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JULY 26, 1930

Detective Story Magazine

EVERY WEEK

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Features by
Elaine Hamilton
M.I.H. Rogers
A.E Apple
Mel Watt

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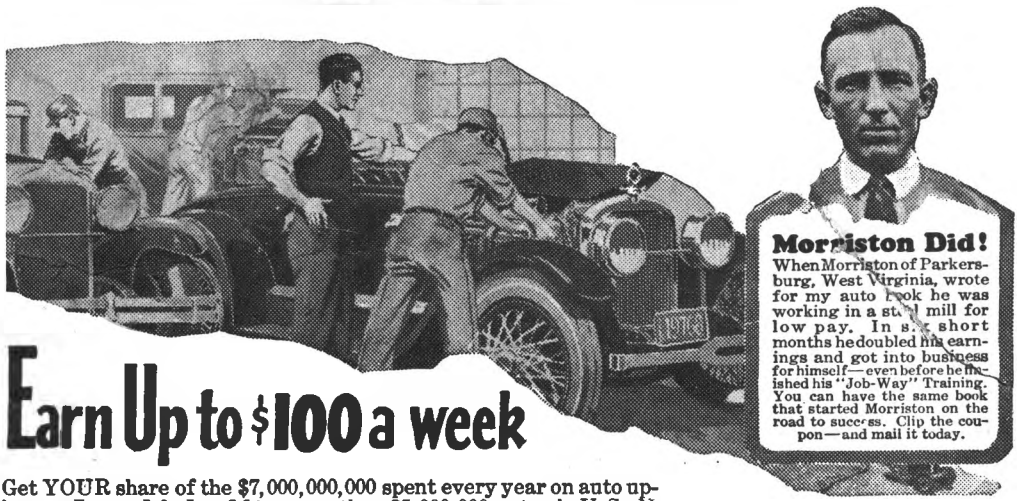
Answer This Ad!

If You Want Quick Success and Big Pay in AUTOS



Morriston Did!

When Morriston of Parkersburg, West Virginia, wrote for my auto book he was working in a steel mill for low pay. In six short months he doubled his earnings and got into business for himself—even before he finished his "Job-Way" Training. You can have the same book that started Morriston on the road to success. Clip the coupon—and mail it today.

Earn Up to $100 a week

Get YOUR share of the $7,000,000,000 spent every year on auto upkeep. **Just think of it**—more than 25,000,000 autos in U. S. No wonder there are so many big pay jobs! Get into this fascinating game, now. Don't put it off another day. Get the facts. Mail coupon for big, FREE auto book. Learn of the countless opportunities in the World's Biggest Business where real jobs and big pay come quick. See how $50—$75—$100 a week is possible for you now. Learn how "Job-Way" Training has brought big money—promotion—shops of their own to scores of men. Find out about my Employment Department—how it helps you get a good job in the auto business.

AVIATION COURSE
also included FREE of extra charge if *you ACT QUICK!*

LEARN AT HOME *IN SPARE TIME*

"Job-Way" Training is the short cut to Auto Success. No need to quit your present job—no need to leave home—just use your spare time to prepare for a brilliant future—a real job paying up to $100 a week. All you need is common schooling. I don't care if you never touched an auto before, I can train you at home. You should be able to make extra money quick—a few weeks after starting. Men from all walks of life who worked long, hard hours for low pay are becoming garage owners, foremen and superintendents. If you like autos—if you're between 15 and 55—get the facts now. "Job-Way" Training covers everything about autos—Mechanical and Electrical Work, Starting, Lighting, Ignition, Welding, Vulcanizing, etc.—Everything you need to get in line for a big money job as an Electrical and Mechanical Auto Expert.

It's the trained man who gets the good jobs and "Job-Way" Training is COMPLETE, yet so simple, so easy that you get it quick.

Send COUPON *for* FREE Auto Book

Get my FREE Auto Book. Learn how "Job-Way" Training has brought success to hundreds. See what it can do for you. Find out how my Employment Department helps you get a good job—about the three big outfits you get. Read my money back agreement, my aviation course offer and many other features.

B. W. COOKE, *Directing Engineer*
Motor Institute of America
MOTOR INSTITUTE BLDG.
Dept. B-375 Evanston, Ill.
[Chicago's Largest Suburb]

***Do It* NOW!**

Don't delay another day. Clip the coupon before you turn this page. Take the first step to a big-pay auto job. NOW.

B. W. COOKE, Directing Engineer, Motor Institute of America
Motor Institute Building, Dept. B-375, Evanston, Ill.

Send me your free auto book. I want to succeed in the auto business. Tell me about "Job-Way" Training—about your Employment Department and your 3 testing and repair outfits offer. No obligation on my part whatever.

Name.....

Address.....

Town..... *State*.....

Age..... *Occupation*.....

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"Three years ago he started at Browning's at $25 a week. Married, had one child, couldn't save a cent. One day he came in here desperate—wanted to borrow a hundred dollars—wife was sick.

"I said, 'Billy, I'm going to give you something worth more than a loan—some good advice—and if you'll follow it I'll let you have the hundred too. Take up a course with the International Correspondence Schools and put in some of your evenings getting special training. The schools will do wonders for you, I know. We've got several I. C. S. men here in the bank.'

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Mail the Coupon for Free Booklet

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Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject *before* which I have marked X in the list below:

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One Serial

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Two Articles

Miscellaneous

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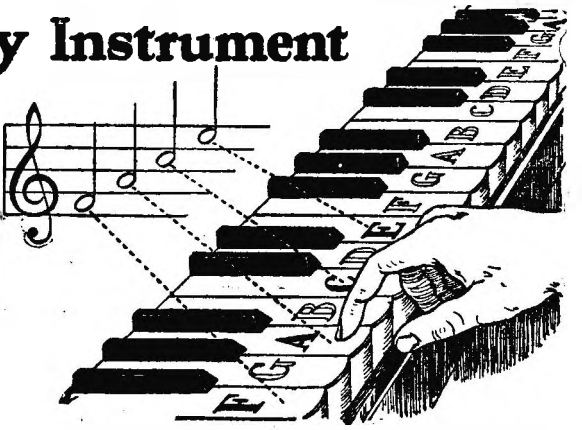

Quickest because natural and pleasant. Grateful students say they learn in a fraction of the time old, dull methods required. You play direct from notes. And the cost averages only a few cents a day!

LEARNING music is no longer a difficult task. If you can read the alphabet, you can now quickly learn to play your favorite instrument! A delightful new method has made it positively easy to become a capable performer within just a few months. And the cost is only a *fraction* of what people used to spend on the old, slow methods!

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Whether you like the piano, violin, 'cello, organ, saxophone, or any other instrument, you can now learn to play it in an amazingly short time. By means of this newly perfected method, reading and playing music is made almost as simple as reading aloud from a book. You simply can't go wrong. First, you are *told* how a thing is done, then a picture *shows* you how, then you do it yourself and *hear* it. No private teacher could make it any clearer. The lessons come to you by mail at regular intervals. They consist of complete printed instructions, diagrams, all the music you need, and music paper for writing out test exercises. And if anything comes up which is not *entirely plain*, you can write to your instructor and get a full, prompt, personal reply!

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Do you sit "on the sidelines" at a party? Are you out of it because you can't play? Many, many people are! It's the musician who claims attention. If you play you are always in demand. Many invitations come to you. Amateur orchestras offer you wonderful afternoons and evenings. And you meet the kind of people you have always wanted to know. So don't miss this exceptional opportunity.

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Mandolin	Piccolo
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Rupture is not a tear, but is due to a muscular weakness in the abdominal wall. Trusses merely brace these muscles but do not strengthen them—on the contrary, the gouging of the ordinary truss pad often increases this weakness as it tends to shut off circulation of the blood.

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Stop wasting your time and money on old-fashioned devices. Learn how to close the hernial opening as nature intended, so the rupture can't come down. Send no money; just mail the Free Test coupon below. For your own good—write today—tomorrow may be too late.

FREE TEST COUPON

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Send me a Free 10-day test supply of the remedial factor Plapao and 48-page illustrated book on Rupture; no charge for this now or later.

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A SURPRISING new profit opportunity is now offered to every ambitious man and woman! A sensational new kind of food business has been invented that can be operated by anyone in either full or spare time. Now, almost incredible as it may sound, $400 to $1000 a month is possible in even the smallest cities!

We supply you with equipment and plans for making and selling a delicious new greaseless doughnut that is cooked in a remarkable electrical device. Easy to digest and more toothsome than old-style doughnuts ever were. This delicious new dainty—Brown Bobby—costs less to make and sells four times as fast. No wonder so many people without one bit of experience are literally cleaning up fortunes with this new moneymaker.

You can open a shop; rent cheap floor space in a grocery, delicatessen, lunch counter, drug store, etc. Or start at home—and make good profits your very first week!

$3,000 in 3 Months

"I made $3,000 in 3 months from my greaseless doughnut business."
Thos. Minch, Fla.

Men and women start in this business daily. You cannot afford to delay. Details will gladly be sent without obligation of any sort. Such an amazing moneymaker may never be offered you again. Write at once for full plans and details.

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For a short time I will include my complete Radio, Aviation Electricity, and Auto Truck and Tractor Electrical Course.

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You get a free life scholarship which enables you to stay longer than the required time if you care to, or you may return at any time and take up new work which I am constantly adding to my school—the most modern at all times.

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Gentlemen:—Please send me free, your big new catalog and full information about your 12 weeks' practical training and special offer.

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Speechless
...When A Few Words Would Have Made Me

But Now I Can Face the Largest Audience Without A Trace of Stage Fright!

THE annual banquet of our Association—the biggest men in the industry present—and without warning, the Chairman called on me to speak—and my mind went blank! I half rose, bowed awkwardly and mumbled, "I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me today," and dropped back in my chair.

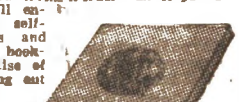
Speechless—when a few words would have made me! If I could have made a simple little speech—giving my opinion of trade conditions in a concise, witty, interesting way, I know I would have been made for life! And then a week later like magic I discovered how to overcome my stage fright. With the aid of a splendid new home study method I rapidly developed the ability to face giant audiences—without a trace of stage fright.

* * * * * * * * *

There is no trick, no mystery about becoming a powerful and convincing speaker—a brilliant, easy, fluent conversationalist. You, too, can conquer timidity, stage fright, self-consciousness and bashfulness. Now, through an amazing new home study training you can quickly shape yourself into an outstanding influential speaker.

Send For This Amazing FREE Booklet

This new method of training is fully described in a very interesting booklet, **How to Work Wonders With Words.** In it you are told how this new easy method will enable you to conquer stage fright, self-consciousness, timidity, bashfulness and fear. Thousands have sent for this booklet and are unstinting in their praise of it. You are told how you can bring out and develop your priceless "hidden knack"—the natural gift within you. You can obtain your copy absolutely free by sending the coupon.



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New Plan—Big Profits

We show you new way to build permanent business. Big profits from the start. Spare or full time. No capital or experience required. Ford Tudor Sedan free to producers as extra reward. Write now.

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5879 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Picture Play

The Best Magazine of the Screen

Price, 25 cents per copy

ON SALE AT ALL NEWS STANDS

Free to Men Past 40

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THE ELECTRO THERMAL CO.,
7631 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio

Life Worth Living Since Asthma Left

Thought Her End Had Come, But Has No Sign of Trouble Now.

Sufferers from asthma and bronchial cough should read this message from Miss Jane Cunningham, 531 Charleston Ave., Port Arthur, Tex. She says:

"I had asthma for 7 years. I tried serums and about everything else, but finally the attacks became so severe I thought my time had come. In November, 1927, as a last resort, I tried Nacor, and after that I never had a bad attack. After taking two bottles, my asthma disappeared and has not returned."

Hundreds of people who suffered for years from asthma and bronchial coughs, state that their trouble left and has not returned. Their letters and a booklet of vital information will be sent free by Nacor Medicine Co., 773 State Life Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind. Write for this free information, and find out how thousands have found lasting relief.

Just Say 20 Words To Ladies

And I Pay You Cash For It

Here's an utterly new, easy way for honest men and women to make money in full or spare time and also the strangest offer we have ever made. No need to sell a thing. Just introduce Van to 10 ladies and say 20 magic words and this million-dollar company will pay you cash. This is the revolutionary new plan of C. W. Van De Mark, the famous sales genius who has already put more than 25,000 men and women on the road to prosperity. "Conservative" business leaders called Van "crazy" for making this radical cash pay agreement. They said it would ruin "conservative" traditions. Cooler heads called it a master stroke that would boost prosperity—for Van will now actually pay you a cash penalty if you don't make at least $15 the very first day.

No Need To Sell Anything

TO GET YOUR CASH PAY

Now Van himself reveals the sensational truth! Countless housewives learned that they can make big savings on our amazing bargain offers. So in almost no time the sale of our products has expanded almost to the "bursting" point. Now we must hurry and employ 1100 more local men and women to take care of regular customers in each town. Big money for our representatives means nothing to us from now on! To save time I now offer every honest man and woman steady work and will pay cash for just a few hours of their time.

I Pay You a Cash Penalty

If You Don't Make Big Money From the First Day

I will not only pay you an actual cash penalty if your first 10 calls do not give you a big profit—but I allow you to make a big profit on every order my customers give you. So what is to stop you from making as high as $35 in a day like some of my other "partners"? I don't let you risk one penny. To show you that I do things in a big way, I will send you $13.00 worth of my products (retail value) to start you. Don't send a cent for this daring offer — just rush application opposite. I'll tell you a priceless secret that will get others to make money for you. If you are a married woman you can surely devote a few spare hours a day. My plan is a funny one. Some of my woman "partners" have made more money in a single day than their husbands make.

I Send You $13 Worth of Goods
(Retail Value)
Without Risk to You To Start You
Just Send Coupon

Get Van's Cash Agreement

Just tell me how much you want.

$15 in a Day Full Time?
$3 in an Hour Spare Time?

and I will send my Written Agreement, legal and binding upon me. The more time you devote to this business the more money you get.—Van.

$25,000.00 Bond Backs Our Guarantee

Rush Pay Application

Send no money—just application. I need 1100 more "partners" quick to start on my daring new Cash Pay plan. This announcement will probably "upset" the nation. Untold thousands will apply. If you delay, it may be too late. Right now mail the Application below for my daring Cash Pay plan and offer of $13.00 worth of goods. Curtis W. Van De Mark, President, The Health-O Quality Products Co., Dept. 1094-G. G., Health-O Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Curtis W. Van De Mark, President
The Health-O Quality Products Co.
Dept. 1094-G. G., Health-O Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Van: I apply for opening as "partner" to start on your cash pay agreement. Send offer of $13.00 worth of products (retail value) and guarantee. This is not an order—send nothing C.O.D. I risk nothing.

I want $.....per hour.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....

WIN $2320.00

Just to advertise, we will give away at least $8,000.00 worth of free prizes including TEN BRAND NEW AUTOMOBILES and thousands in cash. YOU can win BOTH a Buick 4-Door Sedan and $1,000.00 cash extra or $2,320.00 all cash.

CAN YOU PUT A LUCKY STAR AROUND THIS FREE BAG OF GOLD?

By drawing six straight lines with four dots on each line, a perfect six-pointed star can be made from this puzzle. If you can work it, I'll tell you how to win a Buick 4-Door Sedan and

GET $1,000.00 EXTRA CASH

just for being quick!

And, positively everyone taking complete advantage of this opportunity will be rewarded. Duplicate prizes in case of ties. Send your answer now. Win the $2,320.00 or a Buick Sedan and $1,000.00 cash Extra for promptness.

L. Shulman, Dep't. 17, 37 W. Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.

The Stolen Heart

THE DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS OF SOCIETY MEET IN A STRANGE PLACE.

By A. E. Apple

Author of "Crazy!" etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEN UP THE ALLEY.

MOTIONLESS and apparently lifeless, was the body under the thick, green lap robe. It lay in the rear of the motor car, behind the driver's seat, huddled as if death had occurred during a convulsion.

The time was a bit early, in the moonless night, for death by violence. A tower clock struck nine melancholy bongs, summoning the underworld to life, as the car glided along the highway. The dark street was dimly lighted, with a murky river lapping the wharves behind the buildings to the right.

Dark and sinister, too, was the lone man who sat in the car, handling the wheel, with brown goggles covering his black eyes. Under his blue coat was a bulletproof vest. On his person were three gats and a blade, conveniently

within reach. Beneath the robe, with the victim, were a machine gun and a sawed-off shotgun loaded with slugs.

Yet, though this arsenal indicated readiness for sudden danger, the driver did not seem to be afraid. He kept only an apparently casual eye on the sidewalks and on the mirror that reflected traffic approaching from the rear.

Enemies, he had, scores of them. All were not involved in the armistice that temporarily existed between his gang and its rival organization. This amicable adjustment had been reached by dividing the bootleg business of the city into two zones.

The car turned into a black alleyway, which had the appearance of an underground tunnel, except that there was a lone electric bulb above a wooden door. Before that light, glowing feebly through begrimed, frosted glass, the gunman stopped his motor.

He got out, reached to a push button and pressed it twice. After a brief pause, his forefinger shoved again, three times.

Promptly, the feeble light expired. A clicking noise, the turning of a knob, and some invisible person opened the door. It moved silently on its hinges, and also slowly—for the wooden front was only a blind to conceal a thick steel barrier such as protects gambling and other dens from raids by the police..

And now the gunman turned to the body under the robe in the rear of the car. He groped, caught the ankles, and pulled. If dead, the man must have died recently, for there was limpness, no rigidity of *rigor mortis*.

The thug slung his passenger over a shoulder and went through the doorway. The door closed. Again the lock clicked, and the sullen roar of the city sounded farther away. He was in a hall now, moving through blackness. Yet he knew his ground, and advanced without groping.

A dozen steps brought him to another door. It was unlocked. He opened it, and went down uncarpeted wooden stairs. From faint illumination that was like the glowing of phosphorus in the dark, in process of combustion, he emerged into a room with one light. It hung low from the ceiling, a bulb within a green glass shade that was like an inverted funnel. Disclosed beneath it was a table of oak, about nine feet across, polished by the elbows of thousands of saloon patrons of the old days.

The room was large. Its brick walls showed only vaguely, like the obscure confines of some land of phantoms.

At the table sat one man, lean, alert, with a manner of being entirely at ease and yet ready to meet the most unexpected attack. Languidly, he exhaled the smoke of his cigarette, from a grim slit of a mouth. He was young, well tailored, and would have been handsome if his face had not revealed a nature as hard as granite.

"Hello, Fred," he said in a smooth, emotionless tone. "What you carting? One of our boys been taken for a ride?"

"No, Jimmy," was the reply in a husky voice. "This guy's not been put on the spot. Don't you click to him?"

Jimmy peered intently as the victim was brought into closer range. "It's Uncle Jeff, the government man," he commented, and began scowling at the unconscious prohibition agent.

"Yeah!" said Fred. His black eyes flickered like a snake's. "He was accumulating evidence in a speakeasy. On orders from higher up, I high-signed the barkeep to slip some K. O. drops into his glass. He'll be all right after he sleeps off the dope."

Jimmy frowned. "Why'd you bring him here?"

Fred chuckled. "Going to keep him and make a trade with the district attorney," he boasted. "Jeff's worth a lot to the law, and ought to fetch a top price."

"Not so bad!" Jimmy approved. "I

thought, at first, he was dead, or had made one too many raids and——"

Then Jimmy watched the burly Fred carry his cargo into a rear room, toss the victim on a couch, and emerge, locking the door. Fred went to the table and sat down at the right of his pal.

"You sent for me," he said. "Something on?"

"Yeah!" was the answer. "There's a society guy with a barrel of dough that wants a job done. He was due at nine o'clock, and ought to show up any minute now. You're late, too."

"I waited to bring Jeff into camp." Fred explained. "The delay was worthwhile. What you know about this society guy?"

"Nothing," said Jimmy, "except that he got in touch with the boss, through his bootlegger, and word passed down to me to take him on. He's willing to be rolled for two grand."

"Does he want a croaking done?" Fred asked, lighting a cigarette. In his over-size, puffy face it was like a toothpick in an orange.

"I forgot to ask," Jimmy replied nonchalantly. "Didn't occur to me. Must be something else, though—too much jack for a croaking."

"Yeah!" Fred agreed. "Too much jack for a croaking! There's guys in our mob that'll handle a croaking for a picture of the target and a dollar bill to implicate the victim's enemy that gives it."

Jimmy exhaled slowly and contemplated the ceiling. "Times have changed since bootlegging became one of the major industries," he commented. "I can remember when it used to cost twenty-five dollars to get a gunman to pull the big job. With tens of thousands of crooks turned into B. L.'s, we have cut rates on murder."

A soft whistle sounded from up the stairway. It was repeated thrice. The two men at the large, round table exchanged glances.

A sound of soft treading feet, and a man began descending the steps. Slowly he came to view, with the cautious gait of one invading the underworld for the first time and dubious, if not a bit fearful, of what he might encounter.

At the foot of the stairs, he paused, and the two gunmen scrutinized him. He was dressed in evening clothes. Above his Tuxedo coat was a head that was rather too narrow. His eyes and hair were black, and in the eyes was a flicker of uneasiness and apprehension. Perspiration stood in beads on the brow of a face that was pale. He looked as if his age were in the twenties. His eyes were somewhat bloodshot, and under them were dark half-moons of dissipation.

His mouth twitched nervously as he glanced from one to the other, uncertain which to address. Then he spoke in a hesitant, somewhat tremulous voice. "Two grand!" he said. "That was the password I was to give. It means, I understand, two thousand dollars."

"Right!" said Jimmy crisply. "Advance and hand it over."

The visitor obeyed. He approached the table, produced a roll of bank notes from an inner pocket. Jimmy reached for the money, removed the rubber band, made the count and with the expertness of his profession assured himself that he was not handling counterfeit.

"Jake!" he approved. "Take a load off your feet and give us the low-down."

The caller sighed with relief. He used a silk handkerchief to dry his forehead, and snuggled into a chair.

"What's your name?" Fred asked gruffly.

"That wasn't in the bargain," the newcomer protested. "Call me Mr. Green."

"All right!" Jimmy agreed. "It's better than Mr. Yellow." The stranger winced. "You got some dirty work

and you're afraid to handle it yourself?" Jimmy continued.

"Well," Mr. Green explained, glancing furtively about as if fearful that policemen might be lurking in the shadows. "Not so much that I'm afraid, but it's a proposition that others have to handle until the psychological moment for me to come on the scene."

"Psychological!" Fred muttered. "That's a good word. This guy must read something besides the tabloids."

"Oh, 'psychological' isn't as big thunder as you think," said Jimmy. "It means being able to figure out some other guy behind his mask—for instance, tell whether he's a square customer or a spotter accumulating evidence. No, it isn't half as good a word as ambidextrous. That means being able to work as well with one mitt as the other."

Fred nodded. "I see!" he said. "A dip, with this ambi- stuff, could pick two pockets at once."

"Precisely!" Jimmy told him. "And now, Mr. Green, what's on your chest?" His eyes narrowed. "Want some one croaked—killed?"

"No, no!" the stranger responded quickly. Again he peered in all directions, among the shadows. "Are we alone?"

"Sure!" Jimmy told him. "Think we're apt to have witnesses at a business conference like this?"

Another sigh of relief came from Mr. Green. "Then I'll tell you about it," he outlined. "There's a certain young woman who lives in an apartment by herself in this city. I'll furnish her address later. Her name is Helene. She's heiress to a lot of money, and when she comes of age in another year, she'll collect it in cash, no strings attached."

Jimmy nodded his head understandingly. "Nothing like having a rich moll," he approved. "She's your sweetie, eh?"

"You bet!" Mr. Green replied fervently. "And I'd be just as crazy about her if she were in a poorhouse. Of course, I'm not objecting to her having a lot of jack. Now, there's another gentleman——"

"I get you," Jimmy cut in. "This Helene chicken gravitates more to the other bird than to you—so?"

Mr. Green's eyes opened in astonishment. "How'd you guess that?" he asked.

Jimmy's smile was rather withering. "You'd hardly be in a dump like this, seeking the aid of two crooks, if you didn't have a rival who was giving you the go-by."

"That's true," Mr. Green admitted. "I'm out of my element here. It's my first trip into the underworld, and I guess I'm too nervous to see the obvious."

"Boy, you don't know what the underworld is," Fred said grimly. "You're just at the outskirts. I could take you places where—well, no matter. Say, why don't you just have us croak this other gent? Then you'd have the field to yourself."

Mr. Green shivered. "They eloctrocute for murder in this State," he said shakily. "I don't want to be mixed up in any killing. Besides, you don't know this type of girl. She might love the other fellow more in death than alive—long enough for me to lose out, at any rate."

Jimmy lit a fresh cigarette. He exhaled an astonishing amount of smoke in a steady stream. "What, then, do you want?" he asked. "You're paying for the job, and what you say goes."

Mr. Green swallowed, and into his black eyes came the gleam of one proud of his craftiness in concocting a plot. "I figured out all sorts of things," he explained. "A lot of the plans were new, the sort that have never been worked before. And then I took a tumble. The old ways are the best.

Nothing beats the melodramas of a generation ago."

"The old-time ten-twent'-thirt'!" said Jimmy softly. "Tying a woman to the railroad tracks or to a log that a circular saw is biting into, with the hero arriving just at the last minute to save her! It was and is and always will be good stuff."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Green. "It's sure-fire, and it can't be beaten. Nothing else grips the emotions quite as tensely. And I'm dealing with a woman who is extremely emotional. You fellows are to scare the tar out of her. I'll show up and rescue her."

Jimmy pondered. "You think that will switch her love to you?"

Mr. Green shrugged delicately. "I don't know, but I'm willing to gamble two thousand to find out," he replied. "Why shouldn't it work? It was a bell-ringer in the melodramas. The audiences went wild, and that showed that it's human nature to respond just like the actors in the show. For the average spectator, you know, imagines himself or herself in the shoes of hero or heroine. If it works on the stage and in printed fiction, why not in real life? Let's give it a whirl."

Jimmy had become intensely interested. "This is out of our line," he said. "I sort of had an advance hunch that you had access to some rich guy's secret hoard of pre-war hooch, and wanted us to cop it for you and split the loot—or that you desired some one croaked. I've never handled a job just like this before. I'd enjoy it."

"Think you could stage it convincingly?" Green asked eagerly.

"Easy!" Jimmy assured him. "A long time ago, before I reached the age of indiscretion, I was in the show business. As a villain, I was a star. I can frame the job, all right, and train my pal here so he'll look and act like a villain with a heart as black as ink. It won't take much coaching, at that."

Fred scowled. Jimmy continued. "You say she's extremely emotional?"

Mr. Green nodded. "What's that got to do with it?"

"I was just wondering," said Jimmy, "if the experience is apt to drive her crazy."

CHAPTER II.

LOOT—A WOMAN'S HEART.

THEN Green frowned, for what Jimmy had suggested was a possibility that had not occurred to him. He meditated, his mouth pursed and his brow knitted in anxiety that was genuine.

"No," he declared presently. "I don't think there's any chance of her going crazy. She might go into hysterics, though, for I know she has a tendency that way. So you gentlemen don't want to be too rough. On the other hand, you want to scare her enough so she'll appreciate my seeming to save her."

A sudden thought came to him and he gave a start and added, "Be mighty careful, boys. She's not of age yet, and if she went crazy, her relatives would have her declared incompetent and there wouldn't be any inherited fortune for me to cop along with her."

Jimmy nodded. Already his fertile brain had conceived a plan. He suggested: "We'll swoop upon her unexpectedly. Being taken by surprise is always a shock."

"Good!" Mr. Green approved. "Have it happen at night. I can make a call and see to it that a window is left unlocked so you can enter from a fire escape."

"Sure!" said Jimmy. "A person is ten times easier to scare at night than by day. Maybe there's something in the rays of the sun that gives people courage. Again, it may be an inheritance from jungle days when our ancestors were afraid of animals stalking them in the dark. Well, how does this sound? We'll tell her we have a

grudge against her dead father, that he bunked us out of a lot of money, that she's due to inherit it along with the rest of the estate, and we're going to have our vengeance on her."

Mr. Green reflected. "Not bad!" he declared. "I'll get dated up to call on her that evening, to take her out to a night club. We'll time my arrival so that I'll come upon the scene just in time to pull the rescue."

Fred grunted. "We're a couple of tough eggs," he commented. "Just how will you stage things so you'll master us?"

The reply came glibly, "I've thought of that. I'll draw a pistol and——"

"Hold on!" Jimmy cut in acidly. "We're not taking any chances on you croaking us to make the affair decidedly convincing to the girl. If you fetch out a gat, we'll drill you so full of lead they'll send you to a smelter instead of the undertaker."

Mr. Green's pallor became a waxen white. "Yes, whatever you say!" he agreed quickly. "What's that?"

And his black eyes bulged and he half rose from his chair. For a groan had come from the rear room, a groan that, to him, was bloodcurdling. The terror in his countenance could not have been more intense.

Jimmy was quick to turn the incident to the advantage of himself and his pal. "What you heard," he said in an ominous monotone, "was just a note of agony from a gent that double crossed us. We haven't quite finished him off yet. On occasion, the demise of our enemies is a prolonged affair."

He terminated in a shrill laugh, and Fred joined him harshly. Mr. Green experienced a sudden sagging in the region of his stomach. His heart was racing and seemed to be endeavoring to tear itself from within his body. There was, he thought, a sudden chilliness in the underground room—— No, the chill was within himself—a clammy chill, such as one feels when touching a corpse. And he was aware that prickles of goose flesh were erupting on his arms and legs.

For the first time, it occurred to him that he had been foolish, indeed, to hazard his life in this subterranean den with these two fellow conspirators who, apparently, considered a murder as being of no more importance than swatting a fly. And there was no mistaken impression about that. Jimmy and Fred were cutthroats to the very marrow of their bones.

Their eyes were boring into his with a menacing significance. Mr. Green's lungs were almost bursting. He gasped and averted his gaze, directing his attention to the vaguely illumined walls and the deep shadows of the corners, in which he would not have been surprised to have seen assassins materialize.

"Ha, ha!" he ejaculated, in a hollow attempt at levity. "I can't get over the notion that the police are apt to have entered and be listening."

Jimmy stared at him in wonder. Then he grinned. "Oh, yes, sure, you're from the outside and you're naturally afraid of the bulls. I'd rather meet a dozen of them than a rival gunman."

In the back room, Uncle Jeff, the prohibition enforcement agent, had done the groaning. He heard the words of Jimmy, and from long experience he knew that they rang as true as new coins from the mint.

Then there was a silence, broken only by a monotonous *drip-drip* from some leaky plumbing connection in the shadows. The idea drifted through Mr. Green's brain, that such must be the stillness of a coffin after burial.

Fred had told him that he had penetrated only to the outskirts of the underworld. But he sensed that already he was within the picket lines of the sinister realm of death by violence.

So Mr. Green stirred uneasily and with trembling fingers groped for his

gold cigarette case. A diamond was mounted by his engraved initials, and the expert eyes of Jimmy appraised it as being worth at least several hundred dollars. Mr. Green's hand shook so that he broke two matches before getting a flame to ignite his cigarette. Never had an inhalation of smoke been more welcome.

"You gentlemen needn't worry about me trying any funny business, like this double crossing you suggested," he assured them jerkily. "And I can feel it in my bones that you'll give me a fair deal."

"Sure!" both of them replied. Their faces were like expressionless plaster masks.

"You're not to be armed on the night of the big show," Jimmy directed.

"No, sir!" Mr. Green said fervently. "I won't even carry a penknife."

"And don't get any fatal notion, such as having detectives in the background to protect you," Jimmy continued. "We can sense the presence of a dick, like a dog smelling rotten meat. You'll get what you've paid for, by our code of honor, I assure you. You won't need allies other than ourselves. If you go to the cops or a private agency, we won't show up."

Mr. Green was gnawing his nails. "That's a fair proposition," he agreed.

"Now," Jimmy continued, "sometimes unexpected things happen. What if we get into trouble that's not anticipated. You've paid us two grand. But will you do better, in a pinch?"

Mr. Green's head bobbed up and down emphatically. "And don't think," he said, "that I haven't the political influence and the money to get you out of any mess. I'm a rich man, very rich. This isn't a case of me being after the girl's money, though I've no objection to it coming along with her, of course. I'm just bugs about her. It's the girl I want—Helene."

