask questions.”

LAUGHING DEATH.

JIMMY examined the signature, folded the cheque carefully, and put it in his pocket. His hair was toned, and his shirt torn, and he was breathing heavily; but he felt ready to begin again any time, and in spirits he was completely unruffled.

“Now for Connell,” he remarked. “Where is he, Stenning?”

The limp mess at the table buried its pulped face in its hands.

“You may as well know now—he’s with Miss Marlowe.”

“And where’s that?”

“Downstairs. There are vaults under the building that I never told you about. The only way into them is from this flat. I had a private lift put in—I was going to use the cellars to hide him if the police got on to us and there was no time to make a bolt for it. Connell was putting the screw on—he said he must have the girl, and I helped him take her. They’re down there now.”

Jimmy took the automatic from his pocket, and thumbed back the safety catch. His lips were set grimly.

“If anything’s happened to her,” he said, “you’re certainly for a bullet, Stenning. Where is this lift?”

Stenning gestured weakly towards the wall.

“Press the panel next to that picture,” he said.

Jimmy did so. The panel slipped in a fraction of an inch at his touch, and he waited. For a few moments it seemed as if nothing was going to happen. There was no sound, but then a piece of panelling swung open with a click, and in front of him was a small lift. He stepped in, and the panelling closed behind him automatically.

In the wall of the lift were two switches. He tried one without result, but when he clicked over the other the lift began to move downwards.

Presently it stopped. In front of him was a gap in the shaft, barely distinguishable in the darkness. He stepped out, and then he was able to see better.

A tunnel ran to left and right of him. The piling, walls, and ceiling were of stone, and the passage was itself in darkness at either end. But a little way down to his right there was a space in the wall from which a faint light floated. That must have been the light that had since light came from it it seemed as if its source would not have to be a long one. He began to creep towards it, moving as silently as possible over the flags, but he had hardly taken two steps before a low hum from behind made him swing round. He saw the lift by which he had just descended commencing to move upwards, and for an instant he weighed on in his mind the possibility of reaching it and checking its ascent; but the idea was no sooner formulated than it was discarded.

That was Stenning, of course—he should have knocked him out completely or tied him up—but it was too late to think of that now. For a moment again he thought of retracing his steps and waiting for Stenning to arrive, but before he could figure out the pros and cons of that scheme it was driven out of his head by a scream that shrilled and echoed hollowly down the passage. It made him oblivious of his own danger, of the possibility of attack from behind, of every sane and cautious counsel of prudence.

He leapt towards the turning from which the light came. Another shorter tunnel stretched before him, dimly lighted by two flickering gas jets. At the end it appeared to open into a room so brightly lighted that at that point the gas jets must have given place to electricity. He could see a chair and the end of a table—notting else—but it was the only place from which the scream could have come.

Jimmy Traill murdered the intervening distance of ten yards of tunnelling in a blinding red mist of fury, and he was inside that brightly illuminated room in a matter of seconds.

Pamela Marlowe was there, and so was Connell. Connell was holding her in his great arms. Pamela was struggling, but she was a child in Connell’s terrific embrace. Jimmy never took in more than the bare details of the scene. His hand gripped Connell’s collar, and he wrenched the man round with homicidal violence.

“Connell, my man,” said Jimmy, his voice coming shakily through his clenched teeth, “that will be all from you.”

Connell’s fist came up like lightning, but Jimmy was even quicker, and the big man went sprawling against the wall from a mule-kick of a punch that carried every ounce of Jimmy’s weight and strength and concentrated hate behind it.

Connell reeled, and nearly fell. Then he came catapulting back to reply, like a jack-in-the-box. Jimmy side-stepped coolly, and landed an uppercut that started at his knees and traveled skywards with detonating force to impact smashingly on the point of Connell’s jaw, and Connell went down like a log.

Through the locked gates he watched them sagging helplessly to the floor. Yet he was powerless to aid them.
with blood, but Steening, vindictive and triumphant.

"Now will you squeal, Jimmy Traill?" he croaked.

Jimmy made no answer.