He uttered her name, not in reverence, but with the eagerness of a veteran collector intent on acquiring a prize specimen that had been denied him before.

"That's good," Fred approved heartily. "Nothing like having an employer with plenty of jack." He exchanged a meaning glance with Jimmie, unnoticed by their nervous companion.

"When do you want this done?" Jimmy asked.

"I hadn't set a definite date, not knowing how the time of you gentlemen was arranged," was the answer. "It happens, though, that Helene has granted me to-morrow evening for a bit of recreation at the theater or a night club, we haven't decided yet which."

Jimmy snapped forefinger and thumb in vigorous fashion. "Quicker, the better!" he declared. "Date her for a night club. Tell her you'll call for her at nine o'clock sharp. How's that?"

Mr. Greene's tenseness left him. He relaxed and smiled. "Fine!" he approved. "I'll call on her in the afternoon and maneuver things so a window will be left unlocked. You will have easy entrance when you scale the fire escape."

"All right, if it's convenient," Jimmy told him. "However, it's not of great importance. A trifle like a locked window doesn't bother us. Time locks of big vaults are the only sort of thing to stall us. Of course, that's out of our line just now. Bootlegging is our game. It's safer—and, in the long run, more profitable. Give us the low-down about where this chicken lives."

Mr. Green was prepared for this. He fished in a vest pocket and produced a small rectangle of thin paper. On it, he had typed a name and address. Now he extended it, writing turned downward, as though the ceiling might have eyes.

Jimmy took it, read it, and nodded nonchalantly. "You show up at her suite at nine bells sharp—to the sec-

ond!" he instructed. "Don't be early, and don't be late."

Mr. Green's narrow face grinned. "I'll be there, on the dot," he promised. And he rose to his feet and shoved back his chair, his grin widening in pleasure as the thought that he was soon to be out in the open air, where policemen were within earshot for cries of any one requiring help.

"Beat it the way you came!" Jimmy directed. "Hold on! What are you going to stage to scare us off?"

Mr. Green gave a start. "We forgot about that," he said. "I mentioned a pistol and then—got—sidetracked."

As he looked into Jimmy's eyes, he was vaguely suspicious that the other had not forgotten, but had held off until the last minute in order to test his mental alertness.

"You go up to the girl's suite in the apartment house," Jimmy instructed. "You'll find the door unlocked. We'll attend to that. Step in. You'll hear voices in another room. You advance, find us with the girl, turn your head and shout for help. Then you rush at Fred here, and take a punch at his jaw."

"Have a heart!" the intended victim growled.

"He'll duck," Jimmy resumed. "Can you box?"

"Pretty good," answered Mr. Green. "I do quite a bit of gymnasium work to keep in trim."

"Then," said Jimmy, "it won't be hard for you to stage a fake fight with the two of us. Any blows you land, make them light—get me?"

"I won't hurt you!" Mr. Green declared earnestly.

"Better not!" Fred warned him.

Jimmy smiled enigmatically. "We'll let it seem as if you scare us off," he promised. "We'll turn tail and beat it for the fire escape. Then you clasp the gal to your bosom."

"If she hasn't fainted!"

"Clasp her, anyway. We'll not get rough enough for her to faint until just when you show up and she sees you. That's all."

Mr. Green bowed. "Good evening, gentlemen, and I thank you both," he said in farewell.

"Ditto for the two grand," said Jimmy. And Fred blinked his eyes to indicate his own approval.

Mr. Green made his exit far more hastily than he had entered. In fact, he departed so precipitately that he tripped on the lower step and half fell. Then up the flight he went, and into the black corridor, along which he had been steered by an invisible guide upon his arrival. He reached the door.

There was a soft click and it opened for him. The feeling came over Mr. Green that some very menacing thug, custodian of the portal, was uncomfortably close in the darkness.

He plunged out into the alleyway and gulped fresh air deeply into feverish lungs.

Down in the cellar, Jimmy was talking into a speaking tube. "Shadow the bird that just left," he ordered. "Find out where he lives, who he is, and have a complete financial report ready for me at ten a. m. to-morrow. I want to know the names of his relatives and his lawyers."

A grunt, in reply, indicated that the command would be executed.

"What's your game?" Fred inquired as Jimmy came back.

There was no immediate reply. Jimmy reached under the table and pressed a button. In a matter of seconds, a door opened in the brick wall at his left. A waiter entered, bearing a tray on which were a quart of whisky, glasses and ginger ale.

Jimmy motioned for him to leave, and then inspected the bottle. "This is good stuff!" he said. "I helped take it out of the distillery last week."

"That was where you croaked the night watchman?"

Jimmy nodded. "He wasn't sensible," he replied. "I had to give him the works. Funny, how some of those fellows, on low wages, have so much of what they call sense of duty."

He mixed a couple of high balls. Both drank.

"What's your game?" Fred repeated. In his black eyes was something more than curiosity. It was an eager gleam. "If Mr. Green, as he calls himself, wasn't lying, he's got a barrel of dough."

"He's got it, all right," Jimmy opined confidently. "Otherwise, he'd have haggled over the price. He never batted an eye, I was told, when his B. L. told him it would cost him two grand to get a job pulled." Jimmy paused and reflected. "I wish we had Phil here," he said. "I could use him."

Fred grunted. "You're out of luck," he declared. "So is Phil. A judge gave him the choice of six months in the clink or taking a big drink of his own B. L.—and he took the cooler."

"Sure!" Jimmy commented, not at all surprised. "What kind of industrial alcohol was his stuff made of, that he was peddling around to the office buildings?"

"It was poisoned with the chemical with the long name, that the gov'ment uses so much."

"Diethylthalate!" Jimmy said. "H'm! No wonder Phil preferred jail."

"What's it do?" asked Fred.

"Diethylthalate," Jimmy explained, "causes extreme vomiting. In lethal doses, it produces noncoagulability of the blood and drives the red corpuscles through the walls, bringing death by hemorrhage of the brain. Most cases of alcoholic hallucinosis result from it."

"What's your game?" Fred inquired for the third time.

Jimmy shrugged. "I'm not sure yet," he admitted. "But here's a guy with a barrel of dough. We'll roll him for a lot of it, of course."

"Why didn't you keep him here when you had him?"

Jimmy smiled craftily. "Hold him for ransom?" he countered. "How do I know but what he might have had a friend trail him and wait outside, to start the bulls on a raid if he didn't reappear? There is more than one way of skinning a skunk."

"Well, you're the brains of the team," Fred said. "You got the education. I was a dumb-bell in school. Never got farther than fourth grade, then I run away. Yet look what a successful business man I am. Still, it's good to have an educated gent like you around, to explain long words and suchlike."

Jimmy grinned, showing pearly white teeth, tensely set.

"I'm going to pluck Mr. Greene's feathers," he declared.

Out in the back room, Uncle Jeff, the prohibition enforcement agent, was listening. But his chief concern was that he was a prisoner—very, very securely confined.

CHAPTER III.

PRISONER.

REMARKABLE, in numerous ways, was this agent of the law—Uncle Jeff. His career as a criminal investigator had covered a period of half a century. He had entered his profession as an assistant to a railroad detective.

Back in those days, murder had been such a rare crime that the killing even of a person of little importance had been a real sensation. Foul play had been so exceptional that whole counties dated events as occurring so many years before or after such affairs as "the time Farmer Jenkins was found dead in his haymow, his head split open by an ax."

Still, as Uncle Jeff often commented in reminiscing, the population had been sparse in his youth, and, accordingly, facilities for concealing crimes had been more advantageous to criminals. Again, the fine art of detective work had not

been developed as in modern times. Uncle Jeff frequently suggested that, long ago, people who had been supposed to have run away, had, in reality, been victims of assassins more often than had been suspected.

Now in his late sixties—a fine, erect figure with rather long and silvery-white hair—Uncle Jeff was attached to the local prohibition enforcement unit. He posed as a retired lawyer with a thirst dating back to the days when gum opium by the spoonful and whisky at eighty cents a gallon had been dispensed from drug stores. This gained him ready access to speakeasies.

He was not known by many in the underworld. There was a definite reason for this. Uncle Jeff was not a petty spotter. He visited and drank in hundreds of blind tigers, yet never did he make an arrest, never did he appear in court to give evidence of violation of the Volstead Act. True, he supplied many a tip-off that was followed up by fellow operatives.

Uncle Jeff was playing a more important rôle. He was hunting for big game, not for squirrels. To him had been assigned the task of getting behind the scenes, to the source of supply. It was common knowledge that certain known gunmen, organized in two rival factions, controlled the city's liquor traffic. To break up these rings, however, the government had to have comprehensive knowledge of the inner workings of the bootleg outfits, before dealing a vital blow, before making a widespread clean-up with one swoop.

Uncle Jeff, cast as the star actor in this battle of wits, had no easy time. For one thing, he was endangered by official corruption. There was no telling when a traitor might disclose him in his true identity. There was no danger of this from the rank and file of minor subordinates. They were ignorant of his official rôle. The danger lay in the possibility of a leak at headquarters, where only a few knew that he represented the law.

There was treachery, and from that time on, Uncle Jeff's life was in constant danger. The big chief, of whom Jimmy and Fred were hirelings, was advised that Uncle Jeff was a menace, boring in steadily. The initial decision was to have him taken for a ride, his bullet-ridden body to be hurled from a speeding motor car.

On second thought, however, the big chief decided to take Uncle Jeff alive and hold him as a hostage to be surrendered in exchange for Phil, B. L. gunman who was in the toils.

Wary, with the eyes of a chicken hawk, ever alert for the slightest element of the suspicious, Uncle Jeff saw Fred give a high sign to the bartender in a speakeasy. Instantly, the veteran was on his guard. The high sign was in a code of utmost secrecy. It was a mere gesture, the brushing of an imaginary fly from Fred's right ear, repeated thrice. Uncle Jeff noticed it, but would not have sensed its real import, had he not seen, in the mirror behind the bar, the significant glances exchanged by his two enemies.

Instinct told him that something was about to happen to him. Still watching covertly, he observed the dispenser of drinks slip a tablet into a glass of whisky. It dissolved instantly.

"Knock-out drops!" Uncle Jeff surmised.

But he took the bait—tilted the small tumbler and tossed the liquor into his mouth. It did not pass down his throat, however. Instead, he drew a handkerchief and, wiping his lips, skillfully spurted the liquid into a sponge that was concealed within the white cloth. The sponge was there because Uncle Jeff was an old-timer and had anticipated just such an emergency.

He put the handkerchief back in his pocket, went to a table, sat down and propped his head on his palms.

Abruptly he went through the motions of collapsing into unconsciousness.

Fred carried him out to a car, transported him through the night, and delivered him to the rear room of the underground retreat, believing that his victim was drugged. All this time, however, Uncle Jeff was wide awake and silently chuckling to himself.

During the conspiracy with Mr. Green, Uncle Jeff heard every word that passed between the trio. He staged the awesome groan that made the blood of Mr. Green run cold.

Now that moth of society had departed into the night. The plot against Helene interested him exceedingly. Also, it roused his wrath.

But Uncle Jeff was on a far more important assignment. He was out to get the goods on the higher-ups in the bootleg ring, not to rescue a young woman whose danger apparently was to be counterfeit, a mere trick to shift her affections to a scoundrel.

Still, there might be an opportunity to aid the girl, also. He pressed an ear to the panel of the door, and listened to what Jimmy and Fred were conspiring in the room beyond.

"When I get through with this Mr. Green," Jimmy declared, "he'll be a singed rooster. There's no doubt in my mind, that he has more dollars than our gang has bottles of hooch. We'll find out. Maybe we can make sweepstakes out of this, enough to cut loose from our mob."

There was a sound of the clinking of glass and the pouring of fluid as he mixed two drinks.

Fred took a deep gulp. "We'll shake down this fellow so hard, half of his skeleton will fall out."

"You bet!" Jimmy replied. "And we don't have to split with the rest of the crowd. It's a mighty generous boss we have—permitting members to pull stuff on the side, as long as it doesn't interfere with our B. L. operations."

Fred again sampled his drink and, jubilant at the prospect of fleecing Mr. Green, sang discordantly:

"If the ocean was whisky,
And I was a fish,
I'd dive to the bottom
And never come up;
For I often wake up
With the blues all around my bed."

"Cut out broadcasting!" Jimmy muttered. "You've got a voice like a crow. About this Green game—are you on?"

"Am I on? You bet, I am—and fastened with rivets. Who's the chicken, and where does she live?"

Jimmy produced the thin rectangle of paper that Mr. Green had given him. He read aloud the typed name and address.

"Swell district!" he commented. "The molls up there are classy. I bet this Helene is a darb. Green described her as being very emotional. I like that kind of a moll, the sort you never know what they're thinking or going to do."

Fred grunted. "Well, I don't," he declared. "I had one of them once, and one evening she came purring into my arms and slipped a knife between my ribs. She'd discovered that I had another skirt in tow."

"Hospital case?" Jimmy inquired languidly.

"You said it. She was too wise a frail to overlook any such bet as having a blade too short to go through all my fat and find my vitals. She twisted the knife, too. I've still got a scar, where they took a dozen stitches."

Jimmy laughed, as if the story amused him. Fred started to curse, so the other cut in with, "Don't get sore. I had the same trick worked on me, only she used her pearl-handled gat. I'd outguessed her, though. It's my custom always to present my moll with a brand-new gun. They like that sort of present, and I take the bullets out of the cartridges and replace them with duplicates made of hard wax and darkened with graphite.

That was one of Mr. Chang's tricks, if you remember him."

Fred shivered and said, "There'd be a boom in the coffin business if Chang came back and started looting the B. L.'s."

Then there was a silence as the two gunmen finished their drinks. Uncle Jeff heard a third round being poured.

"What's the low-down?" Fred asked huskily after coughing from liquor going down the wrong way, almost strangling him. "What you going to frame on Green?"

Jimmy chuckled. "There are lots of ways of getting to his bank roll," he said. "We might go through with his job and then bleed him steadily, under threat of exposing the whole farce to this Helene girl."

"Uh-huh!" Fred agreed. "But I don't like these slow-bleeding games. The victim is apt to lose his jack in the stock market or some such, before we drain off enough of it."

"That's true," Jimmy admitted. "I've got a better scheme. He's nuts about the girl and would pay any price rather than have her know he had framed a rescue. Surely you noticed how his eyes flashed and his face flushed and his breath came short whenever he mentioned her."

"Yeah!" said Fred. "It showed especially, because the rest of the time he was as pale as a dirty sheet. He was afraid of us."

"Mr. Green," Jimmy predicted grimly, "will be a lot more afraid of us before we get through with him. I wonder if we, in a show-down, could prove that he framed this plot with us. That is, prove it to the girl's satisfaction—or make him think we could if we went to her. There's a good chance that he has a portable typewriter at home and that he used it to knock off this name and address."

Again Fred grunted. "Don't bank too much on that," he cautioned his pal. "This guy Green impressed me as being a pretty slippery sort of snake. Maybe he was foxy enough to use some one else's typewriter, so the bit of paper couldn't be traced to him."

"It's worth checking up," Jimmy agreed. "But I doubt if he'd go to that precaution, not expecting such trouble. Still, you never can tell. He used a peculiar sort of stationery for a man of his standing in society. It looks to me like he'd clipped it out of wrapping paper that'd come around a package from some exclusive shop. However, I've got another better scheme."

He was about to expound it, when Fred—being more animal, and, accordingly, having animal instincts more highly developed, including the sense of danger—suggested, "Do you reckon there's any chance old Jeff has come awake and is listening?"

Instantly, Jimmy was on his feet. A scowl settled over his countenance, and his set teeth showed menacingly between lips that were parted and tightly drawn back.

On tiptoe, he crossed the floor to the door of the prisoner's cell. With the speed of a fencer parrying a thrust, he turned a key in the patent lock, and opened the door.

Fred was close behind him, craning his head over his shoulder. The dim light filtered into the dark room beyond.

But Uncle Jeff had heard the warning words. He lay now just as Fred had left him, in exactly the same position that he had been deposited on the couch.

They approached close to him, leaned forward and listened to his breathing. The respiration was that of one still in a drugged stupor.

"The knock-out drops," Jimmy commented in a whisper, "hit him hard. Of course, he's old. He must have gotten a big shot. Lucky it didn't kill him. We need him alive. He's no use to the big chief, dead."

"To my way of thinking," said Fred, "the only good pro'bition agent is a dead one. These G-Men are all alike, every last one of them."

"That's true enough," Jimmy agreed. "But we want to trade Jeff for Phil. And the negotiations will go flat if we haven't got him alive, to write letters to the big guns in his office."

"Think he'll write them?"

"He'll do a lot of things we order," Jimmy declared, "with a gat against his skull or lighted matches burning the soles of his feet. We've got several chinks in the bunch, that can make any one come across. Orientals have torture developed to a fine art."

They went out, closed the door and left the key in the lock.

"This prisoner is an important one," said Jimmy. "You and I'll be blowing in a few minutes. We'll post a guard here. That'll keep him safe. There aren't any windows back yonder."

By this time, Uncle Jeff was again listening at the door. In the pitch darkness, that was relieved only by a thin sliver of light at the threshold, his mouth was set grimly. And there was a phosphorescent gleam in his blue eyes.

"I've gotten into a swell mess," he reflected. "Still, how else could I worm my way into the heart of this outfit? And I'm not yet at the heart, that's true. But I'll get there. I'll have the goods on the whole crowd before I go back to turn in my report."

Out in the sepulchral underground room, the two gunmen were conspiring again. Their voices had fallen very low, almost to whispers. Had it not been for the sounds coming through otherwise absolute silence, Uncle Jeff could not have overheard the words.

As he listened, a chill began to permeate him.

"Heavens!" he thought. "The girl can't stand that. She'll go crazy, sure as sin. And there's no way I can get a warning to her."

CHAPTER IV.

THE TERROR.

COLD rain, swirling in a northwest gale, beat in gusts against the limousine. It was a battleship-gray car, and the right-hand fender had been badly bent in a minor collision with a taxi.

Jimmy and Fred sat in the front seat, the former driving. They were alone. Jimmy kept an alert eye on the wet pavements with their streaks of reflected light. The water was dashing against the windshield faster than the automatic wiper could handle it. And, this night, he was particularly anxious not to have an accident.

For it was the night scheduled for the faked attack in which Mr. Green, at a cost of two thousand dollars, was to rescue Helene from the pair of cutthroats.

The air was so cool and damp that as the two men exhaled, their breath was visible, like cigarette smoke.

"You changed the license numbers on the machine?" Jimmy asked. He swerved to the right to dodge a car driven by a drunken driver who was off center in traffic.

"Sure!" was the reply. "Changed to a stolen set. But I wish we hadn't had that smash. The stove-in fender might identify our car, if we're noticed in the get-away."

"Bah!" Jimmy assured him disdainfully. "No one is going to be suspicious of us. This game will be as simple as cutting a quart of smuggled hooch. Did you notice what street we just passed? I glanced, but couldn't make out the name."

"Preston Boulevard," Fred answered.

"Then the next is Carlton Drive," said Jimmy. "We'll be at our destination and pulling our stuff within a quarter of an hour. This venture takes me back to the days when I was in the show business. They said I made a swell villain. And they were right, if I do say it my-

self, for the audience always hissed when I entered, twirling my cane and twisting the waxed tips of my black, waxed mustache. You should have seen the wig I wore. It was as dark as a sealed coffin."

"Uh-huh!" said Fred. "You'd make a good *Simon Legree* if your eyes weren't blue."

Jimmy chuckled. "I often wonder why villains generally are supposed to be dark of eyes and general complexion," he commented. "And heroes take better if they're blond. I suppose that's an inheritance from the Nordics of Europe fighting Latin invaders from the south."

"What's a Nordic?" Fred asked. "Sounds like a new drink."

"A Nordic," Jimmy told him, "is a guy who lives far enough north so that excessive sunshine doesn't make him half nutty with emotion. Well, here's Carlton Drive. Now for the dirty work, as we used to say back of the footlights."

The limousine rounded the corner with the ease of a rubber ball revolving at the end of a string. And now the rogues were in an ultra-exclusive district. Mansions were far apart. Stone walls with jagged fragments of glass embedded in the concrete at the top, to turn back invaders, lined the sidewalks, alternating with sepulchral hedges.

Through the storm, they heard the savage barking of an occasional watchdog. Fred frowned at the sounds. He shifted uneasily, and lit a cigarette.

"This is the sort of district," Jimmy commented, "where you find young men with twenty-five-hundred-dollar bejeweled notebooks in which to jot down ten cents' worth of thoughts. Here live the people who drink what they call gin. In the old days, only bums drank diluted alcohol, and were known as white liners. Prohibition has one good phase. It's eating the pipes out of the idle rich and the weaklings. I've always been against physicians and hospitals. They work for survival of the unfit. Let the sick die, and we'd have a strong race in a few generations. You keep an eye open. We're getting along toward the less restricted district, where there are apartment houses. Our goal is the sixteenth, on your side of the street."

"Uh-huh!" said Fred. "Say, you spill a great line of chatter at times. College education—huh?"

Jimmy grinned sourly. "I've fallen farther than you have any idea," he answered. "Art was my line. I won a scholarship to Paris and had to leave there in a hurry. There was a girl, found strangled, and though I didn't croak her, circumstantial evidence was against me. I've lived more in ten years than most people would in twice that many centuries. I'm two thousand years old."

"Uh-huh!" said Fred. "You must be a chink. This is No. 14 apartment we just passed."

"We're almost there," said Jimmy. "Sure you got your rod with you?"

"Uh-huh!"

"Because," Jimmy continued softly, "if there's any shooting, you'll have to handle it. I'll have my hands full."

He stopped the car and parked it, not in front of their destination, but about a hundred feet before they reached it. Both men got out into the storm. They were wearing raincoats, and the collars of these were turned up, and their soft-felt hats pulled low.

The rain was falling torrentially, the vicious wind making the drops mill about like people in some gigantic riot.

"Good night for Noah," Fred muttered.

"And for us," Jimmy added. "The water's running down the windows in such dense curtains that people can't look out and see us."

"How about the janitor?"

Jimmy smiled. "He's taken care of,"

he said. "One of our men gave him a case of alleged Scotch, as a bribe, on the pretext of not wanting to be disturbed while canvassing the suites for B. L. customers. I got the low-down on this janitor. He's a dipsomaniac."

"What's that?" Fred asked curiously, glancing admiringly at his pal.

"An insane or irresistible craving for booze," was the reply. "The word came from *dipsa,* Greek for thirst, and *mania,* for madness."

"Can they cure it?" Fred wanted to know.

"Yes—by a terrific shock that throws a permanent fear of liquor into the victim. You'd be surprised, how many mental kinks are curable. Even playing the stock market—most of the suckers come back three times and then stay away for good."

"Gee! you're a wise guy."

"I'm wise enough," Jimmy countered sagely, "just to have a vague comprehension of the infinite extent of what I do not know. Here's the driveway."

"Shall we cut off into the shrubbery and sneak forward?"

"To the contrary," Jimmy decreed, "we advance as boldly as if we were tenants. Stick to the walk. It's a cold night, and it's a safe bet the janitor is down by the boilers, getting soused."

"Where's the fire escape?"

"You act like an amateur," said Jimmy. "A crook should always steer clear of being stealthy, if he can help it. This girl, Helene, expects us. I fixed an appointment by phone. She thinks I'm an out-of-town lawyer, delivering some legal papers intrusted to me years ago by her father. The papers are supposed to be worth a lot of money to her."

They were walking briskly toward an eight-story building of art brick. It towered impressively in the night, far back from the street, beyond an intervening lawn, its lighted windows like so many comforting beacons.

"Huh!" commented Fred. "It's a wonder that a swell like her didn't tell you to see her own lawyers."

"She did suggest that," said Jimmy. "But I phoned her only an hour ago, told her I was leaving town at ten o'clock to-night, and had been instructed to deliver the documents only into her own hands. I posed as an old-time friend of her pa."

"You're as smooth as fifty-year-old bourbon," Fred complimented his pal. "You could sell fusel oil to a bar fly. Here we are."

They entered the vestibule. Jimmy consulted several rows of small cards, each bearing a name. He found the one he wanted, pressed the button opposite it, and soon was talking into the speaking tube. He gave the maid a fictitious cognomen, which he had employed in telephoning Helene, and announced that he had an appointment with the domestic's mistress.

The lock of the entry door clicked. The two rogues entered a long corridor. It was thickly carpeted, with marble flagstones on either side of the roll of costly floor covering. Paintings of merit adorned the walls.

The elevator was waiting. "Fourth floor, please!" said Jimmy in a cultured tone. And they began the ascent.

Then out into another hall, on to Apartment No. 418. Here Jimmy pushed another electric button. The door opened at once, revealing a French maid with pink cheeks, trim ankles and tantalizing eyes. She smiled winningly at Jimmy—and then a slight frown flitted over her face as she noticed his companion.

"By appointment!" said Jimmy. "Do your stuff, Fred."

Before the girl could cry out, a burly hand gripped her throat and silenced her. Jimmy produced a tin box from a side pocket. He pressed a release. The lid snapped open. He took out a saturated sponge. And the odor of ether assailed the nostrils of all three.

Jimmy clamped the sponge to the maid's nose.

By the time the anæsthetic had rendered her half-unconscious, Fred had her gagged and bound by the ankles and wrists with cloths that he had brought along.

Jimmy took the limp body in his arms. "Just about the right weight!" he approved. "I've a notion to take her along."

"Your moll would kill you both," Fred warned him.

"Words of wisdom," Jimmy agreed. He carried the girl forward and placed her in a reclining position on a settee.

"Swell joint!" Fred whispered. And it was. He was awed by his surroundings. Rugs, oil paintings and water colors, ceramics and antiques—all denoted luxury.

And there was the peculiar stillness that haunts the abodes of the rich and cultured.

Abruptly, two Chinese tapestries that screened a double doorway were pulled aside.

Framed in the triangular opening was a young woman. A faint gasp sounded between Jimmy's teeth as he gazed at her. She was the perfection of the hothouse culture of the wealthy and aristocratic. Her hair was more golden than a wedding ring. Her skin had the hue of a pink pearl, her eyes the depth and blueness of the Mediterranean. And her long, delicate fingers obviously had never done anything more menial than employ a paper knife to separate the pages of limited editions.

"Good evening, Miss Helene!" Jimmy uttered in a softer tone than Fred had ever before heard him use. "I am charmed and honored to make your acquaintance.

He bowed, with the sinuosity of a snake.

The girl started to smile graciously, but, glancing past the invaders and seeing the unconscious, fettered maid, she comprehended that she was in danger. The smile died in the making.

Her face changed from pink to the pallor of utmost terror.

And, involuntarily, she screamed.

Helene wanted to turn and run. But her limbs were paralyzed by fear. Her blood was running cold, and her brain was in tumult, reeling.

Fred whipped out an automatic. He thrust it close to her face. "Let out another yelp like that," he growled, "and I'll kill you."

She nodded automatically. Instinct mastered emotions that otherwise were beyond her control. Her throat was as silenced as if crammed with cotton.

She swayed, as though strength were quitting her like the electric current from an incandescent bulb.

Jimmy took three quick steps and supported her by the arms, gripping them tightly. He shoved lightly, and Helene began to walk backward. The two men followed. The drapes swished shut. And now they were in the spacious living room.

The affair had been rehearsed in regard to vital details. Fred hurried forward, crossed to the windows and drew the shades, so that what followed could not be observed from the rather distant apartment house to the west.

Meantime, Jimmy steered his prisoner to a davenport, where he gently shoved her to a sitting posture among costly pillows.

There was a peculiar look in Helene's eyes—a look he had never before seen in the eyes of any one else. It suggested the approach of a narcotic stupor. Jimmy experienced a twinge of alarm. The girl had caught his fancy. Furthermore, the artistic was developed in him to a degree above the average, and he felt that to injure her would be like crushing some rare orchid.

Her eyes were dazed, uncomprehending. Never before had she encountered real danger of any sort. Of such ex-

periences, she had read—and they had seemed unreal to her, the bizarre creations of writers' imaginations. Yet here she was, captive in the power of two rogues, utterly at their mercy, with no idea what they intended to do.

She wondered if this were some awful nightmare.

Then she found her voice, and it came hollowly, as though a shock had put all of her emotions asleep.

"What—what do you want?" she asked dully. "Money? It—it's in a wall safe. I—I'll unlock it for you."

Jimmy grinned. "No," he told her grimly. "We're not after money. It's you that we want. We're going to kidnap you."

CHAPTER V.

THE BRAIN SPECIALIST.

ABDUCTION! Helene had read of such things, in fiction and in newspapers. But it had never occurred to her that some day she might be stolen. In the main, this is true of most victims of crime. Few of us have any real expectation that we will be robbed, even though we carry insurance against theft. Many a person makes plans for to-morrow, only to be murdered in the sleep of the intervening night. Rare are the instances of premonition, where the victim senses that the sand of his hourglass has run its course, that his assassin is in the offing, approaching closer with each ticking of the clock.

Again Helene wondered if she were having some frightful dream. Surely, this could not be real. She blinked her eyes and stared fixedly, searchingly into Jimmy's eyes of cold blue.

And in them she saw something—a sinister, relentless significance—that made her even weaker, made the chill of horror that had entered her, spread until it permeated her entire body.

"You are awake," Jimmy told her, sensing her uncertainty. He tried to make his voice gentle, reassuring. But, to her, the words were like stabs from so many steel blades.

"Use your common sense," he continued earnestly. "If you go kicking up a fuss, we'll have to be rough with you, like we were with your French maid. Do what we say and——"

He stopped speaking, and his heart fluttered in alarm that he had not experienced for many a year. Helene's eyelids had drooped; they remained closed. Her pallor changed from white to the ghastliness of deathlike coma.

Jimmy stood staring at her in bewilderment. He was hardboiled, and he did not understand why the girl's reaction to the situation should affect him so profoundly. "She must look like some one I knew long ago and have forgotten," he reflected. "There's no other reason I can figure, why she should concern me. Of course, we're going to hold her for ransom and bleed Mr. Green white. To make our game function smoothly, she'll have to be in condition to write the letters to him, as we dictate them."

Yes, he decided, that must be the cause of his uneasiness—that, and the fact that her beauty was so extreme that the hardest heart must soften in its presence,

Ah! her eyes were opening.

She was staring at him, with a puzzled look, as if wondering how he happened to be there.

Her gaze roved, rested on Fred.

She shuddered, and it seemed to her that an earthquake was taking place, for everything was moving up and down and back and forth, as though the floor and walls and furniture had been transformed into living things. Her eyes, she felt, were bulging from their sockets, and now there was a haze in the living room—spirals of vapor turning into corkscrew shape and expanding, twisting, blending into each other—until she saw nothing but dense fog.

Through this fog, she heard Jimmy's

voice: "She's going bugs. No, it's just a faint."

At that instant, in Helene's brain, at the forehead and a bit to the left from center—in the frontal lobe of the left hemisphere of the gray matter within her skull—she felt something that was like the snapping of a huge electric spark from a static machine.

It seemed to her that the top of her skull blew off, and that her heart and lungs stopped dead. And now all was black. Gone was memory, gone the lights of the room and the two sinister invaders and the very room itself. Helene was falling downward into a bottomless pit of unrelieved darkness. No, that was not it, she decided. She was being hurled far out into space, among the stars. Peculiar patches of phosphorescent illumination began to form near her and accompany her in her flight. Gradually they took on the aspect of horrible, grimacing faces—evil inhabitants of the realm of nightmares.

Then all these things vanished. She no longer felt any sensation. She had no thought, no emotion, no memory.

She was unconscious—and in a peculiar state of unconsciousness, something that was not death, something that was a sleep and yet was not, as was to be discovered later.

"Good!" Fred approved, contemplating the girl. She had sagged backward against the pillows, eyelids closed. The terror had quitted her countenance. It had been displaced by a serenity of peace and unconcern. Again her cheeks were pink.

But Jimmy was not so enthusiastic. "I'm not so sure that it's good," he snarled. "Something's wrong with this moll. I've seen lots of women swoon, and they never acted like this. However, she's not dead." He paused, felt for her pulse and found it beating firmly, rather fast. He listened to her breathing, watched the rise and fall of her bosom, and nodded in satisfaction that her respiration was not alarmingly above normal.

"What next?" Fred asked.

"I'm hoping she'll stay like this until we get her carted to where we want to keep her," Jimmy replied. "Doesn't look as if we'll have to bind and gag her, or use a hypodermic. However, you'll sit in the rear of the car, with her on the floor at your feet, covered with a robe. If she comes to, we'll give her a jab with the needle."

Then the gunman moved swiftly. He ran softly across the Oriental rug and passed through an open doorway into the room beyond.

"You locate the fire escape," he called.

"I have," Fred answered. "It's in here. I saw it when I pulled down the shades."

Jimmy was back in a matter of seconds, carrying a blanket. It was soft, of a delicate orchid tint, and, though he was panting from hurry, he noticed that it was fragrant with some exotic perfume.

"Ding!" A mantel clock over the fireplace musically sounded the half hour, and then began chiming soothingly.

Rap! rap! rap!

Some one was at the door, in the public hall.

"Douse the glims!" Jimmy whispered. He began wrapping the blanket about Helene, so that it would protect her from the rain in the dash to their waiting limousine.

Snap! The burly Fred could move fast in emergency. By force of habit, on entering the room, the first object he had looked for had been the switch controlling the electric lights. He had the living room and the entry hall in pitch darkness, so quickly that Jimmy got tangled in the blanket, tripped and almost fell.

Rap! rap! rap! Again there came the knocking at the corridor door, this time loudly, insistently.

A firm voice, a man's, called out, "What's wrong, Helene?"

Then a silence, as if hopeful for an answer, followed by more rapping.

"Somebody heard her scream," Jimmy said in a low tone. He was busily incasing the girl in the blanket. "Open the window."

"Maybe it's Green," Fred suggested as he turned on a pocket flash light and moved forward to obey.

"Not his voice," Jimmy responded. "Too early for him, anyway. Clock just struck eight thirty. Green's not due until nine."

Fred growled savagely, for the handle of the locked hall door was being turned. There was a dull thud, as the outsider cast his weight against the barrier. He was shouting now, "Help! help! Elevator boy! Run for the janitor and get a key."

Again Fred growled, and his free right hand was holding an automatic. He was quite unconscious of having reached for it. His pal sensed the significance of the growl, and the sounds of Fred moving toward the hall where the maid was.

Jimmy turned his head. "Don't shoot through the panel!" he directed sharply. "They'll phone a precinct station, and H. Q. will broadcast a general alarm. A police cruiser might be near by to pick us up. Our game's to get to the car and be off into the night before any one enters here."

There was a lot of noise in the hall now. Others were joining the challenger at the door—tenants emerged excitedly from their apartments, asking questions, offering suggestions. Yes, there must be something wrong in 418. One woman, lured to the open by irresistible curiosity despite the fact that her face was hideously plastered with a green clay pack, clutched her dressing gown about her portly figure and volunteered that she, too, had heard a scream; but had "attributed it to that cat of a Mrs. Wolson down the hall, having another fit of hysterics. Sh! Here she comes. Don't let on I said so."

A slow-moving, solemn-faced man, garbed in a Tuxedo suit in readiness for a battle with rotten liquor at night clubs, had also heard what sounded like a scream. "I thought it was some one tuning in a bad radio," he declared. "What is your opinion, doctor?"

The man he addressed was the one who had been hammering at the door.

His name was Doctor Finn.

He lived in an apartment on the floor above. That the scream had penetrated to him was not surprising. There were two reasons. The floors were not sound proof and there had been a lot of complaint about the construction of this building.

Secondly, Doctor Finn was madly in love with Helene, and undoubtedly there is telepathy between lovers.

He was the rival whom Mr. Green was bent on beating in the contest for the beautiful young girl's affections.

It would not be many minutes before Doctor Finn would wish that he were a detective. That was not his line.

He was a brain specialist—a psychiatrist who practiced privately, unattached to any hospital.

Inside the besieged suite, the gunmen were in process of making their getaway with their loot—the unconscious woman. Helene was rolled in the blanket, only her face visible.

Jimmy hoisted her over his left shoulder. He was surprisingly strong, in view of his rather frail build and his career of dissipation, but Fred was not altogether confident that his pal could safely transport his cargo down the fire escape.

"Better let me handle her," Fred suggested. "I'm built more like a mule."

"Chase yourself!" Jimmy countered. "I could carry a ton of stuff like this. Open the window?"

"Sure! Don't you feel the draft?"

They went out into the darkness of the night and storm, Fred leading the way. The rain lashed them viciously, as if doing its bit for Helene. Rain loves all flowers.

"No light!" Jimmy whispered. "I'll keep my hand on the railing."

Down they went; through the black; reached the third floor and momentarily were dimly revealed in a faint glow from the window of a suite.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! With water splashing lightly underfoot. With the gale fanning them like a rising tornado. Their hats were pulled down tightly and did not blow off.

Past the second floor, now. And here they came to the end of the steps. Fred risked one beam from his light, for brief and comprehensive scrutiny. He located the mechanism that controlled the iron ladder, which extended perpendicularly, drawn up so that prowlers could use it for easy access to the levels above ground.

Fred lowered the ladder. He descended, and was barely at the bottom when Jimmy joined him. They were revealed now, in the dim light from twin globes at a side entrance.

Running, they went out over the lawn, into the darkness. There they skirted shrubbery, reached the highway, ran to their car, entered it, and slammed the doors shut. When the half-drunken janitor let Doctor Finn and the others into Helene's apartment, she was under a lap robe, being driven swiftly away through the night.

CHAPTER VI.

"POLICE H. Q. BROADCASTING."

DOCTOR FINN was first to enter Helene's suite. Unceremoniously he shoved the janitor aside as soon as the pass-key opened the door. The fellow, loaded with bootleg, lurched and almost fell.

A score of tenants had gathered by this time. One and all, they pressed forward eagerly, bent on not missing anything exciting. But they retreated when Doctor Finn turned and said warningly, "You're apt to get shot if criminals still are in the place."

The neurasthenic Mrs. Wolson had joined the crowd. Hearing the physician's words, she began to cry hysterically. Her neighbors gave a start and drew back from her, for her sounds were unearthly in this atmosphere of tension.

"Get her back to her apartment and see that she takes a double dose of her bromide," Doctor Finn directed her meek-faced, whipped husband. She was led away.

"None of you are to enter yet," the doctor continued sternly. His tone, habitually professional, now had an official ring. "If there's been real trouble here, nothing must be disturbed until the police arrive."

He knew the place thoroughly, being medical adviser and suitor of the woman who had just been abducted. Stepping forward into the darkness, he switched on the lights of the private corridor. Gasping sounds along with exclamations of alarm, rose from the people congregated in the public hallway, as the indirect lighting system dispelled the black and disclosed the fettered and gagged French maid. Growls of disappointment and protest rose as Doctor Finn closed the door in their faces.

Quickly Doctor Finn opened his pocketknife and cut the strands of cloth.

The girl gasped deeply several times, in intense relief. She was extremely excited. A stream of French flowed from her lips, in a quavering tone.

Doctor Finn whitened as he listened. "Kidnaped, eh?" he exclaimed. "Oh, my poor Helene!"

The maid was weeping now, and wringing her hands, her shoulders shaking violently.

"I'm a bit rusty on my French," said the physician impatiently. "Cut out the lingo and talk plain English. I know that you're from Iowa and picked up your Parisian at finishing school."

This was true. The unfortunate young woman had seen better days. Reared in comparative comfort, widowed, and left with a pittance as an inheritance, she had become a servant.

"Sure!" she agreed. "Two men called. One of them had made an appointment with my mistress, representing himself as an out-of-town lawyer. They had no sooner entered this hall, than they overpowered me and applied a sponge to my nostrils. It was saturated with ether. I did not stay under long. When I revived, I found myself bound and gagged. There was nothing that I could do to help. The light was burning. I thought it might be best not to let them know that I was overhearing what was taking place beyond those Chinese drapes. So I kept my eyes closed, feigning unconsciousness."

"Good!" Doctor Finn approved. He lit a cigarette and inhaled nervously. "You can give the police a good description of the men?"

The maid shuddered. "Their faces are indelible in my memory," she said. "I shall never forget them. To think, they might have carried me away, too!"

She was an attractive girl. Doctor Finn nodded and said grimly, "Probably they would have, if I had not heard Helene's scream and, responding, hammered at the door and scared them into a premature get-away. Come!"

He parted the hangings, and she followed him into the luxuriously furnished living room. He turned on the lights.

The open window told the story. Doctor Finn ran to it. He leaned out into the rain and peered downward and then out in all directions.

"Gone!" he lamented, smothering an oath. "We're too late."

Then he closed the window, went to a desk phone, lifted the transmitter and said tersely, "Police!" The automatic system had not yet been installed, out here in the suburbs.

Response was quick. Rapidly he outlined the facts, and at the other end of the wire a night sergeant jotted them on a pad.

"You'll send a detective, of course?" Doctor Finn asked.

"At once!" he was assured. "And your report will immediately be relayed to headquarters and put on the air, for our cruisers to pick up. You say the maid saw the kidnapers. Let me talk to her."

This was a grand experience in the girl's life, conversing with the superior officer of the patrolman on the local beat. Ah, but she would spread it on thick, telling other domestics about it later, on her afternoon off. Intoxicated by a feeling of importance, she gave an accurate description of Jimmy and Fred.

The conversation finished, she turned expectantly to Doctor Finn. He was professional from head to foot. It showed in his manner, his piercing gray eyes, his succinct speech, his long, artistic fingers.

Already this young psychiatrist was gaining a national reputation. He had even been consulted by Austrian experts on the subject of unusual deviations from normal in the functioning of the human brain.

"Why did they steal her?" the maid asked.

Doctor Finn hesitated. To his way of thinking, Helene was a prize more attractive than crown jewels. He feared, and yet fought back and would not admit, the possibility that the underworld had reached for her and clutched her into its depths as plain loot.

"Ransom!" he announced abruptly. "She is known to be an heiress, soon to come into a vast fortune. The executors of her father's estate have wide

latitude that would permit the paying of a huge sum for her release. Her abductors could have determined that readily. The will was probated and published."

He paused and frowned. "Again," he suggested, "it may be for vengeance."

"Ah, sir!" protested the maid. "Dear Miss Helene never did anything that could incite any one to revenge. She was incapable of it."

"I had her father in mind," said Doctor Finn. "In the accumulation of his wealth, no doubt, he made many enemies."

Abruptly the psychiatrist closed his mouth and bit his lower lip, aware that he should not be discussing such matters with a maid who might and probably was inclined to gossip.

"Keep a close mouth!" he advised. "You will be compensated." Then he added shrewdly, "Besides, the least word might be turned against you. It is not improbable that the police will consider the possibility that you may have been a confederate."

The girl whitened. She shivered. "A confederate of those fellows?" she countered. "Impossible! You did not see them, or you would agree."

"I have confidence in you," Doctor Finn assured her. "But discuss it with no one. It will pay you." He patted the right-hand pocket of his trousers and she heard coins jingle together.

"Yes, sir! Thank you, sir!" she said with a curtsy.

The psychiatrist's forehead was wrinkled like a mummy's. Intense anxiety flickered in his gray eyes.

"I know and understand your mistress thoroughly," he continued. "So, no doubt, do you. She is highly bred, temperamental, with her emotional nature inordinately developed. Excitement, at times, has tended to reveal in her a strain of the hysteric. I am worried, not so much about her personal safety, as I am about her reaction to this frightful experience—the effect that it may have on certain areas of her brain."

"You mean, that she will go crazy?" the maid asked, her eyes widening in alarm.

"Tut, tut! Nothing like that," he said a bit impatiently. Yet inwardly he was not so sure. It would not do for this girl to become too acquainted with his fears. "You," he pursued, "have observed Miss Helene from a different angle than myself. What is your observation as regards, say, her memory?"

"She has an exceptionally fine memory, sir."

"In every way?"

"Well, I mean, for things that interest her. When it comes to names and other things that have no vital interest, she can never remember."

"I know, I know," Doctor Finn murmured gravely. He reflected, "Her memory is, indeed, marvelous in matters that intimately involve her ego. That faculty is overdeveloped. A crisis like this might easily cause a short circuit. At a certain point, extremes meet—even in matters of remembering and forgetting."

A bell tinkled at the rear of the suite.

"Answer it, please," Doctor Finn directed. "Probably it is the police."

Out in the night, the radio was being utilized in an effort to aid Helene. Radio—most uncanny invention of man, next to the X ray.

At police headquarters, a uniformed operator was speaking into a microphonic transmitter: "Attention, all cruisers, numbers 28 and 29 in particular. This is police headquarters. A young woman, age twenty, golden hair, blue eyes, abducted from her residence at 7413 Carlton Drive. Height, five feet four. Weight about one-twenty. Pedestrian saw her, wrapped in a lavender blanket, being stowed into a limou-

sine by two men—license 173,486. Car has a battered rear fender, right-hand side. Description of the men: Both wearing raincoats and soft-felt hats; one slender, medium height——"

Out through the ether, in all directions, magnified like the voice of some giant, so loud that the human ear could not detect it until stepped down to audible vibration by the tubes of receiving sets, the warning sped. Cruising police cars quickened their motors, and the plain-clothes men who sat beside the drivers hurriedly picked up their machine guns.

And the abduction car was headed for a den in the heart of the downtown district, where lights were brightest, police most plentiful.

But Jimmy and Fred and their beautiful plunder would not be headed off. Already they had abandoned their car, stopped another, shot the unfortunate at the wheel, cast his body into the gutter, and driven away in the stolen machine, chuckling at their safety.

CHAPTER VII.

HELENE AWAKENS.

MOANING, Helene moved convulsively, and opened her eyes. As consciousness returned, she shuddered, under the impression that she had experienced some horrible dream.

Why, the dream must be continuing, and she was not awake, after all. The ceiling at which her blue eyes stared was strange to her. Its plaster was rough, and the color of the paint was almost black. The bed, too, was not the swan's-down affair to which she was accustomed. She groped with her dainty fingers, and discovered that she was lying on an uncomfortable couch, with coil springs painfully pressing into her back.

She gave a start and sat up; found herself in a small room, about eight feet long and six wide. There was a closed door, but no window. The air was stale, rank, and clammily damp.

All this was disclosed by a lone electric bulb which dangled at the end of a braided wire, its frosted glass begrimed.

A sensation of unreality seized the girl.

Then she saw that she was not alone. A man was sitting in a chair near where her head had been resting. He had rather long hair, silvery white, with gray eyes that were piercing and yet so kindly and gentlemanly that instinctively Helene gave a gasp of relief.

The man smiled and said softly, "Now, don't be alarmed, everything will turn out all right. You just leave it to Uncle Jeff."

Helene blinked her eyes and rubbed them. "I must be dreaming," she murmured.

"I wish you were," he replied gently.

His words were so significant that she felt a sharp pain shoot like a hatpin through her neck, in the region of her thyroid gland. Her heart faltered and she swayed as it almost ceased beating. With difficulty, she swallowed.

"Where am I?" she asked, bewildered.

"You are in the back room of a cellar in Chinatown," she heard.

Goose flesh rose on her delicate skin, and all strength seemed to have quitted her limbs. "I must leave at once," she declared.

"I wish you could," Uncle Jeff told her fervently.

"Can't I? Why not?" Her voice trembled.

"You are a prisoner. So am I. We are confined by that locked door. And," he added in a whisper, "there's a guard stationed outside."

Helene stared at him in disbelief. "Nonsense!" she said presently. "This is just a dream. You cannot fool me." Yet her voice was hollow, and she knew that her companion had spoken the truth.

"You were unconscious when they brought you in here," Uncle Jeff said. "That blanket there was wrapped about you."

She reached to the floor and fingered it. "I recognize it," she said dazedly. "It belongs on my bed. But how did it get so wet?"

"You were carried through a storm, no doubt, the blanket sheltering you from the rain. Don't you remember?"

"Remember what?" she asked. There was a glazed look in her right eye that sent an unpleasant tingling up Uncle Jeff's spine.

"What happened," he explained. "You were abducted."

She stared at him in amazement, and then laughed shrilly. "This *is* a dream." she declared. "I'm positive of it now." He contemplated her in silence. "What do you remember last, just before you went to sleep?" he inquired. It had dawned on him that he must handle her carefully, that something had happened to her brain.

"Why," she replied quickly, "I was —— That's queer. I don't remember going to sleep."

"Might I ask your name and where you live?"

"My name is Helene, and I have an apartment on Carlton Drive."

"Do you recall your previous life, in detail, before going asleep?"

She nodded. "Certainly, every bit of it. Born in Italy, educated in Paris, father died of apoplexy, left me a large estate in trust, and there's Doctor Finn and——"

Uncle Jeff interrupted. "But you cannot recall any events immediately preceding this sleep—anything like being attacked and overpowered by men and carried away?"

Again she stared at him, and the look in her blue eyes now told him that she was debating his own sanity.

"Nothing like that happened," she said. "I'd have remembered it, if it had, wouldn't I? Oh, this is just a dream. Well, it's nice to have such a delightful old gentleman as yourself to talk to in dreamland."

Uncle Jeff was thinking fast. "I wonder what's happened to her," he reflected. "She has undergone an experience so terrible that it has been mercifully blotted from memory. I'd give two gallons of rye if I were a brain specialist right now. Part of this woman is still asleep."

She was frowning, as if aware that something was wrong with her. Gently she pinched her left arm, then tightened the pressure. A look of fear flickered in her eyes.

"What's wrong?" he asked quickly, deeply concerned.

She did not immediately answer. Instead, she pinched her left cheek and then the calf and ankle of her left leg. Her pallor became more intensified.

"Why!" she gasped. "I—I haven't any sensation in my left part of me. I —I seem to be paralyzed on that side, from head to foot."

Uncle Jeff mustered a reassuring laugh, but was conscious that it must have a hollow sound, unconvincing. "Oh, that's from the way you were lying when you slept," he said, trying to make his voice blithe, to allay her apprehensions. "You know how it is, parts of us often 'go asleep' as we say—kind of get cramped, I guess."

But Helene did not accept his explanation. "No!" she declared. "I haven't that tingling sensation. The whole left side of me is paralyzed."

"It can't be!" he protested. "See, you're moving your left arm and limb."

"I can move them, but there's no sensation," she insisted. "What was it we were taught in physiology? Oh, yes! My motor nerves, for moving, are all right. But my sensory nerves, for feeling, are dead. Only on the left side, though. The right side is just like it used to be."

Uncle Jeff wanted to groan in sympathy. He comprehended that the young woman should be in the care of a neurologist without delay.

"Something else is queer, too," she continued dazedly. "I—I don't seem to have any emotions, except fear. All my other emotions are—frozen—paralyzed—— Why, I don't even love Doctor Finn any more. Why is that?"

CHAPTER VIII.

BLACKMAIL.

IN reply, Uncle Jeff gazed at Helene, unaware that his fixed stare was significant until a look of alarm came into her eyes. "What has happened to me?" she asked faintly.

"We must talk in low whispers," he replied evasively. "A guard is stationed outside, in the next room. We don't want him to hear, for you and I are going to plan an escape. Don't you worry, miss. I'll get you out of this mess."

The old-timer thought that he had seen about everything under the sun. But here was a new one to him—a woman who had lost part of her memory, who had lost all sensory sensation in the left side of her body, and whose emotions, except fear, had all gone to sleep.

He had no idea what it was, except that something had gone wrong inside her brain. The nature of her malady did not interest him so much as a growing horror that she might be incurable.

"This is awful," he reflected. "In abducting her, they have stolen her love for her sweetheart, robbed her of the finest thing in her life. It's a new kind of loot—a woman's emotions. I wonder if they are destroyed, or just asleep. I'll rescue her and get her to a brain specialist if it costs me my life. Maybe there's some way she can be cured."

Helene was eying him vacantly. "What are you thinking of?" she asked.

"Of you," Uncle Jeff told her gently. "There is no cause for alarm, miss. You are just suffering from emotional shock. Memory and feeling and sentiment will return to you. It will be like suddenly recalling a name that has been elusive, locked up in a brain cell."

He hoped that his prediction would prove correct. But he had his doubts. Something was struggling to come up from his own memory, an affair that was similar to this unfortunate girl's predicament. What was it? He cudgeled his mind, irritated that his faculty of recollection, ordinarily exceptional, now failed him.

It must, he mused, have something to do with crime, for little else appealed to him. Ah, yes! By association, by the suggestion of crime, he summoned the thing to consciousness.

He had heard the story from a detective. Out in a western State, a woman had lost her head in hysterics during a highly emotional scene, had shot a man, and afterwards insisted that she remembered nothing about it. A psychiatrist had aided her in court, had classified her case as one of hysterical amnesia, loss of memory following a terrific shock. The expert had demonstrated that she had, also, hysterical anæsthesia. One part of her body had gone to sleep, and he had demonstrated, proved it to the jury by thrusting long needles through her flesh on the left side, without any response, the woman immune to pain.

"This girl," Uncle Jeff said to himself, "is that and more. She has the added affliction of frozen emotions—probably a psychiatrist would call it emotional anæsthesia. Her emotions are asleep, except for fear. I wonder if they can be wakened."

She was watching him, without much interest. "What day is this?" she asked, rather indifferently.

"Friday, the thirteenth," he answered.

"Then I haven't lost much time," she

commented. "How long since I was brought here?"

"Over an hour, miss."

"Have you a watch?"

Uncle Jeff consulted his timepiece, an ancient one, as thick as a clam. It had been awarded to him, long ago, for an unusually clever bit of work as a railroad detective.

"It is almost eleven o'clock," he informed her, and added, "at night."

Helene nodded. "The last I remember," she said, "it was shortly after eight. I was in my apartment, alone with my maid. Then it's all blank, until I wakened here. Who brought me?"

"Some men."

"What are they going to do with me?"

"Hold you for ransom, I presume," Uncle Jeff suggested. "Judging by your garments, you are wealthy."

Helene nodded. "I do not know how much I am worth," she said. "It is somewhere between five or six hundred thousand dollars. My lawyers come periodically and read a lot of figures to me, but I never pay much attention to them. I never cared for figures—except bridge scores. My allowance is ample, so why should I bother about the principal? It cannot run away. It is held in trust, I think they call it, until I am of age."

"Sh!" Uncle Jeff interposed abruptly. "Be very quiet. I want to hear what's happening outside."

He went to the door, pressed an ear against a panel and listened. An intruder had entered the room beyond. He was addressing the guard.

"I want to see those two fellows I met here last night!" he demanded angrily.

Helene rose and approached her companion. "I know that voice," she whispered. "It's a friend. He'll help. Shall I call?"

"No!" Uncle Jeff answered quickly. "You mustn't make a sound. Who is he?"

"A gentleman of my acquaintance," she replied.

"He passes here as Mr. Green," said Uncle Jeff, who had overheard the conspiracy the night before. "Is that his real name?"

"No, his name is Lordell."

The detective was glad that she had furnished the information. "I'll put that fellow behind the bars!" he vowed silently, but had to add, "if I ever escape from this place."

A sudden apprehension came to him. What she might hear outside, from now on, might send her into hysterics—probably cause another short circuit in her memory.

"Do you trust me?" he asked earnestly.

"With my life. I know you will aid me."

"Then," Uncle Jeff instructed, "sit on the couch and put the blanket around your ears so that you won't catch a word."

Helene obeyed without hesitation. She seemed indifferent.

Meantime, the guard had whistled into a speaking tube and asked, "Jimmy and Fred in the card room? Fred out, eh? Send Jimmy down. They's a guy here to see him that acts as if he's lost his corkscrew."

Uncle Jeff waited. Outside, all was silent, except for the *drip-drip-drip* from a leaky water-pipe connection. Suddenly, he heard a swift, light patter, as if a dancing comedian were descending the stairs, doing a soft-shoe.

It was Jimmy. He had been celebrating and was a few sheets to the wind—but not enough to fail to sense trouble.

"Hello, sport!" he greeted the visitor. "Now, don't get out of your chair and try to do any *Simon Legree*. Sit quiet, and talk in a low voice."

There was a shuffling as Jimmy seated himself at the large, round table, across from his victim. For a few moments,

all was still, with the drops of water falling monotonously to the concrete flooring.

"Beat it!" Jimmy ordered the guard. The fellow went upstairs.

Mr. Green's voice came from a feverish throat, the tone one of agitated accusation. "What went wrong out at the apartment to-night?"

"Nothing went wrong that I know of," Jimmy responded calmly. "I thought everything broke swell." Something in his words reminded Uncle Jeff of a diamond cutting a groove in glass.

"You were to stage a faked attack!" Mr. Green said.

"We did it," Jimmy told him.

"I was to show up at nine and rescue her, driving you and your pal out."

"Uh-huh!" Jimmy agreed. He struck a match and lit a cigarette.

"I got there at nine," Mr. Green continued, "and the place was all in a turmoil, with a whole car load of police and detectives. The girl has disappeared."

"Why, yes!" Jimmy countered. "Now that you remind me, I remember. We decided to take her away with us."

Mr. Green groaned. It was obvious that he really loved Helene. "Took her with you, eh?" he asked sharply. "Why?"

"She was too good to be true," said Jimmy frankly. "I have a passion for collecting works of art."

Again Mr. Green groaned, this time in alarm. "Where is she?" he demanded.

"Now, that would be telling," Jimmy parried.

"What are you going to do with her?"

"This is Chinatown," Jimmy said quietly. "Two floors above you is the local headquarters of the man-killing tong. The district is sort of run down at the heels. It needs pepping up. Fully twenty years, I understand, since a white girl has been put up on the auction block and sold."

Uncle Jeff shivered, and was glad that Helene had a blanket about her head and could not hear the parley.

There was another silence, the water dripping like the tickings of a clock. A peculiar tension was in the air. Uncle Jeff was conscious of it. He had the impression that the atmosphere of mysterious Chinatown had invaded the place. The old-timer sniffed, expecting to scent the fumes of frying duck fat, tea leaves, powdered tobacco, dried scorpions and chandu, the poppy narcotic.

Mr. Green's voice came aghast, in an oath that was an exclamation of horror. Then he said, "You don't mean that!"

A brief stillness, and Jimmy declared grimly, "I am not in business for my health. True, the matter of the girl is a digression from my wonted line. But a man might as well turn his hours of leisure to profit."

Again Mr. Green cursed, and now his tone was menacing. "You'd better not harm her!" he warned his lone companion.

"I don't intend to," Jimmy said smoothly. His voice suddenly changed to a higher tempo and his words came like pellets of molten lead, "Watch your tongue, boy. Don't threaten me. Just a gesture with my finger, and one of my mob would crack you. Don't touch it!"

For Mr. Green had brought a pistol with him, and had moved to draw it. His arm became paralyzed. And he wondered where Jimmy had gotten the automatic that now was in his thin right hand. Certainly, Green had not seen him reach for it. The weapon apparently had materialized out of the air, as a magician with a deft twist of his wrist produces a dove.

"D-don't sh-shoot!" Mr. Green implored. His tongue seemed suddenly to have swollen and filled his mouth.

"It's up to you," said Jimmy lightly.

"Behave yourself, and you'll not leave here feet first. As a matter of fact, I am not at all anxious to bump off a good customer."

Mr. Green gasped. "Ah! So that's it!" he said. "This is blackmail—what you denizens of the underworld call hush money—extortion—ransom——"

"Shut up!" Jimmy cut in. "It sounds too much like the time I was on trial in Chi and they were quoting out of the statutes. Let's talk plainly. I'm going to sell the girl to you."

Mr. Green evidently was regaining his composure, and Uncle Jeff surmised that the gun had disappeared. The dupe at the round table highly polished by former generations of saloon patrons asked cunningly, "What if I'm not in the market to buy?"

"That," Jimmy told him, "is a matter of utmost indifference to me. If you don't meet the price, I know more than one chink that will. In fact, it might be a better idea to exhibit the girl at tong headquarters and raffle her at five hundred dollars a ticket. The slant eyes, you know, are great gamblers."

"What's the price?" Mr. Green asked hastily.

"One hundred thousand dollars—and a bargain, at that."

Mr. Green whistled between set teeth, and the sound had a note of dismay. All was quiet again, out there in the mart of trade, save for the water slowly dripping with a suggestion that it was to continue through all eternity.

"That's a big price," Mr. Green commented presently.

"For an ordinary specimen, yes," Jimmy agreed, "but not for such a masterpiece. I've never seen Helene's equal."

"All true enough!" the other agreed fervently. "It's a lot of money, though."

"You can pay it."

"You've looked up my rating, eh?"

"Sure!" said Jimmy. "This is a real business organization. Why, we even have a cost system and a bureau of investigation, an auditor and what-not. The girl will inherit six times that much. You'll get your money back sixfold when you marry her."

"Yes," said Mr. Green with a dejected grunt, "provided she does marry me."

"Oh," Jimmy assured him smoothly, "we'll fix that. We'll let you stage a genuine rescue, to all appearances, just as we originally intended. Why, you can frame it any way you want—even buy her off the Chinese auction block, if you desire."

"Is she safe?" Mr. Green asked anxiously.

"Absolutely!" Jimmy declared with emphasis. "Do you think I'd take any chances on anything happening to such swell loot?"

"That sounds reasonable," Mr. Green admitted. "I'll have to sell some bonds. The banks open at ten in the morning. I'll be here at eleven sharp."

"Suit yourself!" Jimmy told him languidly. "I have a luncheon date with a private secretary of the district attorney's office at noon, so don't be late. Fetch the ransom in cash." He paused and his next words were in an agate-hard tone. "If you tip off the bulls or try any double cross, you'll be marked for death."

"Don't you worry, I know that!" Mr. Green said fervently. "I'd rather meddle with an electric chair than get you fellows after me. If you want my candid opinion, the devil never will show up to claim you. He'll be afraid."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHINESE PERIL.

AT that, Jimmy laughed and countered, "I can take you out and show you gunmen that are as bad as Satan. Come to think of it, maybe they *are* Satan—split up into a lot of different personalities. No chance of your double crossing us, eh?"

"None—absolutely!" Green spoke with the earnestness of pleading for his life in court.

"We've got you coming and going," said Jimmie. "There's a dictograph underneath this table top, and every word that you have ever uttered here has been taken down in shorthand at the other end of the wire. With the pipe lines we have into the lair of the law, we can have you put away for a long stretch as easily as cutting a case of Scotch. Of course, we don't bother much with real Scotch any more. There's a dope they use in packing houses to paint hams and give them the smoked taste. A few drops of that in alcohol, with a bit of prune juice for coloring, and none but a veteran Red Konk can tell the diff. In making rye, we get the taste by soaking crushed hickory nuts in the B. L., and for bourbon we use black walnuts."

With one hundred thousand dollars cash in sight Jimmy was now quite amiable. Lighting a fresh cigarette, he rose significantly.

Mr. Green was glad to take the hint. He could conceive no place on earth, from which he possibly could be more anxious to make an exit, than this underground den.

Jimmy led the way up the stairs, into the pitch-black corridor. There he said, "So long! See you in jail," and was gone into the unknown. Mr. Green groped to the steel door. Again he experienced a chill of being in proximity to the uncanny, as it opened automatically and permitted him to escape into the foul, rainy blackness of the night. It would be an hour before his heart would slow down to normal pulsation.

Uncle Jeff heard the guard come down the stairs, and the scraping of a chair as the fellow settled himself at the round table under the lone, low-hanging light in a green-glass shade shaped like an inverted funnel.

Uncle Jeff did not immediately leave the door. He was not yet ready to face Helene, for she would ask questions, want to know what had been happening in the outer room.

A puzzling thought had come to the old-timer while listening to the parley between Jimmy and his dupe. The fate of the girl had been discussed openly. Yet Jimmy undoubtedly knew that she was within hearing distance. Why had he hazarded the possibility of her listening to such a crass discussion of herself and going into screaming hysterics?

Did Jimmy want to terrify her? If so, why? On the other hand, it had been evident that the gunman did not want Mr. Green to know where the prisoner was confined.

The explanation came to Uncle Jeff with the suddenness of a bolt of lightning.

The room in which he and Helene were locked had eyes.

There must be a peep hole, through which a spy could watch the occupants. No doubt, too, there was some system of communicating signals—probably, electrically—in a code that had kept Jimmy informed of what was taking place in the cell—for instance, that the girl's head was incased in a blanket, so that she could not hear. This, then, explained why Mr. Green had not been taken elsewhere for conference.

The matter of being under constant observation presented a very difficult problem for the old-timer. It meant that any attempt at escape would be detected and nipped in the bud.