The nearest gas jet was directly over Steening's head. Steening reached up one hand, and the flame was extinguished. A faint hissing sound could be heard.

"Do you know what I've done, Jimmy Traill?" said Steening shrilly.

Jimmy's left arm was round the girl. With his right hand he was fumbling behind him.

But Steening was taking no notice. Forcing his tortured body to obedience by the exercise of a tremendous effort of will, he was reeling back down the corridor, lurching from side to side like a drunken man, keeping himself erect half the time by resting against the wall, but dragging himself, somehow, to the other end of the corridor and the second gas jet. He reached it.

"Shall I tell you what I've done, Jimmy Traill?" Steening's voice came booming hollowly down the tunnel, and as he spoke his hand went up and found the tap he sought.

Jimmy knew then that the man was mad.

The last gas jet went out, and the hissing sound became louder. The only light in the corridor now was that which came from the electric bulb in the room in which Jimmy and the girl were imprisoned.

"I have turned on the gas," said Steening.

And he laughed—a harsh, strident, demoniacal laugh. He was still laughing when Jimmy shot him dead.

After the shot the silence that followed was so broken that Jimmy could hear his own breathing. Steening would never speak again, and Connell was out for a long time.

Slowly Jimmy returned Steening's automatic to his hip pocket. It was no use now. One glance at the massive lock on the barred gate, which went from the floor to the top of the tunnel arch, told him that any attempt to shoot away the fastening would be wasted. Besides, with the gas continuing to escape, even the flash of a pistol would be enough to blow them all up.

He felt quite cool now. He had done everything there was to do, and he had failed. Violence would not help him now; and, anyway, there was no one to fight unless Connell came to. Strength and skill were of no use. He had been caught in a trap, and he knew that it was the end. He had thought that the girl had fainted, but he saw that her eyes were open. Even so, he did not let go of her.

"I am very sorry," said Jimmy, and even as he uttered the words he realised how ridiculously inadequate they were. She nodded.

"I understand," she said.

"They took you when I was away, of course," he said. "It doesn't seem to have been much use—my coming in the nick of time. But I was thinking of something else."

He told her of the cheque he had made Steening sign, and took it out of his pocket to show her. Even then he could not help smiling.

"It may be of some use to your heirs and legatees—if you've made a will," he said.

She looked up at him, steady-eyed; and it was not only that she was holding her, but she was holding on to him. At that moment it seemed the most natural thing to do.

"Is there no chance?" she asked.

"None," said Jimmy bitterly. "Listen. I'd planned out everything I was going to do to-day; but this was the one possibility that I never foresaw. I wrote a complete account of everything I knew about Vanney—or Steening, as he really was—and what I proposed to do to-day, and left it at a District Messenger office, addressed to Teal.

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ON SALE SATURDAY NEXT!
They were to send it straight round to him when I instructed them to do so by telegram. The motor-boat is at Gravesend, as I ordered it, and I should have wired from there. That way, I could have given all the information to Teal exactly when I chose to without risking a delay in the post, and, at the same time, he wouldn’t have received it before I was beyond his reach. But till they receive my wire, the letter will not be delivered; and so I’m afraid—there is no chance. The gas will spread; it’ll have to fill all the cellars. I don’t know how big they are, but it will cover up all the same.

There was a long silence, and then Jimmy said:

"Will you believe me now, when death is only a few minutes away, if I tell you that I’d meant to make a fresh start because—I love you?"

"I know you do," she answered. "It has taken me all this time to realise that I love you."

"Kiss me," said Jimmy.

She put up her lips, and he kissed her, and held her close.

Presently she seemed to grow heavier in his arms. He was stronger himself, and his mind was still clear, but his eyes felt strangely heavy, and his chest was starting to ache with the labour of trying to extract some intelligible cry from the ragged air. There was a rushing as of many waters in his ears, and it seemed as if a thousand trip-hammers were pounding on his brain.

He wondered if she was already gone, but then she spoke. It was no more than a whisper, but her voice seemed to come from a tremendous distance.

"Good-bye, Jimmy," she said.

"Good-bye," he said, and kissed her again.

She was quite still now.

"Good-bye, Pamela," he said, and he could not tell whether she heard him. "We never knew each other in all our lives, but at least we take the last adventure together."

He was starting to feel very weak, and the room was swaying dizzyly before his eyes. He was against the wall, but he still held her with the last of his strength. It seemed to be getting dark, and he knew that he could not last much longer, but he was not afraid.

"THERE'S A MAN TO SEE YOU, SIR," said Sergeant Barrow, entering the room.

Teal looked at the card, and read the note that accompanied it.

"Send him up," he said.

He started a fresh piece of chewing-gum, and waited as though asleep. He remained in that attitude when the visitor was shown in, for his party manners were not his strong point.

Go right ahead," said Teal, without opening his eyes.

The man sat down.

"The circumstances are rather peculiar," he explained. "At about eleven o'clock this morning a rather bulky letter was deposited at one of our branches, addressed to you, with instructions that it was not to be delivered until we received a telegram authorising us to do so. It seemed a rather extraordinary proceeding to me at the time, especially as the address on the envelope told me that it was likely to be a message with some bearing on your professional activities. So, after thinking it over, and taking the opinion of our head office by telephone, I decided that it was my duty to come round and see you at once."

"Have you the letter with you?" asked Teal.

"Naturally I brought it along," Teal stretched out his hand.

"Let's have a look at it," he suggested.

He had opened his eyes to read the address, and then he was suddenly galvanised into life. He sat up with a violence that made his chair, solid as it was, creak protestingly.

"Jimmy Traill!" he muttered. "I'd know that writing in a million."

"I hope I did right," ventured the stranger.

"You did one of the best things you're ever likely to do in your life," said Teal, and pressed a bell on his desk.

"BARROW," said Teal, as his subordinate entered, "take this gentleman away, fill him up with whatever he likes to drink, and thank him as profusely as you know how. I'm going to be busy."

Left alone again, he sat down and ripped open the envelope. He read, and he read quickly, and in five minutes he was leaping down the stone stairs in the direction of that wing of Scotland Yard which constitutes Cannon Row Police Station.

"Every man you've got, armed and at the double!" rapped Teal.

And the sergeant in charge was so astonished at this display of energy and hustle on the part of his normally drowsy superior officer that the order was obeyed in what must have come close to record time.

At about half-past twelve, the keen observer might have noticed a number of burly men in plain clothes unostentatiously taking up positions round the block in which Vauney's stood. Teal circumnavigated the block himself, and made certain that every possible exit was watched. Then he went in alone.

A clerk met him in the waiting-room, but Teal had pushed past him before his business could be questioned. He went through the clerks' room, into Jimmy Traill's office, took in the emptiness of it at a glance, and went straight across to the door marked 'Private.' His hand was on the gun in his pocket as he walked in.

"Ah!" said Teal.

One cupboard was still open as Jimmy had left it, and Teal could see through into the disorder of the room beyond. He went forward cautiously, and squeezed through the hole in the wall.

There was a man in the room, and Teal had him in an iron grip before the other could be quite sure what was happening.

"I'll take you for a start, Harry," said Teal. "Now tell me what you've done with the rest of the gang, and tell me quick!"

Long Harry straightened up.

"I've been in this place all day," he said.

"I bust in. I don't mind telling you that now. I was looking for Connell, or something that would tell me where he was, but I couldn't find him. So I waited. I hid in the bath-room. Traill came in early in the morning, saw the mess, and looked round, but he never saw me. Then Connell arrived, but he wasn't alone, and I didn't dare start anything with witnesses. I heard them talking. Then, presently, after Traill had been in and spoken to them, Connell and the other man went out into the office and grabbed a girl who works in there. They had a blanket over her head, so I couldn't see who it was, but I was watching round the corner of the door, and I saw Connell take her down."

"Down where?" snapped Teal.

"I'll tell you in a moment. Connell took her down, but the other man stayed here, and I didn't dare follow. Then Jimmy came in, and there was a fight. He knocked the other man out, and made him tell where Connell had taken the girl, and he went after her. Presently the other man folowed. I waited, hoping Connell would come back alone. Then I heard something like a shot."