Still, was the spying continuous—or only during crucial periods, or for occasional checking up of captives? Uncle Jeff's sagging hope began to rise. Matters might not be so bad, after all.

Jimmy had mentioned a dictograph being under the round table where he had sat with Mr. Green. Perhaps there was a similar device in this cell, so that

even whispers or conspiracy to gain freedom would be heard by the gunmen in some other part of the building.

It was very probable that no precautions had been overlooked, in the matter of keeping Uncle Jeff and Helene confined. They were valuable to their foes. One was to be traded for the release of the jailed Phil. The girl was to be exchanged for one hundred thousand dollars in cash.

Or was she? The old detective's hair tingled and his lips felt suddenly dry. The small room seemed colder. Jimmy had double crossed Mr. Green once. What was to prevent him from doing it again? He could collect the one hundred thousand dollars—then keep the girl, and, no doubt, render Green worthless except as fertilizer for the soil from whence he had come.

He turned to Helene and motioned for her to remove the orchid-hued blanket that had silenced her ears. She did so.

"What happened? What did they say? What was it all about?" she asked. He noticed that, even in these circumstances, her tone still was lifeless, except for the undercurrent of fear.

Yet he was glad for that fear. It indicated that her emotional being was not altogether paralyzed. It suggested that she might be aroused from emotional sleep under expert guidance.

As before, they were conversing in whispers.

"A lot was said," Uncle Jeff lied to her, "but none of it concerned you."

She looked puzzled and protested, "But Mr. Lordell was out there—the man you called Mr. Green. I recognized his voice."

"Sure!" was the reply. "He was just buying some liquor. You see, we are in the hands of a gang of bootleggers."

Helene was not satisfied. "I don't understand it," she said. "He was to call at my apartment at nine o'clock and take me to a night club. It is two hours later now. He must know that I have disappeared. Why is he buying liquor instead of helping hunt for me?"

"Ah!" Uncle Jeff lied again. "Maybe he is playing some crafty game, trying to find you. But, miss, you said that you would intrust your fate to me. Does that still hold?"

"Yes," she answered. "You are just like a grandpa."

"Then do not ask any questions," he told her. "Lie down, close your eyes and try to take a nap." The girl obeyed.

Like a grandpa! Those words rang in Uncle Jeff's ears. It was not pleasant to be reminded that he was no longer young and dashing, in this predicament where his rôle was that of a rescuer of a beautiful girl. It hurt his vanity, that the rôle would be more appropriately played by a young man. But he consoled himself that in this life youth creates most of the troubles and falls back on age for solution.

"I'll show them all!" Uncle Jeff reflected determinedly. "Mine is only a minor part, after all. Soon her real lover will be on the scene, if all goes well, and take the bouquets, and I'll be just a spear carrier."

He would enjoy himself while the excitement lasted, though. His heart quickened, and suddenly the years seemed to fall away from him and youth was surging in his veins again. The clock was turned back, and up from memory came a rugged personality that had been Jeff in his twenties, and now it took charge of him.

He lit a cigarette and puffed lazily. He made his eyes look absent-minded as they moved about the place. To all appearances, he was contemplating his surroundings for no other reason than that he had nothing else to occupy his time. But he was searching for a peep hole.

Ah! He saw it. There was a small hole in the plaster of the wall opposite the door. It was a round opening, sug-

gesting that a plumbing pipe had formerly extended through it and had been removed.

The light shone into this cavity, and Uncle Jeff was sure that he saw the glitter of the pupil of an eye.

His glance did not pause. It moved on, as if he had not noticed it. For some minutes, he smoked.

When he looked again, the eye was gone.

Quickly he rose and went to the hole, looked through—and saw nothing but darkness. So he had gained nothing except the knowledge that he and his companion were not under constant observation.

The spy might return soon. Uncle Jeff must make good use of every available second. With the expertness of a detective, he began hunting for a dictograph.

He found it—just where he had expected. The lone light of the room was a bulb in a dark, cone-shaped shade, dangling from a ceiling wire. The microphonic device was above the shade, concealed in the shadows. This was an important discovery.

In a crisis, he could muffle the thing, so that anything said or done in this small prison would not be heard by means of the electrical eavesdropper.

CHAPTER X.

SHADOWED.

DOCTOR FINN'S S O S for police aid was answered faster than he expected. Headquarters flashed radio orders for cruisers to comb the city for the fugitive car in which Helene had been abducted. The nearest precinct station rushed investigators to the scene of crime.

They came, a limousine crowded with plain-clothes men and others in gray uniforms, all eager to take a hand. Helene was a society celebrity. Newspapers would play the story of the rich heiress, and here was a chance for the bloodhounds of the law to get into print with their pictures and interviews advancing theories.

Doctor Finn met them at the door of the suite. They trooped in, and closed the door again to keep out the eager sight-seers. There was a small mob out there in the corridor. Every tenant in the building had assembled, mothers even bringing babies in arms. Talk was loud and excited, all manner of speculations being advanced and rumors spread. The janitor was the center of attraction, swaying unsteadily, proudly exhibiting the pass-key with which he had admitted Doctor Finn to the suite. Some one suggested that the girl had been found murdered, and quickly this was accepted as a certainty.

Beyond the door, Doctor Finn faced the police. Briefly he outlined what had happened.

"How did you happen to get here so fast?" a detective asked suspiciously.

"I heard the scream."

"Where were you when you heard it?"

"In my own apartment, directly above."

"Heard it through the floor?" This, in a tone of disbelief. "You must have good ears."

Doctor Finn's piercing gray eyes met the other's challenging look without flinching. "The floors are not sound proof," he said. "Don't you hear the radio below?" His long, artistic fingers opened a platinum case, extracted and proffered an engraved card.

As the detective read the name of the celebrated brain specialist, he gave a start and said quickly, "I wasn't inferring anything, doctor."

"Why shouldn't you suspect me?" Doctor Finn countered. "No one is immune from suspicion in an affair of this nature. The abduction of a beautiful heiress need not necessarily have

been staged by thugs. Naturally, the initial supposition is that she is to be held for ransom. Precedents suggest that. But it may be the work of some person of culture or distinction. The motives of the human brain often are inscrutable. So ask all the questions you desire. I, by the way, have hoped to win the young lady in marriage."

The detective nodded. "Spread out, boys!" he directed. "Give the place the works. I'll take charge. You'll wait, sir, of course?"

Doctor Finn nodded. The next moment, he was alone in the private hall. At the rear of the apartment, a bell tinkled lightly.

He stepped to a speaking tube and then halted on the verge of addressing the person who had rung in the vestibule below. The caller might be coming by appointment. And there was no telling—perhaps there might be some connection with the crime—and, again, there might not.

Animated by intuitive impulse, he did not send his voice down the tube. Instead, he pressed the button that unlocked the door below. Outside, there was another ring, and the elevator operator smothered a curse, that he had to quit the crowd. Down he went in his car, and brought up a passenger.

Beyond the Chinese drapes, a clock chimed nine.

Doctor Finn opened the door just a fraction of an inch. He stepped back near the hinges, curious to know who had an appointment at a time so soon after the abduction.

Mr. Lordell, alias Green, stepped in. His face was pale, his eyes alarmed. The presence of the multitude without had told him that something had gone wrong, and he had hurried from the elevator without pausing to ask questions.

Now, often a psychiatrist can "get the number" of a genuine mental case in about two minutes. Sometimes a glance is sufficient, for there are certain mannerisms or expressions of the eye that have an enlightening significance to an expert.

Similarly, a brain specialist is adept at fathoming the natures of people who are normal. A flitting gleam or a sudden stare; a start of surprise or the pitch of a muffled exclamation of consternation; an incident such as nervously applying a match to a cigar that has not gone out; all these reveal much to the psychiatrist, detective in the weird realm of the human mind.

So, as Doctor Finn's penetrating gaze scrutinized the newcomer, he sensed a terrific undercurrent of astonishment. It was more than surprise or concern. It suggested that something had been anticipated and that events had not run true to form.

Suspicion rose in Doctor Finn. He could not have explained just why, for there was no definite, no tangible cause. Rather, the suspicion was a result of his entire background of training and observation in psychology, normal and abnormal.

Then, too, there are subtle instincts that enable a man to divine the thoughts, emotions and intents of a rival in love. In this field, women predominate, but have no monopoly.

Lordell, alias Green, noticed Doctor Finn. He blinked and involuntarily drew back and clenched his right fist.

"Where's Helene?" he asked hoarsely. And then, his wits protecting him, he explained the directness of his query by adding, "The crowd outside—must be trouble."

"Helene has disappeared," Doctor Finn told him gravely.

"Did they catch them?"

"Catch whom?"

Lordell realized that he had made a slip of the tongue. "Nothing to make her run away," he replied. "She must have been taken by force."

"Abducted, yes!" said Doctor Finn.

His eyes were professionally blank. The other studied them intently, wondering if he were suspicious.

But the suave psychiatrist threw him off the track. "It happened this way," he began—and told what had occurred.

Lordell sank into a chair. "This is terrible," he said. "I had an appointment, was to call for her at nine. We were going to a night club."

"I fancied so," said Doctor Finn, "when the pleasure of her company for the evening was denied me."

Their gazes interlocked and became glares. A man may have a marvelous intellect, its faculties all under perfect control—reason, memory, imagination, perception, and so on—yet still be subject to a typhoon of emotion. Doctor Finn was no exception. Of the two, however, in a crisis he would be last to lose self-control.

He broke the tension by an icy smile. The other responded, but with even less warmth. Both lit cigarettes in silence.

"Those voices in the inner rooms there—police?" Lordell inquired. His voice was as trembly as his fingers.

"Of course!" was the answer. "The best detective brains of the city will be employed to rescue Helene, if possible, and to round up the abductors—in particular, the one who conceived the plot."

It seemed to him that a slight tremor passed through the body of his companion, and that the flitting flicker in the man's black eyes was one of fear.

"There's nothing I can do here," said Lordell. His brain was in turmoil. It had not occurred to him, during the conspiracy, that he would be double crossed. "I won't stay."

"Why not?" Doctor Finn asked. "You have the girl's welfare at heart. Perhaps you can assist in some way. That is why I am lingering here."

Lordell's mouth pursed grimly. He shrugged. "I haven't much faith in these official police agents," he declared in a low tone that was almost expressionless. "But I know a private detective that is a good bet. I'm going to get him on the job. And I'll post a reward, out of my own pocket."

"Fine!" Doctor Finn approved. "The quicker, the better. I'll remain here."

There was no farewell spoken between them. Lordell merely turned, opened the door and departed as if he were on his way to turn in a fire alarm.

Doctor Finn hurried to the drapes. He parted them. "Sergeant!" he loudly called.

A uniformed officer, who had been searching a wastebasket, turned and approached.

"I have a suspect," the brain specialist whispered. "Can you come with me? We'll have to travel fast. He's just left."

This was like offering live bait to a hungry bass. The two men made their exit by the rear door. They went down the back stairs, through a torrent of rain. Doctor Finn's clothes were half-drenched when they reached the garage. He was too excited to be conscious of them. But, motoring in a green smoking jacket of velvet, and without a hat, he would attract attention. Tucked away in his car were a cap and a raincoat. He donned them.

The motor purred. The machine fairly leaped to give chase.

Out on Carlton Drive, Mr. Green was close to breaking the speed limit. He was driving his own car. His rival was familiar with it—a sporty roadster enameled in a peculiar tint of very light green.

"That is our man, ahead, just crossing the street intersection," said Doctor Finn. He continued, narrating what had occurred.

"I know what you mean," the sergeant assured him, "when you tell me you can't explain just why you are suspicious of this guy. It's what we call a hunch."

That mongrel word had led to the solution of many a mystery that otherwise had defied detectives. It might do the same in this case—or it might not.

"It won't do any harm to trail him, anyway," said the police officer. "I've even pinched and convicted a man largely because he was too utterly unsuspicious. Same way, can be so much evidence against a suspect, that he's bound to be innocent."

The chase continued, the two machines nearly a block apart, though Doctor Finn was confident that his rival had no fear of being shadowed so early in the game. Nothing had occurred to put Green on his guard.

The route led downtown. And now the car that was setting the pace was going at slower speed, about twenty miles an hour. Green parked at a curb, went into a store and bought a package of cigarettes. He seemed to know the clerk quite well; leaned over the counter and spoke to him. There was an answering nod. The two disappeared behind a partition at the rear.

"I've got the hunch now," muttered the sergeant. "He's getting a gat." And he patted his own weapon grimly.

Mr. Green hurried out again into the rain. Off he drove, on a mighty bridge that extended majestically across a wide river. Just before reaching it, he turned to the left and headed along the water front.

"Get closer to him," the sergeant said. "He's apt to make a quick shift and vanish into the black."

Doctor Finn obeyed. They were on rather a dimly lighted highway. Through the rain, orange lights glowed, red ones shone mysteriously, with here and there a purple beacon.

"Chinatown!" said the sergeant. "We're on a hot trail, all right. A gent like that fellow has no legitimate business here to-night. Sight-seers don't come here alone. They use the rubbernecks, herded together. A lone man is apt to get knocked off. Suppose he's a hop head?"

"What is that?" Doctor Finn asked, searching his scientific vocabulary. His innocence astounded his hard-boiled companion.

"An opium addict," was the reply. "Park your car. Our quarry has turned up a dark alley."

CHAPTER XI.

TRAPPED.

AS Mr. Green went out into the night, after his conference with Jimmy, he emerged into a pitch-black alley. The grimy bulb that customarily glowed dully above the doorway was not lighted.

He gasped in relief and then let loose a string of oaths at the plight in which he had become enmeshed. In the dark, no one could see him. But his voice was unmistakable to Doctor Finn, who was lurking near by.

The brain specialist nudged his companion three times with an elbow. It was a signal that had been prearranged by them while waiting for their quarry to come out to his roadster.

Mr. Green felt something hard suddenly jabbed against his back.

"I'll shoot you if you let out a yelp!" the sergeant warned him. And the tone was convincing. It was ruthless.

Mr. Green gave a start. His heart momentarily stood still, and he felt as though his stomach and lungs were falling. His initial impression was that this was a holdup, and the instinct of self-preservation brought words instantly to his lips.

"Yes, sir!" he quavered meekly. "I—I'll be still. What do you want—my money?" Automatically, he had raised his hands in invisible token of surrender.

There was a grunt from his captor, followed by, "Pile into your car. We'll crowd along, beside you. Back out to the street and drive to the north. I'll

tell you where to go. You'll be kept covered, and if you yell for help, I'll croak you."

Mr. Green's fear became a terror. Things that he had read in newspaper accounts of the underworld swarmed up from memory.

Gunmen were going to "take him for a ride"!

What else could it mean? What other explanation could there be for his being accosted and directed to haul two enemies with him? He could not see even the one with the pistol. But he knew there must be two, for the gunmen had said, *"We'll* crowd along, beside you." And three would pack the car.

Green's hands shook so that he had difficulty opening the door. He got in, out of the rain, his brain in a turmoil, with a dominating thought that he was doomed. But why would Jimmy's gang be bent on killing him now? If they had any such intent, why not wait until after getting the hundred thousand dollars which he had offered for the price of Helene's freedom?

The enigma of the situation only intensified his terror.

He heard his foes following him; felt a bulky body squeeze into place against him. Another followed, beyond.

"Surely, there must be a mistake!" he protested, nervously starting his motor. "You have the wrong man. My name is Green."

"Lordell, alias Green, you mean!" the gruff voice interrupted. "Drive as I ordered. I've got you covered. Don't turn your head and try to see us. Keep your eyes straight ahead."

"Yes, sir! I will, sir!" was the fervent assurance.

Slowly the car moved backward; reached the dimly illumined Chinatown street; and, obedient to orders, turned and went northward. One street intersection was reached and passed. Another was close at hand.

"Draw in there to the curb and park, in front of that Chinese grocery!" the gunman commanded.

Green obeyed. He sat still, looking straight ahead.

"You can turn now," he was told.

He shifted his head, saw a policeman in uniform—and, beyond him, the grim face of Doctor Finn, gray eyes boring into his like diamond drills.

A gasp of astonishment came from the prisoner. A glimmer of comprehension entered his brain.

"You're under arrest!" the sergeant told him tersely.

Green swallowed hard. He endeavored to look astonished. "What for?" he demanded. His voice lacked confidence. It quavered.

"Abduction!" said the sergeant.

It was a bold play, a chance shot in the dark. For there was no evidence, so far, against Green—except Doctor Finn's suspicion and this hurried trip to a Chinatown den.

Green's face whitened. He was innocent of abduction. But the policeman had charged him so confidently that Green, inexperienced in crime, believed that in some mysterious way his plot against Helene had become known.

"I—I didn't abduct her," he faltered. "They were just to scare her and let me rescue her. The kidnaping wasn't in the bargain."

At that, the sergeant laughed scoffingly. "That's what they all say—try to shift the blame on their pals," he mocked. "Do you want me to tell you where the girl's body is?"

Green's lower jaw sagged. "Body?" he echoed. "Has she been murdered?"

The sergeant had gained two points—that the captive was implicated, and that he was unaware of what had happened to Helene.

"This bird's been double crossed," the officer reflected. "He came clean fast. I wish all suspects were amateurs like him." Aloud he growled, "Spill your story."

Green's nerves were going to pieces. He lit a cigarette, then pulled out a hip flask and took a long drink. He put the silver container back into his pocket without offering it to the others. The sergeant was cold. He was disappointed.

"It was this way," Green began. And he narrated the story in detail, speaking with such earnestness that it was obvious he was telling the truth. Toward the end, his voice became weak, and he had to down another bracer.

When he concluded, the sergeant meditated swiftly. "Jimmy!" he said musingly. "Your description sounds like that of 'Jimmy, the Gent.' He's known to be high up in a B. L. crowd. How do you get into that dump? The door, of course, is kept locked. Some kind of code signal—tell me, you know it?"

Green nodded, eager to do anything that would help get him out of his troubles. "When I first went there," he said, "I'd been instructed to push the button twice, then wait and shove it three times. The same signal got me in to-night."

"Then it would get you in another time," the sergeant suggested. "Probably a steel door. I wish I didn't have a uniform on. Drive up the street until I tell you to stop. I know a second-hand clothes dealer. His place may not be closed yet."

He glanced at his watch. The hour was not far from midnight. In ten minutes, another day would have ticked away into eternity.

So far, the presence of the three men in the parked car had attracted no attention. For one thing, the storm had driven customary prowlers to cover. Then, too, nearly all of the occasional passers-by were Chinese, apparently blind to everything except themselves. Another factor of concealment was that the rain had been coursing down the windows, obscuring the trio from observation of outsiders. It was an exceptionally heavy deluge.

Three blocks distant, they parked again. And now all quitted the car, went up a dark alley and knocked at a side door. It was opened by an Armenian.

He grinned in silent recognition of the sergeant, and led them to a rear room, where shelves were piled high with bundles of Oriental shawls and tapestries made in New Jersey.

"Seems like old times, when I had a beat in this district," said the officer, gazing about and warming his hands at a small stove. "Get me a suit of clothes, anything that'll be a fairly good fit. I want a raincoat, too, and a soft-felt hat. Can you rig me up with an outfit that's fairly clean?"

The Armenian nodded, and his suave smile suggested the sweetness of saccharine. Then he opened a door and went forward into his shop.

"Doesn't speak, eh? Is he a mute?" Doctor Finn asked.

"You wouldn't think so, if he was trying to sell you something," the sergeant answered. "Isn't necessary for him to talk to me. I've known him for twelve years. He's not any too anxious to open his mouth in a situation like this. He'll do anything I want. But he's afraid of the gangsters that infest this neighborhood, and when I come for a change like this, it means that I'm after some one."

He crossed to a small desk, picked up a phone, dialed the operator and said, "Police headquarters."

A terse conversation followed, over the wire, the sergeant speaking in a low tone. His companions listened, their eyes widening, color coming into their faces until both looked flushed with fever.

"Look here!" Green protested when the policeman hung up. "I'm not going to do all that. Why, Jimmy will shoot me."

"It wouldn't be much loss," was the reply, in a tone of unveiled contempt. "Don't forget that you're under arrest. You caused all this mess. It got away from your control, but you're the instigator. If the girl's dead when we find her, you'll be tried on some charge like inciting to murder."

Green had steadily been growing paler. He was dead white now, and his eyes had the terror of a doomed man.

There was a chair near by, a cheap thing of unpainted pine, grimy and battered from use. He sagged to it, and muttered, "They're apt to kill her, at that, out of sheer malice, if we stage the game you've arranged."

Doctor Finn, too, was pallid. He had only one emotion now—concern for the safety of Helene. She was in the hands of ruthless gunmen. There might, however, be a good chance of rescuing her alive—or forcing Jimmy to free her from her place of confinement, which was known to none of them.

"Where do you think she is?" he asked wretchedly. "What would be your guess?"

The sergeant shrugged. "One guess is as good as another," he answered. "But this gent has promised to pay one hundred thousand dollars for her release. She's mighty valuable loot. So it's a fairly safe bet that Jimmy has her near by, right there on the premises."

"I hope so!" Doctor Finn said fervently. "She is so valuable for purposes of ranson, that probably she is alive, uninjured. What concerns me most, is the effect this experience has had on her mind. She is highly strung, extremely emotional, refined, cultured. Contact with such thugs may have unbalanced her. But we may free her in short order. You think so, don't you?" he pleaded.

The policeman did not look any too confident. "This is Chinatown," he reminded the brain specialist, "and there are a lot of underground tunnels for fleeing with prisoners."

CHAPTER XII.

JIMMY THE GENT.

TWENTY minutes later, Green's car again drove into the jet-black alley alongside Jimmy's hangout. The three men alighted into the rain. The place was like some underground cavern, with water rolling down the walls and splashing underfoot. They felt for these walls, of weather-beaten brick, and groped until they reached the steel door, with its wooden surface.

Green hesitated. A premonition of death came to him—a feeling of clamminess, suggestive of a sliding slab in the morgue. A low growl from the police sergeant, now in civilian garb, acted as a hypodermic of synthetic courage. Rather, it was terror. Green was in for it, one way or the other, between the devil and the deep sea. There was no turning back.

Escape his goal—flight into the distance, never to return. Perhaps, down in the cellar, he might shake off his captors and gamble his destiny in the hands of Jimmy. Or how about now? But, as though divining his thoughts, the sergeant again growled, caught his coat in a tight grip, and whispered, "Play the game as I've ordered. Try to double cross me, and I'll shoot you, in the line of duty."

Green hesitated no longer. He felt for the push button; pressed it twice; waited; then gave three quick jabs.

There was the clicking of an electrically manipulated lock. The door swung open. The three men filed into the black tunnel of a hallway, Green in the lead.

No one challenged them. And, hearing the door click shut behind them, they understood why. This place was as hard to get out of as to enter. Once inside, a man was a prisoner.

They went ahead softly, came to the

stairs where phosphorescent light glowed from below, and descended. Only one person was in the large room, whose walls were in deep shadows, the lone illumination gleaming from the low-hanging, green-shaded bulb above the round table. He sat in a chair at the table, lounging in a grotesque posture, a cigarette dangling from his thin lips, the smoke wandering lazily upward.

It was the guard. His cigarette wiggled as he asked in a sharp tone, "Wot's on?"

"I—I have to see Jimmy—at once. I—I think you know me. Tell him that Mr. Green is here on urgent business."

The guard rose languidly. He went to a speaking tube, whistled through it, and relayed the message.

The three visitors took seats at the table, across from the gunman. They, too, lit cigarettes. Green was visibly nervous, rubbing his hands together, scratching his cheeks, tugging the lobes of his ears. Doctor Finn was more at ease, but apprehensive. This was his first trip into such a den. But any instinctive fear was eclipsed by the intense interest with which he studied the criminal type on the opposite side of the polished circle of wood. The sergeant sat erect, head inclined so his face was shaded by the turned-down brim of his black soft hat. He was huddled as if cold, his arms crossed, hands inside both coats—and each clutching a revolver tucked under his belt.

If the gunman suspected weapons, he gave no sign.

They sat in silence, waiting.

Beyond the locked door at the far end of the cellar, prudent Uncle Jeff again whispered for the girl to hold the blanket against her ears. It was the only thing he could do for her, at present—guard her remnants of sanity, protect her from the shock of disclosures that she might hear.

Uncle Jeff was not a brain specialist. But common sense told him that Helene was in a highly dangerous condition, that memory must be restored to her with scientific skill—if it could be brought back at all, along with a wakening of emotions and of sensation in the left side of her body.

At the head of the stairs, a door opened silently. Again the sound of that soft patter of feet, as if an eccentric dancer was descending the steps. Jimmy arrived at the bottom. He stood motionless there, studying Mr. Green and his companions—and a frown came into Jimmy's face and froze there.

He advanced abruptly, with swift strides, sat down beside the gunman, and stared at the three callers.

"What do you want?" he demanded crisply.

Mr. Green was ashen white. "I—I couldn't help it," he explained shakily. "It's not what you call a double cross, sir. I had to come back—at the point of a gun. These men captured me, made me bring them."

Jimmy squinted his eyes. "That's all right," he declared calmly. "Plenty of folks have gotten in here that way, and gone out feet first. Whenever I'm in the room, visitors are covered by rifles from holes in the walls." He laughed mockingly. "Unload your chatter," he invited.

The sergeant spoke. His voice was even, fearless. "I don't think there'll be any shooting," he said. "This building is surrounded by twenty picked detectives from headquarters, and by as many more harness bulls."

Jimmy nodded, as though this were routine in his business. "A pinch, eh?" he countered. "You won't find anything." Just the same, he was troubled. If a raid started, there might not be time to get Helene carried away through a tunnel.

"You're Jimmy, the Gent," continued the sergeant.

The gunman slowly closed and opened

his eyes in assent. Where had he heard this stranger's voice before? Next instant, he knew, for the officer removed his hat and it landed in the middle of the big round table, as if he were tossing it into a ring. His face was disclosed clearly now—hard, relentless eyes, a jaw like the base of a rectangle on end.

Jimmy whistled. "Henderson!" he said softly. "You used to have this beat. Out in the sticks now, aren't you?"

The sergeant ignored the taunt, which was unfair. True, he had been transferred to a precinct station in the suburbs. But there he had become a desk man.

"There won't be any shooting here tonight," Henderson said, "unless you have a craving for it. And get this fact indelibly into your brain. I'm watching you closely. I'm just as fast on the draw as I used to be. I've got my hands on two gats right now. Just you give the slightest signal, and I'll croak you. We'll be buried about the same time."

Jimmy's fingers were as steady as steel as he lit a cigarette. "There is nothing to shoot about," he parried. "I'm in the B. L. game now, and not hiding the fact. But you won't find any evidence in this joint."

"Quit stalling!" said Henderson. His voice had changed. It now suggested agate. "I'm not on a B. L. hunt tonight. You know why I'm here. My being with Mr. Green explains that."

Jimmy laughed. "You haven't anything on me except Green's word—and it isn't worth anything. You can tell that by taking just one look at his shaking carcass."

"Oh, yes, we have," Henderson fired back. "The elevator boy out on Carlton Drive saw you and Fred plainly. We've got you for abduction, both of you."

Jimmy reflected. "That's a more serious charge than bootlegging," he admitted. "But Fred and I both have alibis. We were playing cards with a well-known alderman to-night, at the hour the girl disappeared."

Involuntarily, Henderson bit his lip. He had had more than one experience with official corruption in court. Jimmy was quick to notice the other's setback.

"Besides," he added, "Fred and I, fortunately, are types. We are not the sort that are outstanding in a crowd. I can produce half a dozen men that are so much like me, and in the same dress identically, that no elevator boy will be able to identify me. And that goes for my pal. Now, where do you get off?"

Jimmy was beginning to feel more confident. Green did not know that the girl was in the back room. This meant, the others could not know.

Jimmy seemed to be enjoying himself. He was smiling, gazing beyond his enemies' heads as he spoke, apparently looking at nothing in particular. But up in a far corner, in the shadows, a tiny lens was lighting and then going dark again, telegraphing to him that there was no danger of the girl shrieking and betraying her presence, that a blanket was about her head, so she was not overhearing the parley.

This room did, indeed, have invisible guards, with rifles resting in small openings, ready to shoot down the invaders. It also had a dictograph, and this device was relaying all of the conversation to a room upstairs. And Fred knew that his pals above already had taken a hand.

The blinking of the tiny lens told him that all was well.

In the small prison chamber, Helene sat with the orchid blanket over her ears. Uncle Jeff was on the chair beside her, occasionally letting his eyes wander absently about the room. His manner suggested that he was so concentrated on listening to the voices without, that his ears alone were functioning, his other senses in a state of trance.

But now and again his gaze crossed the small opening in the wall, through which a pipe had formerly extended.

And abruptly he blinked and stared. For, where there had been an eye at the hole, now there was the barrel of a pistol, projecting menacingly. It was an emphatic warning to him to keep his mouth shut—or be murdered.

He nodded, in token that he comprehended.

The tube of gun metal was withdrawn, and again an evil eye glittered in its stead.

Uncle Jeff covertly glanced at Helene. She had not observed. Her face apathetic, almost totally indifferent, she was staring at the floor.

Out in the other room, Jimmy had issued his defiance and demanded, "Now, where do you get off?"

The police sergeant's reply came as a jolt. "I don't get off. I stay right here—until you deliver the girl to us."

"What if I tell you to go chase yourself?"

"I'll pinch you and put handcuffs on you," Henderson told him sternly. "You've confessed, in effect, and I have two witnesses with me, one of whom has turned State's evidence."

Jimmy showed his teeth. "Put handcuffs on me?" he sneered. "Try it, and you'll be dropped dead by my men."

"So?" said Henderson. "If that happens, there'll be a lot of you guys go to the chair. I've told you the place is surrounded. It's the truth." He glanced at his watch. "I'm not going to waste any time," he declared. "If I don't show up in the alley inside of five minutes, the raid will start. It'll be too fast for your rats to scurry away. My men outside are ready to put on a real show—dynamite the doors and use tear-gas bombs."

Jimmy frowned. This sort of trouble must be avoided. It would get him and a lot of others in bad with the police, and—worse, to him—in bad with his chief. That worthy already had his hands full, oiling the higher-ups. He had an ironclad rule, not to antagonize officers of the law, especially in private criminal ventures outside the channels of bootlegging. They were permitted, but only so long as they did not draw the organization into conflict with the police.

And Jimmy, given his choice, would have stepped on the devil's forked tail, in preference to incurring the wrath of his leader.

"You win!" he declared abruptly.

From Henderson came a grim nod. from Doctor Finn a sigh of relief, and from Mr. Green—silence. No matter what happened, Green was reflecting in panic, he would have to disappear, have to flee from Jimmy's vengeance. Ah! He recalled that he was under arrest. Comforting thought—prison, not gunmen.

"Where is the girl?" the sergeant demanded.

Jimmy looked Mr. Green squarely in the eyes and said, "Ask him."

Green gave a start and turned even whiter. "I—I don't know anything about it."

"You're a liar!" Jimmy charged. "We delivered her to your apartment." His accusing voice was convincing.

"We'll go there at once and find out," said Henderson.

In the rear room, Uncle Jeff came to a quick decision that his life was worth less than the safety of Helene. He jumped to his feet, defying the pistol as it again came to view through the small hole in the wall, and shouted, "She's back here!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STOLEN HEART.

THEN Uncle Jeff glared in the direction of the pistol and waited for a bullet. The distance that it would travel was short, and he wondered if he would hear the shot before it silenced his brain. An opal-hued fog formed before his eyes, and his whole life began passing swiftly in review before him. Perhaps,

too, this happens to all of us at the moment of death—or in the utter silence and darkness and lonesomeness of eternity.

But no shot was fired.

The instant he had recognized Henderson, Jimmy had sensed that a police net was drawn about this rendezvous, before being told that by the sergeant.

The game was not worth the chance of a murder charge.

So he had pressed a button under the table. It had flashed lights in various secret places of observation, that bluff was to go the limit, but that there must be no gun play unless he gave a signal.

Uncle Jeff, waiting for death, comprehended that he might yet pass away peacefully in a speakeasy, at the bar, sampling liquor to get evidence on bootleggers.

In the outer room, Jimmy shrugged "I read 'em and I weep," he said. "Game's over, gents. You win. The girl's back there—and she's unharmed. I'll unlock the door. Say, Henderson, hadn't you better go up to the side door and call off the raid? It's about due to start, unless your watch was fast."