"Can't you get to the point?" snarled Teal. "Where did they go?"

"There," said Harry, and pointed.

Teal stared.

"I can't see anything," he said.

"I'll show you," said Harry.

He went across and pressed a panel, as Jimmy had done. Presently a larger piece of the panelling opened, and the lift was revealed.

Teal put his head inside, and stepped back quickly.

"Gas," he muttered. "For the love of mud, don't strike a match!"

He came back into the room, and stoof
over Long Harry, who, taking the situation philosophically, had sat down comfortably in a chair to await removal to his home from hospital.

"Harry," said Teal, "would you like to improve your chances of getting off with a light sentence?"

"Tell me how, Mr. Teal?" replied Harry with alacrity.

"Go down out of here any way you like—there are buses at every door. Send them up after me, and tell them I've gone down in that lift. There's been something funny going on in here, and you might as well look after yourself if you only heard one shot it means someone's likely to be in trouble. Now jump!"

Long Harry jumped.

Teal went into the bath-room, soaked his handkerchief under the tap, and tied it over his nose and mouth. Then he went back and entered the lift.

The door closed automatically behind him, and he was fortunate enough to find the right switch at his first attempt. The lift started to go down. With every yard of the descent the smell of gas, even through his wet handkerchief, grew worse, and Teal knew that he would not be able to live for long in that atmosphere. But he was a man without fear.

Presently the lift stopped, and he stepped out. He saw a faint light coming from the branches that had turned towards it. At the end was a lighted room, and in one corner he could see Jimmy Trall sitting against the wall with Pamela-Marlowe in his arms. With the fumes already starting to make their presence felt, Teal hurried forward.

He tried the iron gate, but it was immovable.

"Jimmy!" he roared.

Jimmy's eyes half opened hazedly, but Teal knew that he could see nothing.

"Jimmy!" he bellowed again. "Where's the key?"

Jimmy's chest heaved, and Teal had to strain his ears to catch the reply. It came, with a fearful effort.

"Stenning's pocket—!"

Teal went stumbling back down the corridor towards the figure that he had nearly tripped over on his first journey. He bent down, and fumbled with the man's pockets. The gas lay more heavily near the ground, and Teal wondered if he could hold out. But he found the bunch of keys, straightened up, and went staggering back down the tunnel. Somehow he found the lock. The gate opened. He was in time to catch the last fall.

By this time his heart was pounding furiously, and his head seemed to weigh a ton. Few men could have remained conscious and active for so long, but Inspector Teal was a giant in strength, and, with a grim determination that he was able to move at all, he never knew how he accomplished the journey with his double load; but after what seemed an eternity of ineffectual straggling he found the lift in front of him.

It would only hold two at a time. He dragged the girl in, and pressed the switch. The lift crept upwards.

At the end of a thousand years the bare wall of the lift turned into panelling, and the paneling sprang open in front of him; and Teal fell out of the lift into the arms of two of his men.

"Get her to a doctor," he gasped, and somehow reached the bottom of the stair. "He's done for sick and weak and giddy, but he soaked his handkerchief again, replaced it, and went back to the lift. They tried to stop him, and then he was savage.

"Jimmy Trall's down there," he said, "and I owe him something. Let me go!"

This time the journey was not so difficult, for his short relief in the purer air of the room above had revived him a little, but there was a limit even to his endurance. He remembered dragging Jimmy into the lift: he remembered pressing the button that started them on their upward journey; and then he saw the glimmering of the ascent. Then everything went black.

When he opened his eyes again he was in bed. Looking to right and left he saw a little room, and the absence of gas.

The room was almost in darkness, but in the dim twilight he saw nurses moving about, and a man in a white jacket was bending over the next cot. At the side of his own bed a nurse was reading, but she looked up as soon as he moved.

"I gather that I am not going to die," drawled Teal. But this time he spoke drowsily, because he really felt drowsy.

"You'll be back at work in a couple of days," she said cheerfully.

Teal sighed comfortably, and rolled over. As he did so, the doctor moved away from the next bed, and Teal saw who the patient was.