"I'll stay here," the sergeant told him grimly. "I'm not through with you yet."

"I'll go and tell the policeman at the door," Mr. Green suggested, rising so precipitately from the table that his chair fell over backwards.

"You're entirely too eager," Henderson said sourly. "I've an idea you'd run a hundred miles without stopping. Don't forget, you're under arrest. Doctor, you do the little errand."

Finn obeyed, on the run. He was back quickly—just in time to see the door open and Helene walk unsteadily into view.

She saw Green.

She saw Doctor Finn.

A peculiar expression showed on her lovely face.

The brain specialist stifled a groan of dismay. He ran forward. "Don't you recognize me?" he pleaded.

She nodded. "Yes, I know you," she said. Her tone was flat, indifferent. Then she peered about into the shadows and stared at the table, illumined in a cone of light from above. "This is a horrible place," she commented. "I want to go home. Call a taxi."

Her vacant stare again turned tableward and she studied the gunman as if he must be dressed for a masquerade.

Uncle Jeff stepped close to Doctor Finn and whispered in his ear, "She's in bad shape, from the shock of this. Her memory's all right except that the abduction is blotted out. The whole left side of her body is gone asleep. And her emotions seem to be asleep, too."

Doctor Finn shook his head in grief. "Hysterical amnesia—a complete case of it—including hysterical anæsthesia and emotional anæsthesia." He went to the girl. "Helene," he said gently, "do you mind waiting back in the little room while I call a car for you?"

She nodded and retraced her steps in a listless manner. Uncle Jeff accompanied her, trying to cheer her up, but in a very husky voice. He closed the door as soon as they were in the cell.

"No use seeing and hearing any more of those underworld creatures than you have to," he said. "Well, your friends are here and everything has turned out all right. You'll soon be home."

"Yes," she answered dully, "friends are here and I'll soon be home."

Out near the table, Doctor Finn was half-paralyzed with a terrible fear. "I had wakened love in her, had almost won her consent to wear an engagement ring," he reflected. "All that has been stolen from me. We've rescued Helene—but part of her brain is unconscious. How can I awaken her to normal?"

A thought flashed to him. He turned to the others, who were watching him in silence. Instinctively, they looked at him as the dictator of the situation.

"Sergeant!" he said. "Come closer —and you, too, Jimmy."

They obeyed. Doctor Finn spoke in a low tone, the words coming rapidly. As the two listened, they looked puzzled. He was enlightening them with regard to the mental short circuit that Helene had experienced from the shock of abduction. As he continued, Jimmy began to scowl, but presently his face lit up with hope and he studied Henderson inquiringly.

"Will you do it, Jimmy the Gent?" the police officer asked.

"You know my price," was the reply.

Henderson shook his head. "I can't agree to paying it."

Perspiration was streaming down Doctor Finn's forehead. "But," he protested, "think what it means to the girl."

The sergeant fell to studying his nails. "No!" he decided. "I'm a cop, and I have to do my duty. I'm not allowed to have sentiments in the matter of handling a crime. However, I'll agree to this: Doctor Finn and I will take it up with the district attorney. We'll speak a good word for you."

"I get you," said Jimmy. He was disappointed. "Well, that's better than nothing. Fred's upstairs, playing poker. I'll fetch him at once." He started for the stairs.

"Come on back," Henderson ordered. "I'm not letting you out of my sight. Send that gunman."

"I can do better than that," said Jimmy. "Almost got away, didn't I? Say, I can't pull Fred into the trap."

"You'll not be harming him," said Henderson. "We can pick him up easily on the outside."

Jimmy reflected. Finally he came to a decision and went to the speaking tube. He whistled into it and said, "Send Fred down at once."

Half an hour later, Helene was back in her apartment, sitting in her boudoir, staring vacantly at the delicately pink wall.

Out in the private corridor, just beyond the Chinese drapes of the double doorway, Jimmy and Fred were fettering the "French maid," wrists and ankles, and inserting a gag in her saucy mouth. She was quite gay now, devoid of fear, exhilarated that she was playing an important rôle in an unusual drama. Her black eyes sparkled.

Standing, watching, were Doctor Finn, Henderson and Lordell, alias Green.

"It is this way," the brain specialist was explaining. "Helene has a straight case of what we psychiatrists call hysterical amnesia. The abduction was such a horrible experience to her that the memory of it was temporarily lost, imprisoned in her subconscious mind. This is where we store away everything that ever comes in the perception of our brains, through any of our senses. Nothing is really ever forgotten. It lies indelibly in the subconscious mind. On occasion, it rises to conscious memory. For instance, you try to think of the name of a person and it is elusive—'on the tip of my tongue, too,' you say. It is down in the subconscious mind, and suddenly it 'comes to you.' Now, memory of the abduction is in Helene's subconscious. We hope to bring it forth—make her recall it."

Henderson shrugged. "If you're asking me," he ventured, "it's the sort of experience that had best remain forgotten."

"No!" Doctor Finn told him quickly. "In this case, it is vital that the girl recover the memory. Why? Because that will end the period of hysterical amnesia—and, with it, end, too, I hope, the complications."

"You mean," Henderson asked, "about her emotions and the left side of her body being asleep?"

"Precisely!" said Doctor Finn. "Emotional anæsthesia and hysterical anæs-

thesia of her sensory nerves. These are just offshoots of her hysterical amnesia. We hope to waken feeling in the left side of her body, governed by the right hemisphere of the brain, and also waken her emotions that have gone asleep."

He looked about for Uncle Jeff. The old fellow was in a corner, puffing a corncob pipe, listening intently.

"Suppose you have forgotten something entirely," Doctor Finn continued. "Some one reminds you of it—and you say, 'Oh, yes, I remember now.' That is what we were going to do in this case. The abduction will be reënacted before Helene's eyes, with friends present so that she will not have fear. Memory will be restored. I may be wrong. But it is worth trying."

CHAPTER XIV.

NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE.

ALL was ready. The French maid, fettered and gagged, lay on the settee in the private corridor. Henderson, Green and Uncle Jeff retreated until they stood in a row at the exit of the suite. Jimmy and Fred, their faces grim, stationed themselves in front of the reclining figure of the maid. Before them, the Chinese drapes were closed.

Doctor Finn went into the living room. "Helene!" he called.

She came to view slowly, without show of enthusiasm. It cut his heart like a knife, for, prior to the abduction, the sight of him had brought a flush to her pink cheeks, a tenderness to her blue eyes.

Her hair, he reflected, was more golden than a wedding ring. A wedding ring! The thought heartened him. He would exert the utmost of his scientific skill to waken her from her half-trance.

"Helene," he said, approaching close to her, "shortly after eight o'clock tonight, you were standing about where you are now. Is that right?"

She nodded and said, "After that, all is a blank until I wakened in that queer little room in Chinatown."

"You have just had a slip of memory," he assured her. "It is no more important than forgetting, say, a name. But I am going to cause you to remember all that happened during that gap. It will be done by having everything repeated before your eyes—and you will not be afraid, will you, my dear? For you know that I am a friend, and so is the old fellow, Uncle Jeff—and Henderson, a police sergeant, must be a friend, too. Is that not so?"

"Yes," she said simply, "I will not be afraid of anything, with three friends near by to help me if I need them."

Doctor Finn mustered a reassuring smile. He put all his effort, all his professional wile into it, to make it convincing. "I will be right beside you, every second," he told her. "And now you are to have a strange experience—something that, probably, never has been done before. Walk forward and part the drapes and look out into the hall."

She did so, and saw Jimmy and Fred.

"Good evening, Miss Helene!" Jimmy uttered in a soft tone. "I am charmed and honored to make your acquaintance. I am here by appointment that I made over the phone with you. I am the out-of-town lawyer, friend of your father, come to deliver some valuable documents into your hands."

The girl stared, a tremor went through her. She reached out at either side and clutched the drapes for support.

"Doctor Finn!" she whispered. "A curtain seems to be rolling up slowly from the base of my brain, on to the forehead."

"Excellent, excellent! The fog is lifting!" he rejoiced.

Automatically, Helene started to smile. But then she noticed the fet-

tered maid. Jimmy was bowing with the sinuosity of a snake. Helene turned pale.

She screamed. She tried to run; her limbs felt paralyzed.

Fred whipped out an automatic. He thrust it close to her face. "Let out another yelp like that," he growled, "and I'll kill you."

She nodded and swayed. Jimmy stepped quickly forward, caught her arms to support her, and guided her backward into the living room. He steered her to the davenport, and gently shoved her among the costly pillows.

"What—what do you want?" she asked faintly. "Money? It—it's in a wall safe. I—I'll unlock it for you."

These were the same words that she had uttered during the actual abduction. They were marching up from her subconscious mind, like the spirits of buried soldiers.

Jimmy grinned. "No," he told her grimly. "We're not after money. It's you we want. We're going to kidnap you."

He stopped then and recoiled in genuine alarm. For another scream had come from Helene. She rose to her feet and held out her arms to the brain specialist.

"Save me, save me!" she entreated hysterically. Again she screamed. "Stop him, stop him! Oh, I remember now. It's all come back to me."

And Doctor Finn reached her just in time to catch her as she reeled.

He had a bottle of smelling salts ready, the glass stopper off, and now held it close to her nostrils.

"Breathe deeply, dear!" he implored. "You must not swoon."

She did as he urged, and then gasped.

"So long, Doc!" said Jimmy, the Gent. "Come and see me in the clink." He bowed. "I'm awfully sorry, miss. I'll never tackle a woman as plunder again. It's out of my line. Glad I could help you at the wind-up."

Then he vanished through the Chinese drapes—graceful, sinuous. He had an air of jauntiness even though he knew that handcuffs soon would be linking him, Fred and Green, with Henderson and Uncle Jeff on their way to the police station. Thus handcuffed, Henderson and Uncle Jeff would be able to keep the two gunmen from tearing out Green's yellow heart.

Back in the apartment, Helene was lying on the davenport. She was breathing rapidly and Doctor Finn was anxiously taking her pulse. The girl's beautiful blue eyes were afire with a riot of emotions.

The French maid entered. "Anything I can do, sir?"

Doctor Finn nodded. He reached in a pocket, brought out a ring of keys and extended them. "Yes," he said, "go up to my suite. There is an exceptionally large medicine cabinet in the bathroom. You will find a bottle of passiflora. Bring it."

The girl hurried for the sedative.

"It's so strange!" Helene whispered. "I remember it all now. And my left side isn't asleep any more. What happened to make me that way?"

Doctor Finn laughed happily. His mirth was rather superficial, for he knew that she was apt to have a nervous breakdown. However, he was confident that the reaction would not be serious, that in a few weeks she would be her old-time self—healthy, highly emotional, adorable, radiating happiness.

"What happened to you?" he echoed. "A patient shouldn't know too much about herself. You are all right, and going to remain all right." Again he laughed. "I'll tell you this much. A part of your brain went to sleep. It was just temporarily paralyzed. Nothing to worry about, I assure you. Why, just think, most people have the entire brain paralyzed all the time."

She smiled, gripped his hand and said, "Oh, my darling!"

Behind The Locks

TWO BAD MEN "WISE UP" JUSTICE.

By Roy W. Hinds

Author of "Bad Man's Blackmail," etc.

WITH the last lock in the vault broken, Al Beeson stepped to the rear of the bank. At the window through which he had entered, he signaled cautiously to his confederate and lookout man, Dave Shell.

Dave was in the shadow of a pile of packing cases across the alley. There was an automatic pistol in the right-hand pocket of his coat. He gripped the handle of this, ready to shoot down any one who might threaten to disrupt this night's work. Dave crept across the alley until he stood beneath the window, which was up a little way.

"It's all open," said Al Beeson.

A thrill of delight hit Dave Shell. What bank robber wouldn't thrill, with loot to the tune of a hundred thousand dollars almost within reach!

Dave was conscious, too, of vast admiration for Al Beeson. Al, alone, had performed a marvelous job in this little New Jersey town. He had opened the vault of the Lawndale bank, which was a rich little joint, and if the remark "all open" meant what Dave thought it did, Al had also got the best of the inner locks—a grated door and the money compartments.

"Inside open, too?" Dave asked.

"Everything," said Al.

Beeson had been working nearly two hours on the vault, with powerful drills and other instruments. It was said in the underworld that he was as slick a man on safes and vaults as could be found anywhere. He had proved it now.

Dave himself, with Al acting as lookout, had worked nearly an hour on the window and the burglar-alarm system. Having been an electrician early in life,

when he went crooked, he became adept in overcoming the problems of wiring that are presented to the burglar. In his line, on windows and doors and alarms, Dave Shell was as good a man as was Al Beeson in his.

It was a team hard to beat.

Dave had framed the job. Picking up a tip somewhere in the underworld that the Lawndale bank offered "ripe" pickings, he went about the look-over job. He spent weeks absorbing details concerning the bank and the town and its police system. He had it all down pat, to the tiniest detail, when he spread the job to Al Beeson.

The two had never met before, yet each was aware of the other's reputation. They became confederates on this Lawndale job with mutual trust.

And now the locks of the vault were beaten. The riches it contained were at their mercy. Yet these exultant thoughts were merely fleeting ripples. They were too clever and poised to lose their heads. The scoop-up had yet to be made, and the get-away. Swift and noiseless action was still in order.

There was lookout work yet to be done. Not much profit in opening the way to a hundred thousand dollars if a fellow isn't to get away with it! Dave tiptoed to the corner of the bank building. He looked up and down the street. It was deserted. It was four o'clock in the morning. Dave took a sharp squint along the alley, and in a moment returned to the window.

"Everything's clear," he informed Al. "But it's time for the cop to show up again, and—— S-s-s-t—here he comes!"

It was true. The patrolman, on a periodic round, was just coming into the other end of the alley. Twice before he had passed Dave Shell, hidden among the packing cases. Twice the officer had walked leisurely beneath the very window by which Al Beeson had entered the bank. He had merely glanced at it. The window had been down, with the bars stuck into place, as though nothing at all was wrong with them. As Al Beeson, inside, had been duly apprised of the officer's approach on those two occasions, he ceased work on the vault until he got another signal from Dave. No telltale sound, the metallic ring of tools upon the steel vault, had reached the policeman's ears.

And now the cop was approaching for the third time. It satisfied the robbers. He would go on his way, and not make the rounds of that alley again until Dave and Al, with the loot, were well on their way.

Al saw to it that the bars were restored to their usual positions. He lowered the window, and retreated into the gloomy interior of the bank. Dave Shell regained his hiding place among the packing cases.

The policeman was large, portly and elderly. He walked slowly along the alley, looking at but not touching windows and doors. He was a complacent individual, a fact remarked by Dave Shell while he was looking things over in the town, day after day, night after night. The patrolman seemed to have been lulled into a secure and listless state of mind, to feel assured that a robbery would never happen on his beat because one never had. He was a very good officer for men like Dave Shell and Al Beeson.

His steps, on rubber soles, were noiseless. But Dave could see him plainly, as street lamps at each end of the alley provided considerable illumination. Dave had merely to nestle quietly in his dark nook and watch every movement of the officer. Dave was sharply alert, yet the state of his mind was contented, blissful. In less than a minute now, the cop would be out of the alley, not to return for nearly an hour. Yes, things had gone well this night, and——

R-r-r-r! Crash!

That's the kind of a noise that a falling packing case made.

It slid off another case, with a grating sound, and then struck the cobblestones of the alley with a bang.

Dave Shell had not moved. He had not touched that case or those under it, but the top one had been poised more precariously than he imagined. Perhaps his numerous goings in and out of the pile had disturbed them just enough to bring on the disaster at this critical moment.

Not that any thought of whys or wherefores crossed Dave Shell's mind. A man on a railroad track who suddenly sees an express train bearing down upon him does not stop to think of how the train came to be there at just that moment. He moves. All his instincts are concentrated on movement. It was so with Dave Shell.

At the first grating squeak of the tilted packing case, Dave moved. In fact, he performed a series of movements that melted into one another so swiftly that they seemed to comprise just one. First, his hand came out of the coat pocket, clutching the automatic pistol. He stood upright, a vain hope still in his head that even the crash might not bring an investigation of the pile; that the noise might be taken as a natural circumstance in no way due to a prowler.

But the officer was moving, too. As Dave stood up and shrank into the shadows, still hoping, the policeman came directly toward him. He switched his nightstick from his right hand to his left hand. The right hand went for his gun.

"Stick 'em up!"

Dave had stepped out of the shadows, a menacing figure, head and shoulders bowed in an attitude of contemplated assault, cap hauled down to shade his face, gun in hand.

The cop came to a dead stop. His hands went up. He was a large target, there in the lighted alley, and Dave Shell had gone into action while the officer was shifting his nightstick. He had not had time to get a hand on his gun.

"Walk straight ahead. Push your face against that wall."

The officer obeyed, while Dave, ready to kill, circled to get in back of his captive. Thus the policeman brought up, facing the wall of a building across the alley from the bank, his fingers high up on the bricks.

"Drop that club!"

The nightstick clattered on the cobblestones. Silently, Dave Shell took four quick steps forward. He jammed the muzzle of his gun into the small of the policeman's back, in a frame of mind to send a bullet crashing into his spine if he should show fight. No fight was shown. Dave snatched away the officer's gun, and darted backward.

He looked around. Al Beeson had crept to the back window of the bank, having heard the packing case fall, and was peeping out. Dave herded the patrolman into the shadows of the packing cases and himself got out of view of any one who might cross the alley in the streets, and perhaps take a glance into it.

Al Beeson came into the alley.

They tied the cop hand and foot. They stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth. They laid him on the cobblestones. It had been impossible to keep him from getting a look at their faces. It couldn't be helped. The officer took such looks despite orders to the contrary. Still, the threats to kill him were not carried out.

Al Beeson went back into the bank. The suit case in which he meant to stow the wealth of the Lawndale bank was already inside, at the vault. Dave Shell remained in the alley, guarding the helpless cop and also on the lookout for chance pedestrians.

Al Beeson ought to appear at the

back window again in a very few minutes, with the suit case loaded.

He did appear there. He came out into the alley quickly. He did not have the suit case. Dave started toward him.

"What's the matter? Where's the stuff?"

"Beat it!" said Al Beeson, in a voice that was cautious and low but at the same time filled with a more ominous hint of peril than a shriek may have been. "Beat it fast!"

There was a strange look on Al Beeson's face, in the gleam of his eyes. They were walking rapidly down the alley.

"But the stuff, Al," Dave began. "You had everything open. Let's take a chance."

Al ignored the implication that he had been frightened off the job by the complication in the alley.

"Shut up," he said. "We'll talk when we get in the car."

Some other complication had developed within the bank. It must have been a very serious one, to have chased Al Beeson away without the loot. Dave was fully aware of Al's reputation, though this was their first job together.

They clung to the shaded streets of the residence district, over a route previously laid out. They came to their parked car. They got into it, with Al Beeson at the wheel, and were soon leaving the Lawndale bank and the trussed cop farther and farther behind.

"There's nothing left in that vault," said Al Beeson. "It was cleaned out before I got into it. Nothing but securities that I didn't touch. I don't think it's wise for us to have a single thing on us that came out of that bank. I——"

"Cleaned out! Vault cleaned out! Dough all gone!"

"Yes," Al Beeson went on grimly. "And there's a dead man inside the vault. In a dark corner, under a table in the front section of the vault. I didn't see him until I begun a thorough hunt after I saw the money drawers had been emptied. He's dead, with a bullet through his skull. I couldn't find a gun. He was murdered."

At eight o'clock on this same morning, Detective Jim Leeds, of New York, sat in the private office of the cashier in the Lawndale bank. The police of the small towns in New Jersey often called in a New York detective in big robberies, for it was generally assumed that the perpetrators, if they weren't actually New York crooks, at least had records there, and may have left some clew, easily recognized in their methods, as to their identity. Jim Leeds was one of the department's specialists on safe and vault jobs, and his chief had asked him to look into the Lawndale job, in the hope that he might turn up men wanted also for unsolved crimes in the big city.

Detective Leeds had looked over the vault and the rear window by which the robbers had entered. He had looked upon the face of the man found dead in the vault. He had never seen him before. Neither had any one connected with the bank, and all employees and officials of that institution had been summoned early, after the patrolman tied up by the robbers had wriggled from his bonds and spread the alarm.

Otis Gropper, cashier of the bank, a mild little man of middle age, with nervous, roving eyes, faced Detective Leeds.

"Well," he demanded, in an eager yet diffident voice, "have you any idea, Mr. Leeds, as to who committed this awful crime?"

"I don't like to say just yet," said the detective, in his slow, emotionless voice. "The drilling on the vault might have been done by any one of a dozen chaps I know. Plenty of men these days who go about a thing like that in the same way, and with the same kind

of tools. But the job on the window is——"

He paused meditatively. He fingered his ragged mustache.

"Yes, yes!" Cashier Gropper put in impatiently. "What about the window, Mr. Leeds?"

"Well now, there's a fella I know who'd be able to do that window job just that way. It's a slick piece of work, on the window and the bars—especially on the burglar-alarm contacts. That's what makes me think of this fellow I know, the way he handled the alarm."

"And you think you will be able to find him?"

"Well, I don't know. We'll certainly look for him. But first I want to take that cop back to New York with me—the fellow they tied up in the alley—and show him some pictures we've got at headquarters. I'll let him have a look at this fellow I'm thinking of, and he can say if he's one of 'em."

"What does he call himself—this man you're thinking of."

"One of his names is Dave Shell. But don't mention his name just yet. It might be easier to pick Dave up, if he don't learn we're looking for him."

"I won't say a word about him, Mr. Leeds."

"Not even to the local police here, Mr. Gropper."

"No—not a word!"

"If it doesn't come out in the papers that we're looking for Dave Shell," the detective suggested, "and if he is the man—why, he'll likely stay right in New York, if that's where he is, and in a day or two begin spending his share of the hundred thousand." He bent forward and looked at a slip of paper on the cashier's desk, the notations resulting from a check-up of the stolen money. "Hundred and nine thousand dollars and eighty cents, eh?"

"Yes, sir," Mr. Gropper agreed. "That was the cash in the vault when we locked it yesterday afternoon. It's all gone, every penny of it. They took everything that looked like cash—even fifty dollars in pennies. Do you want to make a copy of this?"

"Yes, and as soon as you can have it made up, I'd like a list of what serial numbers you can give me on the bank notes they took."

"Certainly, sir."

The Lawndale chief of police came in just then.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "I can't find a soul that ever saw that young fellow before. There's quite a crowd looked at him up at the undertaker's, but he's still unidentified. He's a stranger in Lawndale. Our first idea is right, I guess."

"Yes," Detective Leeds agreed, while Cashier Gropper's darting gaze went from one face to another, back and forth, flitting, like that of a scared rabbit who sees danger approaching from two directions. "Yes," came the slow voice of the New York detective, "it looks that way. They killed one of their pals when they got the job done—either because they were afraid of him, or because they didn't want to pay him his share of the loot. What does the coroner say, chief?"

"The autopsy shows he's a dope fiend."

"That's it, then," said the detective, getting to his feet. "They were scared of him—scared he'd get full of dope and blab. So they knocked him off in the vault. They might have taken the body away and cleaned things up in the vault, if that policeman hadn't come onto that fella in the alley. Well, I'll want photographs of the dead man, chief. And now I'll hustle back to New York with the cop, and have a look at some pictures." At the door of the bank, he said privately to Otis Gropper: "Remember what I said about that fellow's name, Mr. Gropper. Dave Shell. Don't mention it, even to the chief.

Dave is a bank robber I know, but I don't want him to get scared and leave New York. If he don't know we're looking for him—— Don't mention his name, Mr. Gropper."

"No, sir—not a word!" Otis Gropper promised faithfully.

But there was a leak somewhere.

The New York evening papers that day carried a story that the police of the two States were looking for one Dave Shell, as a participant in the Lawndale vault murder, as they called it. The hundred-thousand-dollar robbery became merely an incident of the bigger crime, the bigger mystery—the slaying of an unidentified young man in the vault of the bank.

Reporters, prying around the police in both Lawndale and New York, and around the bank, somehow got a tip that the name of Dave Shell, bank robber, was being mentioned in whispers as one of the perpetrators of the job. They looked up Dave's name in their own newspaper "morgues," and his record was as plain there as it was in the files of the police department.

But the name of Al Beeson did not appear in print. This was a mystery to Detective Jim Leeds, who suspected that the Lawndale policeman whom he had brought to New York to look at pictures in the rogues' gallery was the man who let the information slip away from him. He had identified the picture of Dave Shell as one of the men who helped to tie him up in the alley, as the man in fact who had clapped a gun on him and forced him to yield. He had also identified a picture of Al Beeson as the confederate of Dave Shell.

He knew, that policeman, that Detective Jim Leeds was now in quest of both Dave Shell and Al Beeson. If he had been the man who let the reporters get the name of Dave, why hadn't they also picked up the name of Al? It was a mystery to Jim Leeds, and served to plunge his thoughts deeper and deeper into that bank vault, wherein both a robbery and a murder already had been done.

And that name standing forth in printer's ink from the pages of the newspapers created even greater consternation in another quarter. This was in a modest hotel room in New York, into which two men had checked early that day, under names not at all like Dave Shell and Al Beeson.

Yet it was Al Beeson who sat quietly on one of the beds, smoking a cigarette, and trying to look hopeful, and it was Dave Shell who paced the floor and gazed sharply at the locked door from time to time.

"If they get us, we won't have a chance."

It was Dave Shell who dropped that remark. Al Beeson nodded in agreement.

"That cop knows we crashed that bank," Dave went on. "Positive identification of me, anyhow. The papers don't mention your name, Al, but they hint that the cop identified another picture in the gallery. That's yours, I'll gamble."

"That's a cinch, Dave. We're up against tough stuff. They'll hang that murder onto us. They've done it already, in the newspapers, and they'll do it in court. That means the chair in Trenton, Dave."

"Don't I know it!"

Dave stopped his pacing. He looked down into the street, and then faced his companion.

"And we've got no dough, for the long get-away."

"No dough," Al agreed.

"I've got a hunch who that dead man is."

"You have! Who?"

"He's Sammy Forbes. Description in the paper fits Sammy. Remember, I told you about him."

Al Beeson had lifted himself from

the bed. They stood face to face, tautly, confronted with an idea.

"Yes," said Al, "you told me about Sammy Forbes. He's the fellow that wised you up to that Lawndale job. You gave him a hundred bucks for the tip."

"That's right."

"Well—what was *he* doing in that bank?"

"He, and some others, went there and got the dough. His pals bumped Sammy off in the vault."

"But how did they get in the vault?"

Dave pressed the flats of his hands to his temples, and began to pace again, frantically. The gesture with his hands indicated the pressure that was upon his brain, bewildered, haunted by the fear of paying with his life for a murder done by another man's hand.

"That's what I can't make out," he said despairingly. "I can't make it out!"

"I opened that vault," Al said. "I know what I had to do on it. There's no guy living that could open it without drills and punches. None! You can't beat that vault by the touch system. You can't beat anything with the touch racket, except some of those old safes that rattle when you fuss with the combination. That stuff is out of date. Still, somebody got that vault open without drilling. If that guy was Sammy Forbes——"

"Sammy didn't open the vault, Al. He couldn't open a sardine can without a hammer and chisel. It's some guy that Sammy took in with him. And then he didn't want to be bothered with Sammy, after he got the dough—didn't want to split with him—so he just knocked him off, and left him there in the vault."

They looked at one another.

"And maybe they knew we were going to open the vault the same night, eh?" Beeson suggested.

"That's what I'm thinking, Al."

This was a thought that filled them both with impotent rage, but they suppressed outward manifestations of it.

"If that was the game," said Al, "they intended that the blame for the job would fall on us."

"Sure! Anyhow, Sammy's pal figured it that way. We'd drill the vault, get it open, leave all the evidence—but get no dough."

"And the guy that killed Sammy Forbes, if that fellow is Sammy, he meant that we'd burn for the murder."

"That's the way the thing stacks up, Al."

They meditated upon this, roaming about the room—hunted men, short of money for a journey that would place any safe distance between them and their pursuers, the "long get-away," as they called it.

"We've got to get that guy," Dave suggested.

"Sure! But where'll we start in?"

"If we could locate friends of Sammy we'd find out who he's been running around with lately."

"Where did Sammy get his tip about that bank, Dave?"

"Oh, I don't know. That's his game, you know—picking up stuff about banks that look ripe, and selling his tips. I never heard of him working on a job himself. He's short of nerve for that stuff. He was just a tipster."

"What kind of a guy was he?"

"A-one, so far's I know. Shrewd—a good snooper. His tips were O. K. They turned out about like he said. I'd like to find out if it's really Sammy Forbes—that body."

"Well, as soon as it gets dark we'll step out, and see what we can pick up," said Al Beeson. "You know, Dave, I've got a hunch. How did Sammy and his pal get into that bank? That back window hadn't been monkeyed with until you went to work on it, eh? And the vault—— But first let's find out if it was Sammy Forbes that got

knocked off. And then—well, if we can find the guy that got that hundred thousand, we'll pinch him hard. We'll take it away from him. That'll give us the dough for the long get-away."

Dave Shell nodded disconsolately.

"Yes," he agreed, "but it might take us weeks to locate him, and all the while, Al, we'll be hunted—and if we're picked up——"

They both thought of the wired chair in the New Jersey State prison—and the thought swelled their determination.

Otis Gropper, cashier of the Lawndale bank, sat alone in his private office, in a blissful and contented state of mind. He hummed a quiet little tune, as he sat at his desk, and this was strange indeed, for the morning papers carried a story that it was the firm belief of the police that the bank robbers and murderers, Dave Shell and Al Beeson, had succeeded in making their escape from the country, with the hundred thousand dollars and more they had lifted from the Lawndale bank. If this were true, their capture was a dubious prospect.

It would seem that Mr. Gropper should be dismayed by this. As a citizen and as a high official of the looted bank, it was strange that he should feel in an exultant mood after reading such news. The stockholders of the bank had been called upon to make good the deficit brought on by the robbery, and they had responded, most of them being very rich, yet even that fact was not the point. Mr. Gropper, to hear him talk, lived for one purpose only, and that was to see the robbers and the slayers brought to justice, and to recover from them as much of the loot as possible. Yet, having just read the papers, he smiled, and tackled the business that lay on his desk with a brisk cheerfulness.

In the midst of all his contentment, the presence of two visitors was announced.

"Mr. Steele and Mr. Robbins?" Otis Gropper repeated. "I don't know them. What's their business?"

"They say it's absolutely personal," the secretary replied, "and decline to state it to me. They say they're from New York."

"Oh, well—all right. Send them in."

"Mr. Steele and Mr. Robbins," rather young men, the former with a Vandyke beard, the latter with a mustache, and both wearing glasses, walked in. They looked very amiable and businesslike while accepting Mr. Gropper's invitation to be seated and until the secretary had withdrawn and closed the door. Then there occurred in their manner and looks such a swift change that Otis Gropper took fright. They leered.

He started to get out of his chair, no doubt with the thought that this was some gesture in a newfangled game of holdup. He was soothed a moment by Al Beeson's quiet voice:

"Sit still, Mr. Gropper. No reason to feel nervous. We just want to make sure that our talk won't be overheard. Private matters, you know—yes, very private, between you and us."

The banker had settled back into his chair. His fears were allayed for only a moment. The strangers had ceased to look so sharp and threatening, and were smiling amiably again, but their presence and their mysterious assurance were highly disconcerting.

"What's your business with me?" Otis Gropper demanded.

"You're sure we won't be overheard?" Dave Shell asked.

"Not if we talk quietly."

"You'd better be sure of it," Al Beeson warned the banker. "It's a tough spot you'd be in if we are overheard."

"State your business."

Al Beeson's voice had a pleasant friendly tone and his eyes smiled. He talked low:

"First, we want to salute you as one of the brotherhood. Not exactly one

of us, but clever. I'll give you that, Mr. Gropper—you're clever."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes, you know all right," Al countered. "If you didn't know, you wouldn't be listening to us. You were scared at first, and you're scared yet—but you won't call for help."

Gropper looked around helplessly, thus confirming Beeson's words.

"What do you want?"

"A hundred thousand dollars," Al told him quietly. "That's all. And we want it now."

Gropper leaned forward and planted his elbows on the desk. He looked as brave as he could.

"You must be crazy!"

"No, we're not crazy. We've got this whole thing lined up, from A to Z. If we fall, you fall—and we're so sure that you don't want to fall that you'll do everything you can to protect us. Now here's the story that we'd have to tell the cops, if they grab us. Otis Gropper, cashier of the Lawndale bank, a widower in Lawndale, has a dazzling sweetheart in New York. He's got another name that he uses in New York. The lady in New York won't marry him, as all she wants is his dough. He couldn't get what she wanted, until he ran across a little crook named Sam Forbes, around the night clubs that Gropper's sweetie takes him to.

"Sam Forbes showed the bank cashier how he could loot his bank without fixing the books, and without being turned up by the bank examiners. Simplest thing in the world! Have the vault robbed. Have it drilled and opened by a couple of fellows good at that business. Watch 'em close while they're looking the town over, and then, just before they're due to swoop, take the money out of the vault, and lock it again. The bank robbers come along, and leave all the evidence of a robbery. Mr. Gropper, to cinch things, bumps off the little crook who framed the trick. The bank robbers get nothing. Mr. Gropper's got it all—and still the bank robbers, if they're nailed, will fall for both jobs. How does that sound, Mr. Gropper?"

"I—I still think—you're crazy."

"No, you don't. Your voice wouldn't be so husky if you didn't believe that story. And if you wasn't sure that that story'd be run down in New York and found out to be true, why—this office'd be full of cops right now. You'd have them in here to grab us."

The frightened little man, who had hoped that these two men really had left the country, so they might never even say that they got nothing out of the vault and that the man found dead therein was murdered before they opened it, thus raising a whisper of suspicion, looked exactly what he was—a man in a corner, fighting for his life.

"A hundred thousand dollars," said Al Beeson, "removes us from the country. We'll take a chance. How about it?"

"I—I can't get a hundred thousand dollars."

"Yes, you can. You've got that money planted somewhere, or most of it anyhow. We've been trailing you for a week, but I'll admit that we can't figure out where you planted it. That robbery is a month old. Come now, where is that dough? You know, if we're picked up in this town, it's all off with you—but we're going to camp on your heels till we're paid off. If you want to save yourself, take us where the dough is, and hand it over. If you don't, we all fall."

Gropper's nervous hand rattled a paper weight.

"Why, that cop we tied up in the alley," said Al Beeson, "said we left the bank with no grip or anything. They're trying to figure how we got away with a hundred thousand dollars without a grip. He knows there was

only one man in the bank, and the other was in the alley. Right now there's a little mystery, a little thinking going on, and if we spread the story of Otis Gropper to the police——"

"I'll get you fifty thousand dollars."

"One hundred thousand."

Otis Gropper capitulated.

"You come back here," he said, "at a quarter of three. We'll sit here and talk business, until every one in the bank has gone. I'll get you the money."

They had him, and they knew they had him, though they thought he was a fool to pay them off out of the vault, as he seemed to intend. But that was up to him.

"We've got him sewed up—absolutely tight," said Dave Shell, as they returned to their hotel. "He'll pay. He can't take a chance on having that story started. It can be proved, and he knows it. There isn't even a tiny hole for him to crawl through."

So it seemed.

The bank robbers remained under cover until around a quarter of three, when they ventured again into the streets of Lawndale. For a month, they had quietly assumed something of a disguise, assisted by nature. It was less than a block to the bank. They stepped inside it.

Within a minute or so, they were ushered into Otis Gropper's private office. There was a lost look on the face of Mr. Gropper, as he sat rigidly at his desk.

Before they had time to inquire anything of him, two doors suddenly opened. One was the door that had just closed behind them. The other was a door leading into the banking inclosure of the bank. Jim Leeds, New York detective, stood in one, with a gun on Al and Dave. The Lawndale chief of police stood likewise in the other.

It had happened in the twinkling of an eye.

"Up with 'em, boys!"

Trapped, the hands of Dave Shell and Al Beeson went up. Other officers appeared.

Al and Dave gazed at Otis Gropper, as, handcuffed, they were pushed into chairs. They couldn't for the life of them see how he could have taken such a chance in setting this trap for them. But they presently discovered that he had not set the trap. Otis Gropper had been caught with them.

"We've been on your heels for three weeks, boys," Jim Leeds was considerate enough to inform them. "I was sure from the first that you didn't bump Sam Forbes off. Dave Shell and Al Beeson don't perform that way, I said to myself. There's a trick in it somewhere. The policeman you tied up—he swore to me that Al came out of the bank with no grip or anything. He couldn't stuff a hundred thousand dollars in his pockets, most of it being little money. He saw both of you beat it, with nothing you could carry the swag in. Well, I said to myself, there must have been two mobs tangled up in this job. If there was, the other one got the stuff. So, when I picked up your trail, boys, I let you go. I knew that sooner or later you'd lead me to the other mob. It certainly surprised me to-day when I saw you walk into this bank, and found out later you'd been in conference with Mr. Gropper. All I had to do then was have a quiet talk with Mr. Gropper. He couldn't explain things, and finally caved in—when he saw the whole thing would crash before the day was over. Well, whenever possible, it's best to let one crook lead you to the other. And now we'll move along. All right, Mr. Gropper, get on your feet."

Otis Gropper, facing a charge of murder, had difficulty in accomplishing this feat. He was helped along to jail.

"He was clever about hiding that money," Jim Leds told Dave and Al. "We've been watching for some of those bills to show up, as we had the

serial numbers of a lot of 'em. But he was wise. He let loose only the smallest bills, and not many of them. He had the rest of that hundred thousand planted—and where do you think he planted it, boys?"

They couldn't guess. It was a matter of small interest to them anyhow. They had fallen, and, though they hadn't got a cent out of the Lawndale robbery, they were up against a burglary charge, anyhow.

"Well, sir," said Jim Leeds, "that little cuss planted that money right in the vault. Now that's clever, eh? Right in the vault! He's got his own private drawer in the vault, a big one. It works with a little combination, and he's the only one that knows the combination. Who'd ever think of looking for the stolen hundred thousand in the vault! Yes, sir—that was clever. And he'd 'a' got away with it if you boys hadn't led me right to him!"

OFF TO THE WILDS OF LONG ISLAND

SINCE that slice of land extending like a finger east of New York is but a hundred and thirty miles long and in some places not more than ten miles across, it is reasonable to expect that it is fairly well populated. Long Island's proximity to New York City would almost guarantee that fact to any adult mind. But to the minds of three boys, two of them fourteen years and the third fifteen, Long Island loomed as a strange and uninhabited wilderness.

The boys told no one of their plan to explore the island, but saved their pennies until they had a working capital of nine dollars. Bravely, they left their homes of safety and monotony in First Avenue and trekked to the Pennsylvania Station where they bought three tickets to Lake Ronkonkoma, a small settlement about fifty miles out on the island. The name sounded uncivilized to them, and, as their train sped through the countryside, they were greatly surprised to see paved roads and countless towns, well-kept farms and acres of wooded land.

When at last the train stopped at Lake Ronkonkoma, the boys started to walk over some hard, stony fields. The wind blew colder than they had ever remembered, and, when they reached a forsaken house, they were only too glad to climb in a broken window. With foresight of explorers, as they called themselves, they first scouted for wood and then for food. There was plenty of the former but only potatoes and carrots in the larder.

After three days, the boys decided that exploring was not so much fun after all. The food supply was exhausted and they were sick of the same fare. It took a lot of energy to keep the fire blazing, and the cold was intense. Finally, a conference was held and the three agreed to walk home, since they had no money for car fare. The broad cement highway known as the Jericho Turnpike did not look so bad to them. A little civilization was perhaps a good thing after all. Not far down the road, they discovered a truck idling. One of the boys said he could drive it, and the three clambered aboard.

Strangely enough, it was not the poor driving that attracted the attention of a patrolman at Sixty-second Street and First Avenue, New York, but the unusual spectacle of three such evident kids huddled on the high front seat that caused him to stop the truck. At the police station, the fugitives were given a chance to tell their story. The mothers came for their runaway "explorers" and promised to "warm" them so thoroughly when they were safely at home that they would forget that they had shivered for three days in an empty house near far-off Ronkonkoma.

Chloroformed!

A STREAK OF RED PAINT ON A COAT DOES NOT OF NECESSITY MEAN A LADY PAINTS.

By Elaine Hamilton

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

LAUREEN, a famous London revue artist, returns very late one night to her apartment, escorted by Ivan Lansberg, a millionaire. They find the door of the apartment unlocked, and in one of the rooms discover the dead body of Delmond, a former lover of Laureen's, whose death has evidently been caused by chloroform. The mystery is intensified when Bertha Mackie, Laureen's maid, faints when an inspector from Scotland Yard shows her Delmond's photograph.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPEAKING TUBE.

MRS. CARTER created all the interest she anticipated. Each member of her audience reacted differently.

Laureen leaned forward amusedly, chin cupped in her hand.

Lansberg's face set into graver lines, while Carter glared stonily at his wife for stealing his thunder.

Into the detective's eyes crept the hazy look that drew his victims on to a sense of false security.

"What business had you got listening at the doors of flats at night?" demanded Carter.

His wife gave him a withering look.

"I wasn't listening at any doors," she retorted. "If Bertha leaves the stopper out of the speaking tube is that my fault? She often does, and then if I pass close to the tube in my kitchen I can hear if people are talking near it up here."

"What time was this, Mrs. Carter?" asked the detective gently. "About ten to half past?"

"That's right, sir. I didn't look at the clock but it was about half an hour after the maid went out, and I went to bed at quarter to eleven, so it must have been as you said."

Reynolds made a hurried note.

"Hear anything? Just tell me what happened."

Mrs. Carter put her head on one side meditatively.

"Well, sir, Joe had gone to work and I was having a quiet read of the Sunday papers when I heard men's voices. Two or three men, I should think."

She paused a minute, then continued. "Yes, I'm sure I heard three different voices altogether. For a minute I was startled. Then I remembered the tube was right beside me and that I'd left my stopper out when the maid called me."

"This is all highly important, Mrs. Carter," the detective said. "I only hope you listened," he added, urgently, in case ill-judged reticence might keep her from admitting that fact and all she had heard.

She twisted her apron and colored.

"Yes, sir, I did, because after the maid said she and Miss Laureen would be out for the night it seemed queer that men should be up there talking."

"Very queer," agreed Reynolds. "Could you hear what was said?"

Mrs. Carter shook her head.

"Not clearly. But I'm sure they were quarreling. They must have been in the hall. First I heard men's voices. Then they faded away, probably the men went into another room."

"And you couldn't distinguish a word they said?" asked Reynolds eagerly.

"No, sir. I only wish I had."

"You didn't think of coming up to see who those men were in Miss Laureen's flat when you knew she and her maid were out? They might have been burglars." The C. I. D. man's tone was curt.

The woman bristled. After all her help for this detective to turn around on her like that!

"Burglars, indeed!" she said scornfully. "They wouldn't make a row, would they? They'd be as quiet as they could. Actresses do queer things. It was no business of mine if Miss Laureen pretended she'd be away for the night and sent her maid off, and then brought back some men to gamble. That's my belief if you ask me."

Nobody did, and Mrs. Carter added viciously:

"She's got a roulette wheel. I asked the maid what it was once and she said it was a Monte Carlo gambling machine."

Laureen bit her lip to hide her amusement.

"It's over there, inspector," she pointed to a low table, "under a pile of magazines. Somebody gave it me ages ago, but it has a slant so has not been used."

The inspector lifted the books off and scanned the gambling machine carefully.

"It's covered with dust and has evidently not been used for months," he observed. "Sergeant," he called to his man in the hall, "go downstairs with Mrs. Carter and sit where she was last night. Blow up the tube when you're ready. I want to test this speaking tube."

Presently they heard a whistle and the detective spoke in a loud voice some feet away from the pipe.

"You too, Mr. Lansberg," the detective requested. "Will you please come here and talk to me in an angry manner?"

Lansberg's eyes twinkled as he caught Laureen's muttered "I wish he'd ask *me* to talk to him in an angry manner. It would come so naturally!"

"Hear anything, sergeant?" Reyn-

olds asked a few moments later when his man returned from the basement.

"Yes, sir," came the reply. "Just as Mrs. Carter said. I could hear a voice —yours, I think, sir, but couldn't hear a word distinctly."

The inspector heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's one point proved, anyhow, in this case. Most unusual one I've had for a long time. Anybody could have walked in and killed that man. Every door open, no hall porter, nobody about, windows open, fire escape outside. Everything handy for the murderer to escape."

"Now who were those people who were here talking?" he meditated. Then with one of his swift moves he turned to the girl.

"Have *you* any idea who the men were, Miss Laureen?" he rasped.

"Presumably, Delmond was one. Other than that, I certainly do not know. Neither do I know how, why or when they entered my flat," she replied firmly.

"Sergeant, if that maid has recovered from her fainting fit, fetch her in. I want to ask her a question or two."

Declining the help of the sergeant who offered her his arm, Bertha came in a little unsteadily and took the chair indicated by the inspector.

She looked pale, but obstinate and a little defiant as she sat waiting for Reynolds to open fire.

"Going to try and brazen it out," he decided to himself.

The detective began gently, willing to give her a chance.

"About those black satin shoes, Bertha. How could the sender of that telephone message know your mistress had such a pair?"

The maid drew a breath of relief. This was going to be easier than she thought. As long as he only wanted to talk about shoes, she didn't mind.

"I couldn't tell, sir, unless she had been seen in them."

"May I interrupt, inspector?" ventured Laureen. She was anxious to help the maid all she could. "It has occurred to me that that may have been a chance shot, because, you see, practically every woman possesses a pair of black satin slippers with paste buckles. Why, I'm sure I have two, maybe three, pairs." She looked inquiringly at Bertha.

"You have three pairs, miss," confirmed the maid.

"Thank you," Reynolds responded. "You may be right on that point." He stared vaguely across the room.

"Have you been wearing any of those black satin shoes lately, madam?"

Laureen reflected and shook her head helplessly.

"I'm afraid I really can't remember, inspector." She smiled at the maid. "Can you, Bertha? You've a wonderful memory for what I wear. I used a black brocaded pair last night, I'm sure."

The compliment produced a flow of eloquence from the maid. She started off volubly.

"It comes easy to me, miss, and I've got to remind you or you'd be wearing the same clothes over and over again. You've not used any of those black-satin slippers since you wore your black lace dress at Lady Wentworth's dance the end of April."

"Indeed, an excellent memory," murmured Reynolds with a satisfied smile which made Laureen frown.

Bertha ran on unsuspectingly, pleased at the inspector's tribute.

"Then you said one black pair were a little shabby, another pair hurt you a bit," she ticked them off on her fingers, "and the third pair had the lining torn inside."

"Your maid must be a treasure," Reynolds remarked to Laureen, whose face expressed cold disdain as she met his glance. "Did you notice which pair you took to the studio?" he asked the

maid in smooth tones. "I'll guess it was the shabby pair, because the one pair hurt and the other pair had a broken lining."

"Of course I noticed which pair, sir. I take great pride in looking after my mistress' things. But you're wrong. I chose the ones that had had the lining repaired."

"So you'd remembered to have that done," admired the inspector. "When was that?"

"Last week, sir. I took them to Hanbury's myself and——" She stopped abruptly and a flood of color swept over her face.

Instantly, Reynolds pounced at an obvious point.

"Who was with you," he demanded, "when you went on that errand?"

Lansberg shifted his position as though he wanted to break the tension in the room.

But Reynolds relentlessly repeated his question.

"Who was it?"

Bertha hesitated, looked piteously at her mistress, and back at Reynolds' stern face, as if hypnotized.

"My friend," she whispered, "Mr. Jackson."

"Jackson!" murmured Laureen in astonishment.

The inspector hushed her with a warning finger.

"You mean the dead man whose photograph I showed you?" questioned he more kindly.

The maid nodded, tears running down her cheeks.

"Yes, sir," she sobbed. "It's dreadful to think we had words on Saturday night and the very next night he must have got in here somehow and been killed."

Over her bent head the two men looked at each other in amazement. Poor deluded woman caught in the toils of her own vanity! But Laureen's eyes were wet as she heard the pitiful sobs, though there was something akin to terror in her heart.

"Tell me, Bertha, when and how did you meet Jackson?" the detective asked.

The maid fought back her distress.

"Three weeks ago, sir. I was going out one evening when he stopped and asked me where the nearest tube station was. I told him but he said he was a stranger and would I be so kind as to show him the way." She sighed deeply at the remembrance of her brief romance.

"And then?" suggested Reynolds quietly.

"Well, sir, I'm the last to pick up with any man like that, but he—he was so different. He was so grateful to me for walking along to the tube with him. He told me he was a single man and had no friends in London. He was here on business for a while."

"Did he say what his business was, Bertha?"

"Oh, yes, sir, he was very frank. He was a traveler."

"Did he mention the name of his employers?"

Bertha shook her head.

"No, sir; he just said he dealt in soft goods."

The inspector's hand went up quickly to hide his mouth.

"I see," he remarked in a stifled voice, ashamed to see that Lansberg and Laureen had controlled their expressions better. "And after that first talk you naturally met him often by his wish?"

Bertha nervously wrung her hands.

"It sounds dreadfully bold to talk about it, but he was such a gentleman and so devoted to me. It seemed like love at first sight for both of us. We used to go for walks or to the cinema and once we went to Miss Laureen's theater when she gave me tickets."

The detective drew little patterns on a piece of paper.

"Must have been during one of those

walks that you lost your key, I suppose," he hinted.

"It was the night we went to a cinema, sir. My bag fell down. It must have opened and the key dropped out."

"Mr. Jackson was concerned probably to know you'd lost it," stated the inspector.

"I never told him, sir. I didn't miss it until next morning when I got up to the flat, and then as my mistress was there she let me in. I took the other key and said nothing about it until this morning."

"Did Jackson often come to this flat to see you?" the inspector asked.

The maid flushed indignantly.

"Never," she exclaimed emphatically. "That is, until last Saturday night. I was to meet him outside, but he said as he was a bit early he thought he'd call for me. I asked him inside the hall while I put on my hat, and was annoyed to find him in here when I came back ready to go out."

"As any honorable maid would in her mistress' absence," agreed Reynolds. "Is that what began the quarrel?"

Bertha's face had a tortured expression as she responded:

"Yes, sir. I found him in this room at that bureau opening the drawers and turning over some letters."

Laureen made an involuntary sound. Reynolds glanced at her speculatively before he again addressed the maid.

"You were angry?"

"I was—very angry. More than I ought to have been perhaps, for Mr. Jackson explained that he often did a bit of society reporting and as Miss Laureen was a very famous revue artist all the world was interested in her."

"This is very interesting, Bertha," commented Reynolds. "What was your answer to that?"

"Well, sir, I understood a bit better, though I was still annoyed. Then he said he'd heard rumors that my mistress was giving a special surprise party here on Sunday night, June 30th, and probably a member of some royal family was coming."

"And you replied?" the detective questioned eagerly.

"That he'd heard entirely wrong as I happened to know my mistress was going to a studio party at Mr. Spencer's and would be there from ten o'clock that night."

"I see." Reynolds aimlessly tapped his pencil on the table. "Did he ask what time she would return?"

"Yes, sir, he did. That made me angry again. I said, 'Some time after midnight, but I always wait up for her so it's no use your trying to crawl in here and interview her when she's tired.' Then he fired up and said some horrible things about Miss Laureen. We quarreled dreadfully and at last he went away alone and I had a good cry."

"And you never saw him again, Bertha?"

"No, sir. I walked along to Victoria last night and back hoping to meet him as usual and make it up. But he didn't come and now it's too late." Again her self-control gave way and the inspector signaled to Laureen to take the maid to her room.

Lansberg looked at his watch and rose as he saw Reynolds putting his papers together.

"I'll go and get some luncheon, inspector, and be at my rooms ready for you at two thirty. Wonderful how the pieces are fitting into the puzzle, isn't it?"

"It will be," corrected Reynolds grimly, "when I can force open the fingers that hold on to some of those pieces."

"Inspector," asked Laureen from the doorway, "can my maid pack up some of our clothes and remove them to St. Andrew's Hotel near by. With your permission, I propose to take rooms there for Bertha and myself."

"Certainly. Your maid can stay for

an hour or so. The sergeant will be here on guard. And you, madam?"

"I must get some luncheon. Then I'll go to the theater and lie down in my dressing room for an hour or so," she said quickly. She turned to Lansberg. "It will be quieter than the hotel and after last night I need rest, or what will my work be like to-night?"

The inspector nodded and led them to the hall door.

"For Heaven's sake be careful, Laureen," warned Lansberg in a swift undertone as they walked downstairs together. "Reynolds will have a man watching every step you take to-day."

She screwed up her face impishly.

"What's the betting that I elude the creature?" she whispered.

But Lansberg's face was serious, his mind on the ordeal before him that afternoon.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUTTERFLIES.

DOWNSTAIRS the front door was closed. Lansberg and Laureen hesitated in front of the man stationed there.

"Press photographers and reporters outside, sir," explained the officer in plain clothes who was on guard. "I'll take you and the lady out the back way if you like."

"Thank you," Lansberg replied.

The man unlocked a door behind the staircase that led through a walled-in yard, opened another door and conducted them through a narrow alley into the street behind.

Lansberg put Laureen into a passing taxi, raised his hat and strolled away in the opposite direction.

Upstairs in the flat Reynolds turned back for a last word with Bertha, who was on her knees packing a trunk.

"Do you know any one by the name of Valerie?" he asked.

The maid bent over the garments she was deftly folding.

"No, sir," she responded firmly.

"Any of your mistress' friends called by that name?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

Some latent obstinacy in her tone made Reynolds tap her on the shoulder.

"Don't conceal anything," he warned. "You've heard that name recently. Who mentioned it?"

The woman hesitated, then said reluctantly:

"My friend, Mr. Jackson, asked me once if any lady of that name had ever been to the flat. I said 'no.'"

"Did Jackson give his reason for asking?"

Bertha thought a minute.

"I'm not quite sure, sir, but I believe he said this Valerie—he didn't give her other name—had once known Miss Laureen—acted with her or something, he'd been told. And I said maybe that was before my time as I'd only worked for my mistress for ten months."

"He never mentioned the subject again?"

"Oh, no, sir. It was only asked casually, I think."

"About this Miss Gilbert who rang you up last night with the message. Have you ever heard her voice before or seen her?"

"No, sir. And I'm sure no one of that name has been here. I never admit any one who don't give her name because my mistress is always being bothered by all kinds of people."

"H'm. Anything peculiar about this woman's voice on the telephone? Could you recognize it?"

Bertha conscientiously tried to describe it.

"I think I'd know it again, sir, as it was a very clear, rather high voice."

"Thank you," said the inspector. "That's all I need bother you with now. Good morning."

He was walking away when the maid timidly called him back.

"Please, sir," she clasped her hands nervously, her eyes swimming with tears, "do you think I might have a photo of my friend? One like you showed me this morning. I should be so grateful."

"Yes, you shall," he said with rough kindliness, foreign to a man alleged to be without a heart.

With a word to the sergeant on duty, he strode heavily downstairs and impatiently thrust aside the eager newspaper men.

By the post box at the corner of the street the inspector stopped and glanced at the tablet indicating the hours of clearance. Afterward, he walked the short distance to Scotland Yard, revolving in his mind the facts he had elucidated and the huge gaps remaining in this problem.

One or two things had gone very smoothly. The photograph of Leslie Delmond, for instance. Early that morning he'd sent a man out to try all the film agencies for pictures of the dead man, and within an hour one had been obtained. An excellent portrait, too, judging by Bertha Mackie's instant recognition of it.

In his office he ordered coffee and sandwiches and began sifting out reports that had come in about investigations for which he had previously given instructions.

A thin, scholarly-looking man came in.

Reynolds gave him a very rapid summary of the facts up to date and then asked:

"Found that telephone clerk yet, Jenkins?"

"Not yet. But I'll have news presently."

"That film agency where you picked up the photo of Delmond. Did they know his address?"

"No. Hadn't seen or heard of him for ages. That photo is two or three years old."

The inspector ticked off those items on his list.

"You saw the women Miss Laureen dined with last night. Did they observe anything unusual in her manner?"

Jenkins shook his head.

"Nothing noticeable, they said. But, after a bit of trouble, I got them to admit she'd seemed in a hurry to get away. Kept looking at her watch, they said."

The inspector's mouth tightened.

"She did, eh! Funny she couldn't remember what time she left there when I asked her last night, or rather early this morning. What about the waiters in the restaurant? Nothing fresh there?"

"Only what I told you on the telephone, sir. Two waiters were positive Miss Laureen left at eight twenty-five, and the porter outside said the lady wore a pink cloak and wouldn't have a taxi."

Reynolds stroked his chin.

"That bit agrees with what she said. But, Jenkins, that cloak is lined with black and is reversible. She let that out. And in the pocket was a black scarf or maybe a little black cap. Doesn't take much to cover a woman's head in these days."

Jenkins pondered. "Reversible, eh!"

"Nothing remarkable in a *black* cloak and hat," went on Reynolds, "whereas in a pink cloak, bareheaded, and with her golden hair, she'd have been marked wandering about before going to the Spencer studio."

"I called at Spencer's address," Jenkins added, "and got hold of the caretaker. Richard Spencer is a bachelor and a bit sweet on Laureen, the woman who cleans his flat told me. She says he's got sketches of her all over the place."

The inspector whistled softly.

"So Spencer's keen on this girl, is he?"

Jenkins laughed.

"Dozens like him from all I can hear, sir. I don't wonder. She's as clever as she's good looking. I went to see her show last week. Lansberg's got money in it, they say."

The detective made a sudden decision.

"Ring up and book me a seat in her theater for to-night. I'll go and see the minx myself and find out why people rave about her."

"You'll know all right once you've seen her," predicted Jenkins. "Back of the stalls, side seat will be best, I expect. Not too conspicuous. You needn't dress up, you know, sir," he added.

But the inspector had finished with that theme.

"Get copies of this photograph of the dead man sent to all the newspapers and tell them we want information about him," he ordered. "And while you're about it, get an extra copy for me."

"I'll see to that at once," promised Jenkins.

"Also," went on Reynolds, "I must have news about this girl or woman called Valerie."

He briefly outlined all he knew and showed Jenkins the envelope Carter had worked on with the address. "Get 'em to reproduce that and ask any one who saw or received that letter to call here immediately."

"Post box cleared at seven fifteen a. m.," mused Jenkins. "Letter for W. 1. district. H'm. It would get delivered any time after two p. m., I suppose."

"About that," agreed the inspector, looking at his watch. "I must be off to my appointment. I shall be at Lansberg's flat if you want me. It's somewhere near the Adelphi. Look up his number and ring me if the report of the post-morten comes in."

"Curious that no key of the flat was found on the dead man," observed Jenkins. "No letters either, or papers. The other oddments we found in his pockets are in this box."

"All right. Within twenty-four hours we may get some light on this Leslie Delmond from his landlady or wherever he lived."

"Do you want me to comb through all the flats in 49 Beresford Street and ask the tenants if they posted a letter addressed to some one called Valerie?" asked Jenkins.

The inspector considered the question.

"No," he said at last. "That maid, Bertha Mackie, says the dead man asked her if a girl called Valerie ever came to see her mistress. So it's long odds the letter came from somebody in that flat, and I'd give something to know what was in it."

"You're having Laureen watched?" questioned Jenkins.

"You bet I am," Reynolds assured him emphatically as he jammed on his hat. "Get on with that newspaper business at once."

Inside the spacious hall of Lansberg's apartment the inspector, against his will, felt impressed. His duties often carried him into palatial mansions, but in the silence and dignity of this place there was something quite apart from all he had seen before.

It occupied the whole of the first floor and the interior had evidently been reconstructed to suit its owner's taste. Doorways had been widened and hung with rich draperies. Thick carpets deadened all sound. Even Reynolds' untrained eye could realize beauty in the two or three exquisite pieces of statuary that gleamed with color filtering through a beautiful, large stained-glass window.

He tried to shake off the feeling of awed respect that was creeping over him. Firmly, he told himself that this type of furnishing wasn't English, and that the olive-hued, sloe-eyed manservant who had taken in his card was a dago.

He almost started as he found the

man at his elbow announcing with a strong foreign accent:

"Mr. Lansberg will see you, sir."

"See me, indeed!" murmured the detective to himself. "He certainly will."

Hat in hand, the inspector followed the man through the portières, across a lofty room decorated in a style neither ornate nor austere, into a library.

From a huge writing table at an angle to the window, Lansberg rose, dismissed the manservant with a few words in a language unknown to the detective, and bowed with grave courtesy.

"Where would you like to sit, inspector? With your permission I will stay where I am." His eyes twinkled. "As you see, I face the light nicely here."

And again Reynolds had that uneasy sense of being out of his depth. Was this the man he had badgered and kept at heel with his commands and questions last night and this morning? Also Reynolds felt he would give quite a lot to know what his superior officers in conference that morning had in mind when they urged he must not annoy Mr. Lansberg unduly.

Lansberg opened a carved ebony box and twisted it toward the detective, who had chosen a hard chair with its back toward the window.

"Will you smoke?" Lansberg asked. It was almost as if he were trying to put an awkward guest at his ease.

The inspector selected a cigarette with an effort at being casual, striving for equally composed manners.

"Thank you," he said, repressing the "sir" which rose to his lips almost mechanically, and bending forward for the lighted match Lansberg offered.

Leaning back calmly, Lansberg awaited the detective's opening, one hand idly fingering an ivory paper knife.

On the little finger Reynolds noticed a heavy gold ring engraved with armorial bearings unlike any he had seen before. He wished——

But even a Scotland Yard man has limits, and he had no adequate excuse for asking leave to examine that ring. Anyhow he could hunt up Lansberg's pedigree later.

He pulled himself together with a frown.

"I should like your full name, age, occupation, please," he began formally.

Lansberg pushed a card across to him.

"Anticipating those questions, I wrote them down for you, inspector, as my names are lengthy and a little complicated to spell."

The detective glanced up under his eyebrows as he took the card and read it slowly to gain time. That inability of his to spell! Was Lansberg making fun of him?

But there was no hint of anything except well-bred attention in Lansberg's face.

"Like a blooming Sphinx," the detective muttered to himself. "He'll answer my questions but give nothing away voluntarily."

Aloud he said:

"A good way to avoid any mistake. Now, Mr. Lansberg, before I go back to the events of last evening, will you tell me what your business is?"

Lansberg smiled faintly, flicked one finger toward the card Reynolds held.

"It is clearly stated there, inspector. I have many interests that cannot possibly affect this affair; interests," he added icily, "that I am not at liberty to reveal. It will be sufficient for your purpose if I tell you—what you probably already know—that I have considerable money invested in the theatrical world, including the theater in which Miss Laureen acts."

"That I suppose is your hobby," said the detective with a heavy attempt at sarcasm.

"It's quite a good name. Call it that by all means, if you like," Lansberg agreed genially.

"What is your staff here?" the inspector asked.

"This is a service flat. I rarely take any meals here. The only resident servant of my own is the man you saw who acts as butler and valet."

"Does he speak English?"

Lansberg shook his head.

"About a dozen words. I have a secretary, an English ex-officer, who comes daily," he added, almost as though he wished to change the subject. "Knowing you were coming, I sent him off for the afternoon."

"Why?" asked the C. I. D. man bluntly.

"Only so that we should be undisturbed," was the quiet answer. He wrote something rapidly on a card and passed it to Reynolds.

"There is his name and private address if you care to call on him."

The inspector tucked the address into his pocketbook.

"We'll now deal with your movements last night, Mr. Lansberg. Where did you dine and with whom?"

"At my club, and alone. That address too you will find both on my visiting card and the supplementary card I gave you just now," he added.

Reynolds verified the remark, slightly irritated to realize Lansberg was getting the better of him in some vague way.

"I suppose the hall porter or waiters at your club can confirm that statement?"

Lansberg raised his hand indifferently in one of his rare gestures.

"Possibly. That is your affair, inspector."

Something in that gesture prompted Reynolds to ask another question.

"Are you English?"

"By birth, no. My origin is rather cosmopolitan since my mother was English and my father was from one of the Balkan States. I was born in Paris, and am a naturalized Englishman."

"And subject to English law," commented the inspector inwardly with a grim satisfaction.

"Please outline what you did, Mr. Lansberg," he added aloud, "from the time you left here and went to your club until you reached Mr. Spencer's."