"How are you, Jimmy?" said Teal.

"I'm going to be all right," said Jimmy weakly.

"Remind me to arrest you when you're better," said Teal, and went to sleep.

Four days later, Mr. Teal, a trifle pale, but otherwise his old self, rang the bell of 113, Cheyne Walk, and Jimmy answered the door himself.

"Why, it's old Claude Estance!" said Jimmy. "Come right in!"

Teal came in.

"Say when," murmured Jimmy.

"Cheerio!" said Jimmy.

"Cheerio!" said Teal.

"By the way," said Jimmy, "before you arrest me. I believe you saved my life, and all that sort of thing. God bless you, and so forth!"

For the first time in his life Mr. Teal looked embarrassed, but he shook the hand which Jimmy offered.

"I wish I knew how," said Teal presently, "why haven't you tried to jump for it on that boat-you're got lying at Gravesend?"

"I feel like it," said Jimmy.

"For one thing, Miss MARLOWE'S been taking longer to get over the gassing, and I kind of wanted to be around; but she's going ahead fine now, and we're going to be all right. It's over, but I don't want her to spend her married life being chased all round the world with me. How long do you think I'll get?"

Teal sat down and pursued a fresh packet of his favourite sweetmeat.

"This is our one consolation for having lost America," he remarked, and then he came back to the point. "How long will you get, Jimmy? Well, I should say six months in the second division, at the outside—no more than you've had for making a fool of yourself in a car. You needn't worry, we shan't put up much of a case against you. Of course, you shot Stenning, but we'll go down as self-defence."

"How's Connell?" asked Jimmy.

"Enjoying a tropical climate, I should say," replied Teal dispassionately. "They got him up later, when the firemen had arrived. He wasn't bad, but he was one of the dearest men I've ever seen."

Jimmy lighted a cigarette.

"He was Vanney, of course," he said. "And at the same time, I don't. It would have been too risky to let Stenning interview people that he had probably done business with before, although he had grown a moustache and made one or two alterations to his dress up in livery, as George—a mere porter—nobody ever noticed him. There was a door opening right out of the private office to the passage, only a couple of feet away. When I went through to speak to Vanney, I went further through, and spoke to George. When Vanney had to interview people I got my instructions from Stenning, and conducted them with a smile. Connell simply said 'Yes' and 'No' as I tipped him the wink."

Teal nodded.

"I guessed all that," he said.

"I don't suppose you've had spotted us so soon if we had been able to keep Connell in order. He looked great in a false beard, but he started getting uppish. He had to have money, and wanted more and more money. We tried to keep him indoors in case he got tight and spilled the beans, but he got away the other night." "I found him," said Teal. "He told me a lot that I wanted to know. It was clever the way you and Stenning arranged for him to drive you and the body of Red MULLIGAN, recently received at the hospital. I rushed up the car, and have both you and Connell to swear that it was Stenning who had been killed. In fact it was all very clever, but it wasn't good enough. You've got to be a genius to beat the law these days, and if you are a genius you can make money more honourable, and less dangerously."

Jimmy smiled.

"Carry right on with the moral lecture," he said. "I've already decided that you're right, so I won't argue."

Teal got ponderously to his feet.

"I'm sorry to have to do this, but I'm afraid you'll have to come along with me and be arrested. You can go into court and be committed for trial this afternoon, or we can wait and keep you long. I'll see that you get bail."

Jimmy Trall rose also, picked up his hat, and brushed it carefully. He adjusted it carefully at a rakish angle on his head, and turned to Teal with a smile.

"You shall be the guest of honour at my wedding," he said. "Lead on, Claude Estance!"

The End.
The Promontory and the lighthouse at low tide—

At Dead Man’s Harbour, situated on the north coast of Ireland, is an isolated village with a population of not more than two hundred persons. At high tide the village is on a promontory sixty feet high, which rises sheer, twenty feet above the water. But when the great forty-foot tide rushes out, it leaves the village on a promontory sixty feet high, which is a steep descent from the village to the sea below. One can cross to the island and ascend by similar means the almost perpendicular sides of the rock, where a lighthouse stands on the rocky peak.