Lansberg reflected.

"I left here about seven thirty p. m. last night, strolled along to my club, found one or two letters and read them while dinner was being served."

"Many people dining there?" interpolated the detective.

"Very few. On Sunday nights there rarely are. That is one reason why I like to dine at my club then."

"Do you remember conversing with any particular member?"

"No, or I should remember it. I dined alone, nodded to one or two men, smoked a cigar and looked at the papers for a while, and then about nine thirty p. m. I set out for the studio."

"By taxi, or your own car?"

"Neither. It was a fine evening, I had plenty of time, and I walked as far as Victoria, where you have proof from Miss Laureen's maid that I took a bus to Chelsea."

For one wild second the detective felt almost hysterical. Yet another of them who took a walk after dinner! There seemed to have been a passionate wave of pedestrian exercise last night.

But was it all so straightforward as it appeared to be? Rapidly, he mentally measured the distance between Lansberg's club and Victoria.

A glint came to his dull eyes as he worked out that Laureen's flat was midway and could easily have been visited in the time.

"You had no reason to pass through Beresford Street and call at Miss Laureen's flat during that walk?"

"No," he said, "I had no reason for doing so, and it would have been slightly out of my way."

Lansberg's reply was unhesitating,

his face composed. But Reynolds' eyes were not on Lansberg's face. Once before he had seen the man's hands tighten as they tightened now on that paper knife.

The detective had at last got a lead. Those sensitive fingers made him positive Lansberg knew more than he meant to tell. Reynolds' mind plowed through the events of the night before as he endeavored to reconstruct the situation if Lansberg had called at that flat before going to the studio.

On the supposition that there might have been a struggle he swiftly tried his old means of lightning attack.

"I should like to see the garments you wore last night, please. Including the shirt," he added.

Lansberg's face expressed nothing more than the ordinary surprise, tinged with good-natured amusement, that any man might exhibit if called upon to produce his wardrobe.

He pressed a bell. "Certainly, if you wish, inspector."

The manservant appeared, but before Lansberg could give him any orders Reynolds addressed him.

"Est-ce-que vous parlez français?" he demanded rapidly.

"Oui, monsieur," the man replied.

Continuing to speak French fluently but with a harsh accent, Reynolds asked the man:

"You have been many years with your master?"

The man darted a glance at Lansberg before replying, as if asking permission. Lansberg nodded assentingly and the servant answered:

"I and my people we have served for many years with—monsieur"—Reynolds noted he hesitated before the name —"and his family before him," the servant said proudly.

The inspector turned to Lansberg.

"Please tell your man to answer any questions I ask him."

Lansberg did so, speaking in French —a degree of tact and courtesy which the detective appreciated.

"What time did your master leave here last night to go out to dinner?" Reynolds went on.

"At seven thirty or not more than seven thirty-five."

Although the replies were coldly polite, Reynolds felt the servant's disdain of him as a being of common clay who dared to intrude into his master's life.

"At what hour did he return here last night?" questioned the inspector inexorably.

This time the servant's gaze flickered in quick supplication to Lansberg, who calmly interposed:

"My servant—his name is Neron—does not wait up for me with chocolate, inspector. He was in bed when I returned about three fifteen a. m. after our late interview last night."

But he had spoken in French! Was that to give the man his cue, Reynolds wondered.

"Bring me the evening suit and shirt your master wore last night!" he commanded.

The man turned instantly and went out of the room.

"Did you return here before going to Mr. Spencer's party, Mr. Lansberg?"

Before he could reply, the telephone on the desk rang and Lansberg lifted off the receiver.

"Mr. Lansberg speaking." He passed over the instrument. "It's for you, inspector."

Reynolds took the receiver, and after a curt monosyllable listened attentively for a few minutes.

"All right, I shall be back very shortly," he said, and ended the conversation.

He looked at Lansberg meditatively.

"The result of the post-morten on Leslie Delmond has just come in. He died from the effects of—in fact was undoubtedly murdered with—chloroform."

"Chloroform!" There was amazement in Lansberg's face. "Is that certain?"

"Our pathologists are fairly reliable," commented the inspector dryly. He paused, his eyes narrowed. "Have you any reason to think there should be another cause for this man's death?" he demanded harshly.

"No," Lansberg replied calmly, "none whatever. Only it seemed an unusual weapon. Surely it takes a large—an awkwardly large—quantity of chloroform to murder a man?"

"Somewhere about half a pint, probably." Reynolds impatiently glanced round the room, again baffled by Lansberg's explanation of his surprise. A natural surprise, he agreed. Chloroform *was* an unusual weapon and a bulky one.

What was that servant doing? Probably carefully examining his master's suit.

The inspector, scrutinizing the book-lined walls, noticed a huge safe skillfully built into one corner, a case of vividly colored butterflies above it.

Reynolds longed to get a peep into that safe; maybe it could tell him more than its owner would. Just then the servant entered silently and deposited a pile of clothes on a table.

Reynolds rose, looked the garments over mechanically and without interest, picked up the shirt, stared at it abstractedly and laid it down again.

He took his hat from the chair beside him.

"Thank you, Mr. Lansberg. Good day."

But as he walked back to Scotland Yard his mind was not on the shirt he had just seen—in one second he knew it was not the same one as that worn last night, although the cuffs had obviously had studs in them. The one Lansberg had worn last night, the detective remembered, had a smear of cigarette ash on it, and a bulge at one side of the front incompatible with Lansberg's immaculate attire.

Reynolds decided to solve *that* problem later. For the moment his thoughts curiously turned on butterflies.

CHAPTER IX.

A HIDING PLACE.

LAUREEN had luncheon in a little tea shop that was nearly empty.

From her seat in the window she could catch glimpses of a man who alternately was absorbed in a newspaper or thoughtfully propping up the wall.

She slid back the curtain considerately so that he could more easily see she was there. Her brain was busy on a plan in which she hoped the faithful hound, as she mentally dubbed him, would play no part.

Presently, her eyes twinkled. She hurriedly wrote something on a card, folded it over and called the waitress.

"Take this note across to that poor man standing over there," she indicated him to the girl. "He looks as if he's out of work and needs a meal. Give me his bill if he comes in and orders something."

From the window she watched the shadow unfold the visiting card and read the message:

Why not come in and have luncheon? You can see better and will find it less tiring. I shall be here some time yet.

For a second the man hesitated, then he swung round and entered the tea room. Raising his hat without looking in Laureen's direction, he chose a table as far from hers as possible, but one that gave him an excellent view of the door.

She heard him give his order.

"Anything you have ready and coffee, please."

When the waitress came to her table again Laureen said in an undertone:

"Ask the gentleman if he will kindly lend me his newspaper for a few min-

utes, as I'm interested in sport." She slid a shilling into the girl's hand. "Don't forget the last sentence."

Scenting romance, the waitress obediently gave the message and returned with the newspaper, but not before Laureen had seen the man quickly bend his head to hide a smile.

"Really, I'm getting quite fond of the nice little fellow," she told herself as she handed the girl a pound note.

"Take the money for both bills from that without mentioning it to him, or his pride may be hurt," she warned the waitress.

Laureen knew that only a sense of humor would keep her from screaming to-day.

After her ordeal of last night followed by the inspector's examination, her nerves were screwed up almost to snapping point. And there were things she had to do with a cold brain, as well as get through her work in the theater to-night.

The newspaper she had borrowed from the faithful hound was the midday sporting edition. Its front page was emblazoned with huge headlines.

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY

FILM ACTOR FOUND DEAD IN FAMOUS REVUE ARTIST'S FLAT.

So far apparently Inspector Reynolds had spared her reputation, she noticed, inasmuch as no reference was made to her statement that the dead man had been her lover. But she had a growing conviction that that was about all Reynolds would spare her before he had finished.

She shrugged her shoulders as she gathered up her change. Well, she could look after herself. She was used to publicity, and what did a little more or less matter to one who had fought and kicked her way by sheer hard work up to the position she now held? Reached there unaided too, disdaining the easier and speedier methods.

From the other end of the tea shop came sounds of distress from an embarrassed man struggling to get his bill from a loyal and sentimental waitress.

Laureen smothered a giggle, laid the newspaper on her table and walked slowly to her theater.

The stage-door entrance was in an alley at the side of the theater. There, in the doorway, Laureen paused and in clear tones asked Minnis, the door porter, how he was, how his wife was and his garden; this to give the hound time to get within earshot.

Taking her letters, she yawned audibly and remarked, "Well, Minnis, after last night's ghastly affair in my flat I'm going up to my dressing room to get some sleep and write a few letters. Don't let any reporters get by you; I don't want to be disturbed." She lowered her voice. "The man now in the alley outside is a detective. If he likes to come in and sit in your office where he can watch this door, let him."

Minnis stared. He admired Laureen very much.

"A detective, miss!" he gasped. "But they can't suspect——"

She shook her finger to and fro.

"Suspect me? Of course not. He's only taking a kindly interest in me to see I come to no harm. If he speaks to you say I hope he enjoyed his lunch. He'll understand."

She pushed open the swinging door and walked up the stone staircase leading to the dressing rooms.

Halfway up she paused to look closely at a small iron door fastened by two heavy bolts. It was the door that led to the theater. Gently she wriggled the bolts and found they slid easily into their sockets. Then contentedly she went on to her dressing room.

Except when there was a matinée, at this hour of the day—it was twenty past two—she knew the place would be practically deserted, save for stage hands.

About an hour later, a neat old lady,

with gray hair and bent shoulders, called at a house in Bloomsbury and asked to see one of the lodgers.

The slovenly maidservant stared at the patient figure clad in an old-fashioned brown coat, and then called over her shoulder:

"Missus. Somebody wants Miss Baird."

"If you'll please tell me where her room is, I will go up," interrupted the old lady. "There is no need to disturb your mistress."

But before the maid could reply heavy steps along the passage heralded the landlady.

"I want to see Miss Baird," repeated the caller.

"So do I," sniffed the owner of the house indignantly. "She went out at six o'clock last night. Said she was going to church, and I haven't seen her since. Church, indeed! This is a respectable house for respectable people," the woman added fiercely.

"Yes, yes, I'm sure it is," murmured the old lady. She seemed taken aback by the landlady's words. "Probably Miss Baird stayed the night with friends and will be back soon," she ventured hopefully.

The landlady, looking at the pathetic, stooping figure, withheld what she longed to say and substituted:

"Will you call again or leave a message?"

"Thank you, thank you," the caller said nervously, "I'm only in town for the day. Tell Miss Baird her old governess left her love."

The landlady watched the shabbily dressed old lady go down the steps, and called out warningly as she passed the railings:

"Mind, that paint's wet—I'll give your message when she comes back."

Once again in Oxford Street the old lady climbed nimbly on a bus, her face, shaded by its out-of-date mushroom hat, worried and abstracted.

"Not been back since six o'clock last night!" she repeated over and over again to herself.

At Piccadilly Circus she got out and threaded her way to a large imposing hotel.

Inside the entrance hall she passed through the crowds to the letter bureau. A man was already there asking for his mail and she overheard the conversation.

"Have you a room, sir?" asked the clerk.

"Not yet," was the man's reply.

"Please register for your room first, sir. That is our rule."

The old lady faded away from that department, and going across to the reception clerk asked for a single room.

"Number 420, Ten and sixpence. Sign your name here, please. Luggage?" The clerk ripped off the formula automatically.

The elderly client signed in a thin cramped handwriting without removing her glove.

"My luggage is at the station. Shall I pay in advance?" she offered timidly.

The clerk cast a practiced eye down the old figure, saw faded gentility written all over it, said it didn't matter and handed over the ticket giving the number of the room.

Back at the letter bureau again, the old lady produced the ticket and asked if there were any letters.

The clerk glanced through the file.

"Nothing, madam."

The old lady looked so disappointed that he added, "Wait a minute. I've not had time to sort through this last lot yet." His fingers dealt rapidly with a large stack of letters beside him. "What name did you say?"

The old lady repeated it, watching anxiously as the pile grew less.

"Ah, here you are!" He handed her a thick envelope, glanced at her casually, and went on with his task.

Twenty minutes later an old lady

went unobtrusively in at the front entrance of a theater, slid past the big crowd near the box office and pushing open the door leading into the back of the stalls, found herself once more in the dark, empty auditorium. Silently she made her way to the corridor behind the stage box, opened a small iron door in the wall and vanished.

"Joe," called Miss Laureen presently to one of the carpenters, "you might slip out a minute and get me some cigarettes."

Joe looked approvingly at the dainty negligee the lady was wearing. He liked women to wear pretty feminine things.

"Certainly, miss," he said eagerly. All the staff liked doing jobs for Miss Laureen, and not merely because she rewarded them liberally. "I'm doing a bit of papering in number four," he added. "The guvnor thinks he'll turn it into an extra office as it's not wanted as a dressing room. What'll you have, miss? Turkish or Egyptian?"

"Virginian, and get some for yourself at the same time, Joe."

The cigarette shop was some distance from the theater. Laureen thought she could reckon on eight minutes before Joe returned.

Silently she went along the passage from her room to number four where Joe had been working. Her breath came quickly as her eyes searched the bare room for some hiding place. It had the usual paper-hanger's table, steps and bucket of paste.

Joe had evidently been hanging a strip of wall paper when she called him. With a gleam of hope she noticed the skirting board had warped out slightly from the wall and that he had stuck the paper over it to hide the opening.

Bending down she gently raised the bottom edge of the paper. The paste was still wet and the paper lifted easily. Yes, there was ample space behind the skirting.

In a moment she had slipped a thin white packet between the skirting and the plaster, thrust it down and delicately pressed the edges of the wall paper again over it, adding a little more paste to make it firm. Even if Joe lifted the paper he could not possibly see the packet behind the woodwork.

She was in her dressing room lying on her couch, white arms curved above her head, when the man returned.

"Thank you, Joe," she said, holding out her hand for the cigarettes and yawning.

"It's a wonder you're not ill, miss, after all you went through last night," he remarked sympathetically. "'Orrible affair. Shall I tell Minnis to order tea for you?"

She glanced at her watch.

"Quarter past four. Yes, I'd like some."

Minnis appeared with a tray in a few minutes, obtained from a café near the stage door. He set it down on a table beside her and said in a low voice:

"That fellow down in the passage has been asking me questions." He grinned. "He didn't get much change out of me though, miss."

Laureen poured out a cup of tea and dropped in some sugar.

"I'm sure he didn't, Minnis. But he's a nice little fellow and very attached to me, so I hope you treated him kindly and asked him into your office."

Minnis looked up under his shaggy eyebrows, not quite sure if Miss Laureen was serious.

"No, miss, not exactly, but he's been leaning against my door ever since you came, trying to pump me as to everybody's movements here. I'm getting sick of the sight of him."

"So he's been leaning against your door all the time, has he?" The lady smiled to herself. "Well, well, that's something. Did you say I hoped he'd enjoyed his lunch, Minnis?"

"I did, miss. He got red."

Laureen put down her cup and chuckled.

"He'll be purple before I've finished with him," she predicted. "Wait a minute while I write a letter."

She scribbled a note rapidly, addressed the envelope, fastened it insecurely, and handed it to the porter with fun dancing in her eyes.

"Like to help me in a joke, Minnis?" she questioned.

Minnis nodded, with a grin.

"Rather, miss."

"Good. You can go down and casually mention I'm going to my hotel to get some dinner before the show tonight. Say I told you to post this letter as I've no stamps. You can grumble and say, 'She thinks I can run out at all hours and leave this office, to do her fool errands.' Something like that. Being kind-hearted, he'll offer to post it for you—*which is just what I want*. D'you understand?"

"Exactly, miss," beamed the man.

"I shall just give you time to get that off your chest," Laureen added, "and then I shall come down."

The man retired with the letter and within three minutes Laureen had hurriedly dressed and strolled downstairs singing.

Minnis was in his office alone. As she was passing out he whispered and pointed with his thumb.

"All gone nicely. He's outside waiting for you, and he's got your letter."

Laureen went slowly up the alley, beckoned a taxi and told the man to drive to her hotel, without troubling to see whether the hound was trailing her. She had had a most successful afternoon from her point of view, with only one anxiety.

In the hotel where she had reserved rooms, she found Bertha had unpacked and was sewing placidly. The maid was paler than usual, but did not allude to the morning's proceedings.

"I've ordered the porter to send up the evening newspapers as soon as they arrive," she informed her mistress, who had gone at once to the telephone.

"Is Mr. Spencer there?" Laureen asked when her call was answered. She seemed staggered by the reply that came over the wire.

"You think he's gone to Paris!" she repeated.

Swiftly she demanded particulars of the caretaker at the other end of the wire and learned that Mr. Spencer had gone out about eleven thirty that morning with a suit case, saying he didn't know when he'd be back, and that she—the caretaker—was to clean up the studio, which was "in a nice mess after the party," lock it up and keep the keys. No, he had left no address but she had heard him ring up Croydon and ask about airplanes to Paris when she was doing the bedroom. There had been two men there since asking about him, and one of them—a detective—had taken away a pair of black satin slippers. "Belonging to you, miss. Was that all right?"

"Yes," assented Laureen. It was all right. But about the only thing that was right, she felt at the moment.

Dick Spencer dashing off to Paris like that? What did it mean? Was it accidental? Had he read the news of the murder in the papers before he left? If so, surely he would have telephoned to her. Or had he not needed the newspapers to tell him that news?

Laureen's head whirled as she lay back and tried to face this new difficulty. She might have been cheered could she have heard a little conversation at Scotland Yard.

Her sleuth—Bradley by name—had reported there after he had seen her stop at her hotel.

"I want to see Inspector Reynolds," he told Jenkins importantly. "I've got hold of a letter Miss Laureen wanted to have posted."

It was addressed to one of the women

Laureen had dined with last night, the inspector noticed as he delicately raised the flap of the envelope.

He read the note and looked at Bradley.

"You may like to read it," he remarked. "That young woman seems to have a sense of humor."

Bradley's face indeed grew purple as he read:

DEAREST EILEEN: So sorry you're being drawn into this mess of mine. I'd come round and see you, only I'm no longer alone and fear you don't like dogs. He's a very faithful hound, extremely attached to me, though rather an ugly brute and not over bright.

One of these days when he's had a bath I must bring him along to see you. We lunched together to-day and I found his table manners are not all one would like: I must really teach him not to put his feet in the plate.

Still, one can't have everything in this life, and, as I say, he comes to heel most obediently. Yours, LAUREEN.

"I suppose it must be posted, sir," said Bradley disgustedly as he handed it back to his chief with a brief explanation of his luncheon.

"It certainly must," the inspector replied firmly as he resealed the envelope and put it with other letters for the post.

"I hoped I'd get something out of her by going into that tea shop," Bradley explained.

"It will take a brighter lad than you to get that young woman to tell you what she doesn't wish you to know. I'll have to put somebody else on to her. If she's fooled you in this she'll fool you in something else. If she has not already done so," he added with tightened lips.

"She was in her dressing room resting all the afternoon," apologized Bradley meekly. "I never left the stage door."

"Humph!" grunted the inspector. "Well, cut along back to her hotel now, and to-morrow I'll make fresh plans."

As the man went out crestfallen, Reynolds remembered his arrangement to go to the theater that night, and rang for Jenkins.

"Fixed up that seat?" he demanded.

Jenkins nodded.

"Bit of luck to get one, sir. Just what you want, too. Wall end of stalls, eighth row. No need for you to doll up."

"You said that before," said Reynolds tersely. "I shall know what to do." Already he was beginning to look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable evening of business combined with pleasure.

"Maybe I'll get a little light there on this murder," he told himself hopefully.

Motive in this affair seemed to pivot round Laureen, and he had an urgent desire to see more of this girl on her native heath, as it were; find out why men circled round, apparently willing to risk their necks for her.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSING LODGER.

THE last editions of the evening papers had done full justice to the information meted out to them by Scotland Yard.

Huge headlines screamed of the Westminster flat mystery. Photographs of the murdered man, Leslie Delmond, appeared with a brief account of his career. Photographs of Laureen with a lengthy and very inaccurate description of her career followed. There was a reproduction of the address drawn by Carter, "Miss Valerie XXXXX," etc., together with a request for information concerning that letter. News was also demanded about Valerie and Leslie Delmond.

The *Star* had featured the letter episode and its news bills and chief headline read:

WHO IS VALERIE?

The earlier editions of the evening papers had caused every reserved seat to be booked in the theater, and an enor-

mous crowd had lined up for the cheaper seats, willing to pay any price if only to stand in order to see the revue actress on whom the limelight of a murder drama was playing fiercely.

From his secluded seat in the stalls Inspector Reynolds felt the peculiar thrill surging through the packed theater.

With his opera glasses he carefully scanned the house, dwelling particularly on the boxes.

There was a stir in the audience as a distinguished-looking man with hair graying at the temples entered the stage box, followed a moment later by two women and another man whose face was invisible from Reynolds' angle.

The first man was Lansberg. No mistaking that calm dignified face with its dominant, lustrous eyes. He placed the ladies in their seats, and then with a casual glance round the crowded theater, stood talking with the other man who was in the background.

"That's the Countess of Warnham and her niece, Lady Avice Garth," he heard a woman behind him say. "Who's the distinguished, foreign-looking man with them? He looks worlds above this sort of thing."

"That's Lansberg, a millionaire and Heaven knows what besides," her companion replied. "They say Lady Avice is setting her cap at him. She and her family are poor as church mice and heavily in debt."

Both women in the box had a curiously deferential manner toward Lansberg, urging him to take the seat Lady Avice had. Presently, he yielded with that aloof, calm way the inspector was beginning to know, and as the other man came into view Reynolds recognized him.

It was Doctor Tempest, the pathologist, and Reynolds' keen eyes noticed that Lansberg paid almost more attention to the doctor than to the ladies in his party.

The curtain rose on the opening numbers, which were received with keen enthusiasm.

About a quarter of an hour later there was a strange, keyed-up lull in the audience, the chorus divided to form an opening in the middle of the stage, limelights centered, and Laureen darted straight down, a radiant being so full of vitality that the chorus seemed as wax dummies.

Instantly there was a wild crash of applause, drowning the orchestra and preventing all stage action for several seconds. People stood, waved their programs and shouted, "Laureen, Laureen," disregarding cries of "Sit down."

Without hesitation Laureen raised one hand imperiously for silence, then, both arms akimbo, she leaned across the footlights.

"'Ush!" she said sternly.

There was a roar of laughter and then the house settled down.

Reynolds was amazed at the versatility of the girl. She could sing and dance, but his interest was not in those more ordinary talents.

It was her character sketches and quick humor that fascinated him. Her extraordinary changes of voice, age, nationality, language, as in turn she was a cockney flower-girl, an American tourist, a French tragedienne, an elderly English spinster alcoholically lively at a birthday party, an Italian street singer stabbed by her lover.

No wonder the minx could deceive him in her flat last night, past mistress as she was of every art of mimicry.

Inspector Reynolds' seat was at the end of the row, the gangway only separating him from an exit door, over which the attendant had jerked a heavy velvet curtain when the show began.

Suddenly, just before the interval, his eye caught a tremor of movement behind that curtain, which was almost facing the stage box on the opposite side of the theater. Presently the tips of a

man's fingers stealthily drew aside the folds of the velvet, though the man's face was out of sight.

There was nothing abnormal in any one peeping through to get a glimpse of the stage. It might have been the attendant anxious to see how near the interval was, or some one searching for friends in the stalls.

But in a moment the curtain swayed back a little and he caught sight of the man's hand—*a hand that lacked a thumb!*

An unusual mutilation which sent Reynolds to his feet. For among the finger prints that had been photographed in Laureen's dining room was the clear impress of a man's hand showing a stump where the thumb should have been. The photograph had been taken from the dining-room table beside the dead man.

The C. I. D. man made a swift dive across the gangway, but tripped over a cloak that was trailing from the seat in front of him.

That slight delay lost him his chance. When he snatched back the curtain there was nobody there.

Pushing open the exit door he found himself in the corridor, equally empty. On the left it ran down behind two boxes and ended in a cul-de-sac; the right side, up which Reynolds hurried, led round to the back of the auditorium.

Two attendants were there and the detective spoke to them.

"Seen a man just go out?"

"No, sir," both replied.

Reynolds' worried expression made one of them add:

"Perhaps you'll find him in the bar, sir. Down there to the left."

The detective searched as directed with no result. There were four young men in the bar, laughing together, and not one had a mutilated hand.

He retraced his steps to the corridor again and found himself behind the stage box which Lansberg occupied with his party. A roar of applause indicated that the first part of the revue was over and the interval had begun.

For a moment the detective hesitated as to whether he should knock and ask to speak to Lansberg when his attention was caught by a small iron door in the wall at the end of the corridor. He pulled, found it unfastened and opened it far enough to see that it gave on to a stone staircase.

"Come away from that door, sir," said an attendant from behind him.

Reynolds closed it carefully and turned round.

"I wanted a little air," he observed in conciliating tones. "Isn't it an exit door?"

"No, sir, the exit door is further back. That's a private door leading to the dressing rooms and green room."

"I see," the detective said thoughtfully. A door that led from the dressing rooms to the front of the theater, while the stage door was in a side alley!

Suddenly the door of the stage box opened and Lansberg and Doctor Tempest came out.

The two men showed amiable surprise at seeing the detective.

"Hello, inspector," Lansberg greeted, "are you here to see the show, or do you want me for anything?"

Reynolds smiled pleasantly.

"Both, sir, if you can spare me a moment."

Doctor Tempest broke in.

"I'll leave you to talk. Come along to the bar when you've finished, inspector, and have a drink. Good show, isn't it?"

"Excellent, doctor. Thank you, I'll join you in two minutes if I can."

The detective twisted round swiftly to Lansberg.

"Do you know a man with a missing thumb, Mr. Lansberg?" he asked.

Even in the half light of the corridor he could see Lansberg recoil and his masklike face stiffen to severe lines.

"A missing thumb!" he repeated aghast.

"Yes, the right hand. It's a noticeable mutilation."

"Where have you seen this man?" Lansberg demanded agitatedly. "Not here?"

Reynolds nodded, perplexed. There was no mistake about Lansberg's grave concern.

"Hiding behind the curtain over the exit door opposite your box ten minutes ago," he explained definitely. "Who is he?"

"That I cannot tell you, inspector. But if he's lucky he probably will be my executioner," Lansberg observed grimly. "He made two excellent efforts a year or so ago in Paris. This time he may succeed."

The inspector's eyes were watchful as he put his next questions.

"What has this man against you, sir? And what makes you think he'll make a third attempt on your life? Please answer me clearly. I can't afford to waste a second longer."

"I can only imagine he wishes to steal certain valuables"—he paused and Reynolds fancied changed his word—"articles that are in my possession. I can think of no other reason. I do not know his name, his business or his nationality. And I think he may again attempt my life because he has so far not succeeded in obtaining what he desired."

"You've not seen him lately?"

"Not for about a year."

Reynolds swung on his heel.

"Thank you, sir. I must be off at once."

A hurried search of the corridors and foyer proving hopeless, he telephoned for men to be sent to watch all exits and went back to the Yard, bewildered and annoyed at the new tangle.

That Lansberg was concealing much, he was sure. But he was equally sure that Lansberg was acting within his rights and knew the limits of the detective's power to question him.

Well, Reynolds decided, Lansberg must be forced to open his hand. Some damaging clew might yet come to light.

"Jenkins," he called, when he arrived at his office, "I want another look at the photos of the impression of a man's thumbless right hand."

A moment later he was staring at them—two excellent photos, each showing clearly four fingers, the palm and the stump of the thumb.

"Humph," grunted Reynolds. "Got any news?"

"Yes. Spencer—that Chelsea artist—has gone to Paris. Left no address, his caretaker says."

"H'm. I'll start on him to-morrow. Had no time to-day," grunted the inspector. "Anything else?"

"Yes. There's a hotel clerk waiting to see you. He thinks he handed over that Valerie letter this afternoon."

"What!" the detective roared. "Show him in at once."

Reynolds could scarcely wait for the man whom Jenkins ushered in.

"Tell me your story as precisely as you can," he urged.

"Right, sir. I'm one of the clerks in the mail department at the Hotel Imperial," the man began. "I read in the *Evening News* at seven to-night that you wished immediate information concerning a letter, so directly I was off duty I came along here."

"I've already taken his name and address, sir, to save time," said Jenkins.

"This afternoon at three twenty-five or three thirty," the clerk continued, "an elderly lady asked if I had any letters for Miss Valerie Baird."

"Baird!" exclaimed Reynolds with triumph. "Yes, go on."

"She showed me her room ticket, No. 420, otherwise I should have asked her to produce that or her key."

"What's the reason?"

"Hundreds of people began using our

letter bureau as a *poste restante,* so the only way we could reserve it for residents was by making that rule."

Reynolds nodded.

"Well," the man continued, "I looked through the file and there was nothing for her. She seemed anxious and disappointed so I told her to wait while I looked through the mail that had just come in. That's how I fixed the time as three twenty-five or three thirty: the mail arrives at three fifteen."

The inspector rubbed his hands contentedly. This was the type of statement he reveled in, clear, matter-of-fact, concise.

"Excellent," he commented. "Take your time, and don't forget any detail."

"I'll do my best, sir," promised the clerk. "The old lady thanked me. She seemed a patient soul of about sixty though I couldn't see her face much because she had a drooping brim to her hat and a veil."

"How did you guess her age then?" asked the C. I. D. man.

"She had white hair at the sides and some showing at the back of her hat. Also she stooped like an elderly woman and had a thin quavering voice."

"Well, you sorted the letters?" prompted the inspector.

"Yes, sir, and I found one for the name she had given. A thick, white envelope addressed in big writing to Miss Valerie Baird, care of Hotel Imperial, London, W. 1. I handed it to her and she thanked me again and went away."

Inspector Reynolds turned over his papers and found the dummy which the caretaker had drafted. He wrote out the address he now knew, compared it with the one Carter had compiled by memory and showed it to Jenkins.

"Carter wasn't far out, you see," he commented. Then turning to the clerk:

"Can you possibly recall what this woman wore?"

"I thought it was a long dark coat, but was not quite sure. So I went at once to the reception clerk and he was positive the woman wore a dark-brown coat, rather old-fashioned, a black hat and veil. Also he was sure she was round-shouldered or bent with age."

"Why didn't you bring him along?" asked Reynolds.

"He's on duty until midnight, sir, but you can verify this on the telephone. His name is Foster."

"Did you or Foster notice this woman's hands?" Reynolds questioned eagerly.

"I didn't, sir, but Foster is certain she signed the register with her gloves on. I couldn't bring the hotel register away—besides you can always see it there if you wish—but," he produced an envelope from his pocket and laid it on the table, "Foster and I made a tracing of her signature."

Reynolds scrutinized the slip of paper carefully.

"You and Foster are too intelligent for your jobs," he stated with an approving smile. "You ought to be in this line."

"Thank you, sir. But we've got to use our eyes where we are, too. This isn't particularly wonderful."

"Isn't it?" The detective cast a look at Jenkins. "We should be glad to have all our witnesses as intelligent, eh?"

"We should," Jenkins agreed with emphasis.

"Anything else you can remember?" Reynolds asked the clerk.

The telephone bell rang before the man could answer. Jenkins took up the receiver and listened.

"A woman's just arrived from Bloomsbury: thinks she has some information concerning this Valeria business," he announced to his chief.

"Tell them to send her up here immediately!" the inspector ordered.

"Shall I go, sir?" the hotel clerk asked.

"No, no. I shall be glad to compare

what this woman has to say with your story. Possibly she knows nothing at all. By the way, have you thought of any other detail about this Valerie Baird?"

"It's only a trifle, sir, but Foster says he thinks there was a smear of red plaster or paint on the woman's sleeve. I didn't see it."

The door opened before he finished speaking and the inspector looked up to see a rather untidy, out-of-breath woman enter with Jenkins.

She was obviously ill at ease. The inspector tactfully offered her a chair and thanked her for coming, before beginning to question her.

Jenkins, always a master of method and time saving, placed a slip giving the woman's name and address before his chief. The inspector read it carefully, found the woman more composed and began his work in easy tones.

"Now, Mrs. Hornett, will you tell me what you know of Miss Valerie Baird, please?"

The woman opened her eyes in astonishment.

"Why, that's what I'm here for you to tell me, sir," she said in a puzzled voice, "considering I've not set eyes on her since she went out at six o'clock last night. Told me she was going to church!" she added indignantly.