The island in Dead Man’s Harbour is lonely enough when surrounded by the whirring waters of the bay, but when the cruel rocks rise steeply from the wet sands below, it is grim indeed.

On the night of the strange disappearance of Captain Ebenzer Williams, the local constable, the lighthouse keeper, had gone to his home in the village. A heavy fog had settled on the harbor just before eleven o’clock, and the lighthouse had blown out. The foghorn broke the night with a dismal regularity.

The following morning Daniel Cobb, coming soon after low tide, as was his custom, to relieve the captain, climbed down the ladder on the face of the cliff to cross the sands to the lighthouse.

He noticed a broad trail in the hard-packed, damp sand as though a horse had trodden on it. The trail ran from the rear of the lighthouse back to the sea, straight to the cliffs of the lighthouse.

Cobb entered the lighthouse at 6.1 a.m. He called to the captain and started upstairs. There was no answer. He went to look for him. The captain was not in the lighthouse, nor anywhere on the tiny island. Mystified, Cobb ran to the little boathouse expecting to find the captain’s boat gone, only to discover the boat stored away, with the oars in their usual place, all dry. The island is less than ninety yards in diameter, and is covered with a close-cropped turf. There was no other place for anyone to hide.

Cobb shouted everywhere and searched diligently in every conceivable place, but there was no trace of Captain Williams. Cobb, it may be stated, was promptly and justifiably exonerated for all suspicion by the examining police; he was of excellent character and deeply attached to the captain.

Cobb then rushed to the edge of the island and peered down the steep sides, but nowhere on the smooth rocks or in the tall-tale expanse of wet sand, which surrounded the island completely, were any traces whatever, except for the fifteen-inch-wide trail which he had observed before reaching the island.

Cobb summoned aid from the village, and search parties were sent out, but it was unprecedented for the captain to have left the lighthouse untended. The local constable, with Cobb and several villagers, party, undertook an examination of the island and the lighthouse. They could find no trace from which a struggle or foul play could be deduced. They remarked that the foghorn was still blowing, although the fog had lifted that morning a few minutes before low tide. The engine of the foghorn, the sound of the island, to see if a body might have been cleverly concealed; but there were no traces. Nor could anyone be found to defend the theory that the captain, strictly devoted to his government, could have suddenly decided to abandon his post without explanation. Assuming that there had been foul play, it was highly improbable that the murderer, having dragged his victim’s corpse across to the cliff base, would have carried it up the ladder and through the single street of the village, as he would have to do to reach the wooded portions of the promontory. Search everywhere in the neighborhood proved fruitless.

Now it happened that a former official of Scotland Yard was visiting at one of the summer homes in the vicinity—Mr. James Thompson, who is credited with the solution of many big and well-remembered murder cases. Having heard of the strange disappearance of the captain, he came to the island. Delighted at the interest so celebrated a detective, the constable requested him to examine the scene and the witnesses, and to give an opinion on the mystery. After a half-hour examination he had yielded the facts which have been stated, and had familiarised himself with the locale of the mystery, the detective started evolution by evolution, to solve it as a case of cold-blooded murder.

"Murder!" Thompson stated with the greatest confidence, "by someone who had planned the crime most carefully." The detective even predicted the circumstances under which the body of the captain would be found, and with remarkable astuteness reconstructed many of the events of the tragedy.

Two weeks later his predictions were confirmed, the landing of the body proved correct. The mysterious assailant of the captain was subsequently captured, although this was more the result of extreme good luck on the part of the local police than anything else.

The local constabulary were amazed at the confident deduction of Mr. Thompson. To them, the clues seemed to be meagre indeed, and yet Mr. Thompson, apparently, had found no difficulty in solving the riddle. Put yourself in the detective’s place. Collect the facts, and then see if you can clear up the mystery. The questions to be answered are:

1. How did Mr. Thompson know that it was murder? (Marks 2.)
2. How did the murderer probably reach the island? (Marks 2.)
3. How did he dispose of the body of Captain Williams? (Marks 2.)
4. How did he escape from the island? (Marks 2.)
5. Under what circumstances would the captain’s body probably be found? (Marks 2.)
The TRAPPER!

A DRAMA
OF THE NIGHT-HAUNTS
OF LONDON

By

GEORGE DILNOT

Author of "Scotland Yard," etc.

The Opening Chapters Retold.

THE CRIME.

The Trapper directed operations from an office in Garrington street, London, E.C., under the fictitious name of Messrs. Maule, James & Co., Indian Merchants. It was in an outer room here that Estrahan, disguised as an Eurasian, was established as an inquiry clerk, or, more correctly, a watchdog to hold the fort.

The Trapper was to receive attention at the hands of the Trapper should he become too deep in the case, yet his instinct was against that conclusion. There would have been justification for holding her as one under suspicion, but he had felt that he would be bad tactics. Stella was only a pawn—though an important pawn—in the game. He did not want the little fish until he was sure of the bigger ones. While she was at large there was always a chance that some triviality might betray her confederates. For although the shadowing might fail there were others by whom the wealthy one came to him. Among her acquaintances were men and women, who, for fear or favour, would not hesitate to reveal bit of the yard any thing that came to them. At any rate, he had no fear that he would again lose sight of her.

There were other matters demanding his attention, and he dismissed the girl from his mind to deal with them. In the course of hours a man drifted in to him. The inspector, collating a thick dossier of reports and statements looked up impatiently.

"Well, Linko," he demanded, "what do you want?"

"It's about this girl Cliffe, sir."

"Ah!" Wilde pushed the papers away and leaned back in his chair, prepared to listen.

"The young detective—he looked like a spruce salesmen—cleared his throat.

"I don't know whether it's important, sir, but I thought I ought to report right away. I've left Monson outside her old rooms in Earls Court, and as Moody is also on duty there now, I thought you might like to know there was no sign of her. Since she disappeared disguised as a road sweeper—it seemed a good opportunity to get back to you, while they kept her out of her. She and the lady she was with took a taxi from outside here to Piccadilly Circus, where they got out, said goodbye to one another, and separated. Cliffe strolled up Regent Street looking at the shop windows. She only spoke to one person on the way. That was Swift Jack, the con man. We couldn't hear the conversation."

"Never mind that," interjected Wilde, making a mental note. "Did she spot you at all?"

"Linko smiled with a touch ofwegency.

WILDE MEETS THE TRAPPER.

The art of shadowing has been brought to a very fine perfection by Scotland Yard. But none knew better than the men of the Criminal Investigation Department that no reasonably alert person can be trailed for any length of time without becoming aware of the fact. Martin Wilde had no expectation that such a wide awake person as Stella Cliffe would not within a short while realise that he was being watched. It was likely, however, that some little period might elapse before she became conscious of her followers. In that time it was just possible that she might do something indiscreet.

Wilde had to confess himself baffled as to the position of the girl in the underworld was playing in the drama. His first impression had been that she was merely a lay figure with no direct connection with the case. That view had been shaken when she disappeared. Her attitude now that she had been questioned puzzled him. By all the rules a girl of her antecedents who had been innocently involved should have behaved differently. She should have been anxious to expelmete herself at any cost. The riddle must be too deep in the case, yet his instinct was against that conclusion. There would have been justification for holding her as one under suspicion, but he had felt that he would be bad tactics. Stella was only a pawn—though an important pawn—in the game. He did not want the little fish until he was sure of the bigger ones. While she was at large there was always a chance that some triviality might betray her confederates. For although the shadowing might fail there were others by whom the wealthy one came to him. Among her acquaintances were men and women, who, for fear or favour, would not hesitate to reveal bit of the yard any thing that came to them. At any rate, he had no fear that he would again lose sight of her.

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A tall, masked figure forced Detective Wilde slowly back. Estrehan follows them, dragging the unconscious body of Linke.
The Solution of this week's 'BAFFLER' PROBLEM

on page 25.

DO NOT READ THIS ANSWER until you have made your effort to solve the crime. To this end the facts are printed upside down.