The inspector raised his eyebrows and gave a humorous glance at the hotel clerk, and began again patiently. He knew this rambling type only too well.

"How came Miss Baird to be in your house, Mrs. Hornett?"

"Same way as all my other lodgers. I keep an apartment house and she took a room, fourth floor front, twelve days ago. Very little luggage she had, and a week's rent owing come Wednesday. I might have guessed!" She sighed heavily.

"Guessed what?" Reynolds demanded.

"I suppose she had no money and just walked out leaving her few things. And they're not worth much," Mrs. Hornett added with disgust.

"So as the old lady didn't return last night you looked through her luggage to-day," Reynolds remarked blandly.

"Well and what if I did, sir! I've been cheated that way before." Then, remembering his sentence, she added sharply, "But what do you mean about an *old* lady? I'm talking about Miss Baird."

The detective's eyes glanced keen warning at the hotel clerk who had started at the woman's last remark.

"Ah," he said, "that was just a slip of mine. About how old should you say this Miss Baird was, Mrs. Hornett?"

She looked at him a little suspiciously. She hadn't come here at ten o'clock at night for this detective to make fun of her, she decided.

"I don't know what age *your* Miss Baird was," she said heavily, "but Miss Valerie Baird who took my room and walked out last night to go to church, so she said, was not a day more than twenty-four. If that!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Hornett. That's a great help to me," commended Reynolds graciously. "Please describe her."

"Thin, pale, fair, blue eyes, medium height or a bit shorter, dressed nearly always in navy blue or black and hadn't got much else so far as I could see."

"What did she do for a living?"

"Well, sir, she was very reserved and stand-offish if I ever asked her a few questions," Mrs. Hornett bridled at the memory of being rebuffed by her lodger, "but I saw a lot of drawings of dresses done in ink in her suit—I mean, in her room."

"Did she receive any correspondence?"

"Never saw a letter and I see all that come to the house."

"I'll bet you do," said Reynolds to himself.

"Any visitors?" he asked aloud.

"None till Saturday night—day before yesterday," she added importantly. "Some girl called to see her, but Miss Baird was out."

"Did you answer the bell?"

"Certainly not," Mrs. Hornett replied. "I've got a servant to do that, but I heard voices and went up."

"What did this girl wear? I'm sure you've a good memory for a lady's clothes, Mrs. Hornett," said Reynolds, hoping flattery would help a little.

"There wasn't much to remember, sir. A small black hat and a black cape. It was about half past nine and nearly dark. I couldn't see her face. She'd had her answer from my servant and was turning to go down the steps as I came."

"Did you notice her hands or feet?" the inspector asked.

"No, I didn't. Well, as I was saying when you interrupted me, there was that girl came Saturday night, and this afternoon some old lady called to see her."

Reynolds' eyes glinted with excitement, but he asked casually:

"Did she give her name?"

Mrs. Hornett shook her head.

"She said she was only in town for the day and I was to give Miss Baird her love and say it was her old governess who had called."

"Did you happen to mention Miss Baird's surprising absence since the night before?"

"Yes, I mentioned it," she replied, "and the old soul seemed quite upset at first. Then she said probably Miss Baird had unexpectedly stayed the night with friends. Do you know where she is, sir?"

"Not at the moment," the inspector admitted. "Can you describe this old lady's appearance?"

"Black hat, mushroom brim, and veil, dark-brown coat, out of date. White hair, very stooping shoulders, shaky old person."

A long brown coat! Reynolds reflected to himself.

"Sounds like the same woman, eh?" he said in an undertone to the hotel clerk, who had listened to the conversation with the deepest interest.

"It certainly does, sir," he replied emphatically.

"Well, I think that's all for to-night, Mrs. Hornett, thank you. Directly I have news of Miss Baird I'll let you know. Meanwhile, lock her room up. I shall come along to-morrow and examine it, so don't touch or remove anything," he warned her. "Good night."

She rose, offended at his warning, and smoothed the folds out of her coat.

"Drat that paint," she said softly, rubbing a piece of the cloth.

Reynolds' head shot up, alertly.

"Paint?" he demanded. "Where?"

The woman pointed to her coat where a red mark showed.

"Off my railings. They were only painted this morning, and I came out in such a hurry——"

The inspector signaled to Jenkins to get her away, his mind intent on linking up details rapidly.

"And Foster saw red paint on the coat of the old lady who called for that letter to-day?" he demanded of the hotel clerk.

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you. Good night," said Reynolds absently.

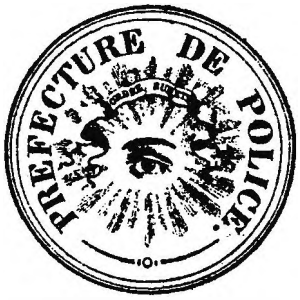
For suddenly he remembered where he had seen a brown coat on an old lady, a coat that had had a red mark on the shoulder.

Laureen had worn it in her impersonation of the inebriated elderly spinster on the stage that night!

To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

Monot Baits A Rat

DESPERATION AND A STREAK OF THE RODENT DROVE HIM TO HIS DEED.



THE "EYE OF THE POLICE."
Badge of Parisian Detectives.

By Mel Watt

Author of "Hot Diamonds," etc.

MONSIEUR MONOT, noted criminologist of the Parisian Sûreté, stepped from the train at Avignon, in the lovely south of France. The stocky, dapper detective, dressed in stylish light gray, dropped the detached, worldly look of the world's most sophisticated city, and grinned like a pleased boy, when he beheld on the platform his old friend, Monsieur Chatelaine. And with Monsieur Chatelaine were his wife and daughter, and a good-looking young man with a traveling bag at his feet.

In a space of seconds, Monot and Chatelaine were in each other's arms, patting each other on the back, and grinning with the affection of two deep friends.

"You're not a day older, you old scoundrel!" exclaimed Chatelaine.

"Neither are you," said Monot. "And we're both liars."

The little detective turned to madame and mademoiselle.

"Ah, madame, the Scottish people have a saying: 'You are a sight for sore eyes.' I am so pleased to see you again. My friend, Michel Chatelaine, should consider himself a very blessed man."

He gazed fondly at the patrician, kindly features of the mother, and at the fresh, young, lovely face of the daughter.

"Mother and daughter! Can it be! And is this the same Jeanne who six years ago was a little girl of fourteen?" He teased her gently. "I am going to be very jealous of all the young men, mademoiselle!"

"Oh! Monsieur—I——" For a moment, Jeanne was embarrassed, but madame came to the rescue, and introduced the good-looking youth.

"Monsieur Monot, may I present Monsieur Armand de Bernays? You see, Jeanne and Armand are betrothed."

"Delighted, monsieur." Armand smiled. "I have heard a great deal about you."

"That is kind of you," said Monot, and, looking at Jeanne, teased some more. "So my chance is gone! Monsieur de Bernays, you are a very fortunate fellow! My heartiest congratulations to both of you!"

Monsieur Chatelaine put his arm around Monot, and explained: "We are seeing Armand off, on the same train you came down on. He goes on to Marseilles, where he embarks for the lands of the eastern Mediterranean."

"A pleasure cruise, monsieur?" asked Monot politely.

"Pleasure and business," explained Armand. "I shall probably contract for certain consignments of rare eastern wines and liqueurs, for my father, who is a wine merchant. It will require several months."

As he said this last, he glanced regretfully at Jeanne. Jeanne smiled at him, but, in her patrician way, restrained her emotions.

The train whistle blew, and they accompanied Armand to the steps. He bade them all adieu, and, in conventional French fashion, raised the hands of madame and mademoiselle to his lips. The train started, and they waved good-by.

"Pleasant boy," said Monot, on the way home. He sat in the front seat of a little car, which Monsieur Chatelaine drove.

"Their betrothal pleases madame and myself," said Chatelaine. "Excellent family, the De Bernays. Very old blood. Armand is a bit restless, but Monsieur de Bernays wisely is allowing him to travel and get it out of his system. It is a splendid match." Monsieur Chatelaine became confidential: "I am especially relieved, because it has gotten Jeanne over a girlish infatuation for a Swiss army officer whom she met some time ago while she and her mother were holidaying on the Riviera. You know how those things are. And you know how unreasonable a young girl can be about them. The scoundrel might have made trouble. Knowing that Jeanne is—if you will pardon me—of well-to-do people, he might have compromised her in some way. Well, thank Heaven, it is finished!"

"And is Jeanne in love with Armand?" asked Monot.

Chatelaine nodded complacently. "She is fond of him. Love will come."

Arrived at the Chatelaine home, and settled, Monot was overwhelmed by the kindness and consideration that were showered upon him.

"But can't you stay with us longer than a week, old friend?" Monsieur Chatelaine begged.

"Yes," Madame Chatelaine said. "The moment we got your telegram, Michel and Jeanne and I conspired to find a way to make you stay longer."

Monot regarded them all affectionately. "It is much too kind of you, my dear friends. But, indeed, I am fortunate to have even a week. I shall be thankful if, before it is ended, my chief does not recall me to duty. That is the sort of thing which we of the Service de Sûreté expect."

An excellent dinner, followed by an evening of conversation and music, sent Monot to bed that night feeling that he had never spent a more delightful day in his life. The next day was the same. Monsieur Chatelaine did his friend the honor of knocking off from business for a few days, so that they could fully enjoy their little reunion. There is nothing so completely satisfying as the talk between two old friends who have not met for some time, and plenty of time to do it in.

After the ladies had retired that evening, Monot and his host sat long into the night. The servants were allowed to go to bed. Mathilde, the ladies' maid, retired with her mistresses. Leon, who was both butler and valet, had been excused by Chatelaine hours ago. The old cook did not live on the premises.

Chatelaine and Monot did not go to their rooms until nearly three o'clock, each with a happy sigh, for hours well spent.

Monot came downstairs late the next morning. The pleasant, informal life of the household was going on as usual. Madame and mademoiselle were out in the garden, enjoying the sunshine. The servants were busy. From the library came Monsieur Chatelaine, bidding Monot good morning. But, once he had greeted Monot, Chatelaine's face assumed grave lines, and he said:

"May I talk to you for a few minutes in the library?"

Possibly, intuition, sixth sense, told Monot that something was wrong. He followed his host in, and the door was closed.

Without a word, Chatelaine took Monot to a wall safe, and, pointing at it, said:

"What do you make of this?"

The little criminologist's examination was brief. It required very little time or observation to see that an inexpert hand had been at work.

"It has been tampered with, clearly. But the work is so crude that I doubt whether the culprit opened it."

Chatelaine nodded. "You are correct, Monot. It was not opened; everything is intact. But some one has most certainly made an attempt."

The situation obviously demanding it, Monot became at once the professional detector of crime.

"Let us have a look about," he requested.

With a powerful little lens, which had been specially made for him, and which he was never without, he went over the safe. He then went over the vicinity of the safe. He finished with a shake of the head.

"Not a trace of print. The marauder plainly had, at least, the sense to wear gloves."

He next went to the windows. A glance showed that both of them were unlocked.

"Did you unlock those?" Monot asked.

"No, I did not. The servants——"

Monsieur Chatelaine called in Mathilde and Leon. He spoke to them, not in the voice of a cross-examiner, but in an employer's tone, while Monot seated himself and turned the pages of a book so as to give the servants no inkling of the real state of affairs.

"Was it you, Mathilde, or you, Leon, who unlocked those windows this morning?"

Although their master was kind, the pair seemed to sense a reprimand in his tone. Both made haste to exonerate themselves.

"Not I, m'sieu'," said Mathilde.

"Nor I, m'sieu'," said Leon.

"Then they were not locked at all last night!" Chatelaine said curtly. "You neglected your duty."

There was a silence for a few moments, during which the maid's pretty face flushed with color, and the man coughed apologetically. Then Leon regained his dignity, and spoke.

"M'sieu', I am positive I locked the windows last night before retiring."

There was another silence, during which Chatelaine looked the valet steadily in the eyes, but Leon's eyes did not drop. The valet was either a truthful man or an excellent actor. Monot, too, noticed it. But Monot, unobserved, was giving more of his attention to the maid. The girl stood, apparently blameless and unconcerned, but her eyes had a veil of secrecy over them, and, unconsciously, her right hand, which was almost hidden in her apron, was doubled into a fist, as though she were holding herself tensely.

"Very well," said Chatelaine in dismissal. "That is all."

After they had gone, Monot rose from his chair, and, again with his lens, examined the sills of the windows.

"Well, what do you think?" Chatelaine asked.

"No marks of any sort," Monot replied. "None on the sills, and none, of course, on the cement walk below the windows. No clews, which proves that the marauder was a clever person. The fact that the safe was not opened does not detract from the would-be thief's intelligence. Opening a safe is a matter of skill and technique, which can be acquired. Obviously, your excellent safe was a bit too much for the person's skill."

"But, the window locks, Monot! Leon told the truth, I would swear!"

Monot had been examining the locks. He turned to his host with a smile and a shake of the head.

"Then why should a thief take the trouble to unlock both windows? Besides, there are no marks of force on the locks. No, my friend, I think Leon was merely preserving his dignity and his pride in being a very efficient servant."

"Then you think they were unlocked all night?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Deliberately, do you think?"

Monot, his thoughts centering on the maid, paused several moments before saying: "We have no proof of that. Perhaps it was merely carelessness on the part of the servants; and perhaps a common sneak thief from outside took advantage."

He patted Chatelaine on the shoulder. "At any rate, we can keep our eyes open in case anything further happens. But see that you keep your place well locked, henceforth."

Chatelaine sighed. "It's all very strange, none the less." He shrugged and smiled. "But there's no harm done, so why should one worry over it. Besides, you are here to enjoy yourself, and I'm a boor to impose on you like this!"

Monot chuckled. "Not at all! I do the same for people I do not even know. Why, then, should I not help an old friend like yourself?"

Monot purposely made light of the mysterious affair for two reasons. First, he did not want his friend to worry, and thus upset the whole household. Second, he wanted for himself a clear and unobstructed field for observation and investigation.

Neither had the little criminologist been too outspoken in his real view of the affair; he had thought it best to wait. Nevertheless, he felt that it was what, in America, is called an "inside job." His logical mind told him that, if a thief had been clever enough to gain entrance to a room without leaving a single clew, then the thief would have been clever enough to know how to open a safe. Monot had not mentioned it to Chatelaine; but he knew that, while the safe was modern and scientific, it would not have offered an impossibility to any thief clever enough to break in as—at first glance—had been thought to be the case.

On the other hand, Monot's theory was much more plausible. He reasoned that the inside marauder had been—as far as safes were concerned—an amateur, and that, failing to open the safe, the prowler had spent his or her cleverness in trying to make it appear like a housebreaking job.

In the afternoon, Monot found that he had to go into the business part of the town, to make some purchases. He mentioned it to his host.

"Then you can drive in with Jeanne and myself," Chatelaine said. "I have a little business that will require an hour or two, and Jeanne is going to do some shopping."

They set off about two o'clock. Monot's eyes narrowed speculatively when he saw that Mathilde, the maid, accompanied Jeanne. He held the door of the car open for them both, with the laughing remark:

"A major shopping excursion, mademoiselle?"

Jeanne smiled and said: "Mathilde always accompanies me. It saves time. And I am not so easily tempted, with Mathilde at my elbow."

Mathilde curtsied modestly. "Thank you, mamselle."

In town, they got out to go their own ways. Monsieur Chatelaine promised to be back at the car in an hour and a half. Jeanne instructed her maid:

"Make those small purchases as quickly as you can, Mathilde, and then meet me at Moiret's shop. I gave you enough money, didn't I?"

"Yes, mamselle. This will be sufficient."

"In an hour and a half," said Monot, and went on his way.

His way, however, was not far off. Out of the tail of his eye, he watched the maid. When Jeanne and Monsieur Chatelaine were well away, he swiftly doubled back, and followed Mathilde. He had to be exceedingly alert, for it was at once plain that the girl was no fool. Without calling any attention to herself, she covertly managed to see if she were being followed. Once, she stopped as though to pick a thread from her stocking, and Monot did not fail to see her eyes glance back quickly. Another time, she paused to look into a shop window. Monot was not at all proud of his skill—for shadowing was a job he disliked—but it must be said that he proved himself a consummate artist at keeping out of view, the meanwhile he trailed a person. He did not know if anything would come to his trailing the maid, but he meant to keep on and find out. Was she going to meet some one?

The question was soon answered. Mathilde, with a final rapid look about her, disappeared into a doorway. Monot proceeded carefully. He came up to the doorway. It was the entrance to a telegraph office.

Cautiously, he peered through a window. Mathilde was at a desk, writing out a telegram.

Monot withdrew into a near-by café, and watched for the maid to come out. In a few minutes, she did, and went on her way. The little criminologist's knowledge of psychology told him that Mathilde was no longer concerned as to whether she was followed or not. She walked with perfect ease. There would, then, be little need to keep following her. What interested Monot now was the telegram she had written.

He went into the telegraph office, and approached one of the two clerks.

"A few minutes ago," he said, "a young lady came in here and wrote a telegram, did she not?"

"We give out no information, m'sieu'," snapped the clerk.

Monot showed a badge and uttered the magic words that make many people change their minds: "Service de Sûreté."

"Oh, m'sieu'," the clerk said hastily, "I beg your pardon. You understand, of course, that we must be careful——"

"Quite," Monot interrupted. "Now, may I have a look at that telegram?"

The clerk handed it over. It was addressed to one Jerome Rouher, 63 Rue Constance, Lyons.

It read: "Do not come down. Detective here. Writing." It was signed: "Arlene."

Monot chuckled. "So that is what the little Mathilde is up to! An old, old game. Getting into employer's good graces—trusted servant—attempt at theft, which proves too much for her—thus obliged to call on her colleague in crime—but puts it off because of danger of detection. Ah, well!"

He gazed again at the last word of the telegram: "Writing." The maid would doubtless give things completely away, in detail, in the letter she purposed to write. Monot decided to wait until that little episode had been ac-

complished, before he presented the facts to Monsieur Chatelaine.

When the hour and a half was up, he was back at the car. Monsieur Chatelaine was there ahead of him, leisurely enjoying a cigar.

"It is well that patience is one of your virtues, Monot," he said good-naturedly. "The ladies will, of course, be late. Shopping is an important matter with them."

"Yes." Monot smiled. "An important matter."

In another half hour, Jeanne and her maid returned. They were fairly loaded with packages; for, in Avignon, one carries one's purchases with one.

"Goodness, child!" gasped Monsieur Chatelaine. "Did you buy out the establishment!"

"Father dear," Jeanne said, as she plumped her pretty self down in the car, breathless, "I bought only a few things that *maman* and myself simply must have. Indeed, I have been very good. There was a gorgeous gown, but I said: 'No, Mamselle Jeanne, you may not have that to-day.' So I took only the other two, which I simply had to have right now. Now, isn't that economical of me?"

"Yes, little one," said Monsieur Chatelaine with a perfectly straight face. "That is what one might surely call a triumph of will power."

They chatted desultorily on the way home. Jeanne spent most of the time admiring the scenery. Describing it, in an airy way, to the others, Monot was surprised to find that the girl had a gift of expression.

"Mademoiselle," he complimented her, "you are a poet."

Jeanne laughed lightly. "Sometimes I become brazen enough to put it down on paper. Would you like to read some of it?"

"I shall look forward to it," the little detective assured her.

They arrived back at the Chatelaine home an hour or so before dinner time. The hour was spent playing tennis. Monot played a valiant game, but Jeanne triumphed over him, and went gayly off to dress.

After dinner, coffee was served out in the garden. Jeanne, impatient to keep her promise, brought out some of her literary efforts, and showed and read them to Monot. They were, Monot knew, nothing very original; but in them were the dreams and feelings of a very sensitive soul. The little criminologist smiled sympathetically, and trusted that life would never bruise this little Jeanne.

Leisurely as he appeared, Monot's watchfulness never waned. He could hear Leon and Mathilde at work inside the house. When the clatter of work ceased, the detective's eyes watched the street, down which either Mathilde or Leon must go if they went out. No such thing happened, however; and, once the family had moved inside again, Monot kept eyes and ears open for any movement of the servants.

Bedtime came, but no one had left the house. Mathilde, it seemed, must be awaiting the morrow to send her letter to her accomplice.

Monot made it a point to be the first up in the morning. Luck was with him, for, no sooner had Mathilde come from her room than she hastened outside, carrying something in her hand. Monot kept her in sight. She did not go far; only to the letter box on the next corner. She dropped a missive into it, and quickly returned. She had not yet seen Monot, and was quite unaware that she had been watched.

Monot pretended he had just come downstairs.

"Good morning, Mathilde."

"Good morning, m'sieu'." The maid smiled uncertainly. "M'sieu' is early this morning.'

"Yes, Mathilde, it is so lovely I wish to take a stroll. The tang of early

morning is always particularly refreshing to one."

Mathilde bowed politely. "I shall serve m'sieu's *déjeuner* immediately."

Monot hastened the meal, although trying not to appear hurried. He wanted to get to the letter box before the postman collected. He need not have hurried, however, for he had all of a half hour to wait until the postman came round.

He approached the man. "There is a letter there, monsieur, addressed to one Jerome Rouher, in Lyons, which has been posted by error. May I have it back?"

The postman looked skeptical, but asked: "What is the gentleman's address in Lyons?"

"Rue Constance, 63," said Monot promptly.

The postman looked at the letter, but, either because he was not satisfied, or because he wished to show his authority, he shook his head as though he were deciding the fate of a nation, and said: "No, m'sieu', I do not think I can give it to you."

Flashing his badge was always a last resort with Monot, but now he was forced to do so, and again to speak the magic words: "Service de Sûreté."

The effect was instantaneous. The postman almost pushed the letter at him.

"Pardon, m'sieu'." He bowed several times. "That is quite different."

The French police have many more powers than the police of most other countries, and the French never question the badge that has the "Eye of the Police" upon it.

Monot returned to his room. A most fastidious man in all the civilized niceties of life, he was quite ruthless about opening the letter and reading it. The law of society was paramount. In the trapping of criminals, the end always justified the means.

The address on the envelope was printed in ink. Monot smiled. Plainly, the maid was taking every precaution that no outsider could see her hand.

Then Monot opened the letter—and got one of the shocks of his life!

The handwriting was that of Jeanne Chatelaine!

He peered again, to make sure his eyes were not playing him tricks. Yes, it was Jeanne's. He remembered her writing distinctly, from the manuscripts of her poems.

The letter read thus:

My Dear Captain Rouher: It will be impossible to send you what you ask for, just now. Neither must you come down here to get it. Monsieur Monot, the noted Sûreté criminologist, is visiting father. You must have heard of him, so you see what I mean. I will let you know when things are well. You shall have what you demanded; I have no choice. But I implore you to cease, after this next time. I beg of you to leave me alone, for I cannot keep this up.

Very truly, Jeanne Chatelaine.

P. S.: Oh, Jerome, how could you do it! You have broken my heart. J.

It required no great insight to see that the letter was eloquently complete in what it told. The postscript and the salutation were the keys to the little drama. The postscript was a clear confession of what had once been love. The salutation: "My dear *Captain* Rouher."

From one of the pigeon holes of his brain, Monot took the fact that Jeanne had not long ago had an infatuation for a Swiss officer. And Monsieur Chatelaine had broken it up, for fear the fellow might be a fortune hunter. Now, it was plain that Monsieur Chatelaine's suspicions had not been far amiss.

Quite obviously, it was blackmail. But on what grounds? What hold had this fellow over Jeanne?

There was one clear line of procedure, and that was to get the truth from Jeanne herself.

Monot waited patiently. Jeanne was late in coming down. The little detec-

tive's gentlemanly instincts revolted at what he had to do, but he knew he was like a surgeon who must inflict pain so that he can cure.

He maneuvered to get Jeanne into the library. Madame Chatelaine was busy supervising in the kitchen. Monsieur Chatelaine had a bit of business to attend to in town.

The criminologist laid down the book he had picked up as an excuse to inveigle the girl into the room. He closed the doors, and sat facing her.

"Now, my dear child," he said kindly, "do not be frightened, but tell me the whole truth about this Captain Rouher affair."

"Captain—Rouher!"

The girl went pallid from fear; for moments she could not speak, and only the violent movements of her breast told of her feelings. Then she flushed with anger—a defensive anger of one who is forced into a corner.

"What do you know of this, monsieur!" she cried frenziedly. "What business is it of yours! What right had you——"

"The best right in the world," interposed Monot calmly. "To protect you from yourself, and from a scoundrel."

She quite suddenly broke into tears, as he knew she would, for she was so young and sensitive. He took her hand and patted it reassuringly, pointing out to her:

"Let us be sensible, my dear. Whatever you have done, I know you were driven to it. I want to help you. It is far better to have those things cleared away, if you would have happiness in your life. Temporary pain, you know, is vastly preferable to a lifetime of slow suffering. Now, tell me all about it."

The first violence of her emotions ceased, and, still sobbing softly, she stopped pretending and became what she really was: a very young and delicate girl, bewildered and hurt by her first brush with life.

"Oh, it is all so cruel, monsieur! I did not dream that Jerome"—quickly she corrected herself—"that Captain Rouher could do a thing like that!

"You see, I met him when I was holidaying with *maman* on the Riviera. He was so nice! So courteous and gallant! Women were attracted by him. But he was indifferent to all of them but me." Monot smiled slightly at the amusing little flash of feminine vanity, and waited for her to continue.

"There were days we had together, glorious days," she went on, with a deep sigh. "I would never have been allowed to do it, here at home. But the Riviera is different. There, one indulges in an easy camaraderie which, at home, is unknown to French girls.

"Then, one day, in the late afternoon, we went for a drive. Into the mountain roads, far away, where one is surrounded by stillness and grandeur. Captain Rouher, so I thought, liked those things, and I loved them. The hours flew past, and we stopped for dinner at a wonderful old château that was perched like an eagle's nest on a great rock. I remarked laughingly to Jerome—to Captain Rouher—that it was a wonder we got here at all, so steep and dangerous were some of the roads we had come up!

"We had a very leisurely dinner; there was so much we found to say to each other. He talked so interestingly that I was not aware it was raining outside until a sudden thunderburst crashed into the stillness. Oh, monsieur, those awful storms! You have doubtless experienced them. They arrive! They crash on the land without warning! In only a few minutes, the land is deluged, the wind is a fiend, and the noise is terrifying! Travel is utterly impossible. Sometimes they pass quickly; sometimes they remain. This one remained."

Jeanne shuddered. Not with loathing in her eyes, but with a disillusion that was sorrowful.

"I became frantic. I thought of *maman,* and became desperate. I implored, commanded, Captain Rouher to drive me home. He was courteous, but adamant in his refusal. 'It is quite out of the question,' he said. 'Those steep declines—we would simply drive to our deaths.'

"It was true, and I realized it. There was nothing to do but remain there for the night. Captain Rouher attended to it. He signed the register for both of us. I was shown to my room, and he to his. In the morning, of course, the storm had cleared, and we set out for home. Scarcely a word passed between us. There was nothing to say. Only once did he speak, and that was when we neared our destination.

"'My dear Jeanne,' he said, 'you mustn't worry. I shall explain everything to madame, your mother.'

"Explanations, however," Jeanne sobbed, "were one thing which *maman* did not care to listen to. Poor *maman* had worried herself into frenzy. When we arrived, a maid was administering smelling salts to her. Captain Rouher started to explain. *Maman* just glared at him, and told him to be off before she called the gendarmes. He left, with only a long look at me; he was perfectly calm. I managed, later, to assure *maman* that everything was all right, and she believed me. But if father had ever come to know! So *maman* told him nothing except that I had been infatuated; he would have found that out anyway."

Jeanne shrugged, but another sob broke from her. "You can picture the rest, monsieur. A little over two months ago, I received a letter. It was from Captain Rouher. It was very polite, but there was no mistaking the threat in it—nor the demand for money. He informed me, quite coolly, that he had a transcript of the register sheet upon which he had signed our name at the château. If further proof were necessary, it could be easily proved that I had been with him that night at the château, he pointed out."

Jeanne clenched her small hands, and there was a faint note of anguish in her voice: "Oh, it was all so cunning! So cruel and cunning! He had waited until my betrothal to Armand became known. Then he knew he had me where I could offer no resistance!"

She clutched Monot's hand. "Oh, do you see? The De Bernays are proud and well known! If this got out, I should be publicly ostracized! As for mother and father, it would kill them! Innocent as it all really was, the world will not believe that. It never, never does! Don't you see? It must be kept from father! It simply must be kept from Armand! Oh, monsieur, what shall we do?"

Monot did not answer that question immediately. A master of psychology, he had been observing Jeanne closely. He had seen, with little effort, the look of wounded love in her eyes when she spoke of Rouher. He had seen, too, the look of dread when she pictured the blow to her own family and to her fiancé. He spoke to her gently:

"Life is often like that, my dear. You had the misfortune to lose your heart to a scoundrel. It was a stark awakening, I know. But time will make it unimportant; before long it will merely be an episode in your life."

Before proceeding, Monot wished to clear up one or two other questions in his mind.

"And he has been dunning you ever since? You became so desperate you—forgive me—you attempted to open the safe?"

Jeanne covered her face with her hands. "Oh, it was shameful! I despise myself! But I was afraid, dreadfully afraid! I did not know where to turn. And what a mess I made of it!"

Monot thought of the several little clever touches, such as the forethought

to wear gloves, and the tampering with the window locks, but he only smiled tolerantly and said nothing, not wishing to chide her.

"Do you know," Monot said disarmingly, "all the while I rather thought it might be poor Mathilde. Matters seemed to point clearly that way."

"Dear Mathilde!" said Jeanne. "I do not know what I would do without her. She is utterly loyal to me."

"Ah, well," exclaimed Monot cheerfully, "so far, so good."

Jeanne gesticulated imploringly. "But, monsieur, what are we to do?"

"Set a trap for the rat to crawl into," replied the little detective crisply. "He shall come; we shall spring the trap; and then we shall put him where he will cause no more grief."

Monot became specific. "That telegram and letter. The implication I got from them is that this scoundrel, impatient at your inability to get money for him, was coming down here to get it."

Jeanne drooped her head with shame. "It was worse than that, monsieur. I was desperate; I would rather have done anything—anything—than let him go to father. Oh, I cannot tell you the rest!"

"Please do so," Monot urged gently. "I know it is hard, but it is best."

The words rushed from her, as if they befouled her mouth.

"I would have been—a criminal! I was to arrange that the windows were unlocked, so that he could enter easily, and—and open the safe himself! Oh, I know it was despicable of me! Now do you understand how he had goaded me?"

"Quite!" Monot nodded. There was a cold, relentless gleam in his eyes.

Monot sat in thought for several minutes, then intimated calmly: "Very well. We shall give him his chance to open the safe."

Jeanne's eyes opened wide with fear. "Oh, monsieur, no! Not that! Father would then know!"

Much as he disliked to pain her, Monot held firmly to the greater good to be accomplished.

"He will be compassionate, child. Fathers have a way of completely understanding when you least expect it. It is the only way. This criminal must be apprehended. It means your whole future happiness."

To reassure her further, he added: "Have no fear. Once caught, this fellow will confess his lies; he is a coward."

Reluctantly, Jeanne nodded.

"That is better!" Monot commended. "And now for an interesting little drama with this rodent!"

Thus the result of the little talk between Monot and Jeanne was that a letter was, after all, dispatched to Jerome Rouher in Lyons. Monot, of course, might have gone after him; but this was quite unnecessary, for the unsuspecting criminal would snap at the bait, inasmuch as he had long been impatient for the chance to do so. Moreover, catching him in the act of rifling a safe would put a final clincher on the fellow's abominable criminal life.

So a letter was posted. Only, in this letter was the information that the coast was clear, that everything would be as demanded. It concluded with the plea that, afterward, he disappear from her life forever.

The letter was dated September 14th. The stage was to be set—so the letter informed—for the night of the 18th.

Monot's nerves were disciplined, so he showed no sign of tension. But it was torture for Jeanne. The little criminologist admired her, for her attitude of naturalness was a sheer effort of her young will. Neither Monsieur nor Madame Chatelaine were told what was about to happen. Monot wanted no interference, no chance of blunder, until after the whole thing was over.

But, even for trained man hunters, awaiting a tense drama which one knows

is going to happen, is the hardest thing in the world.

Once, Monsieur Chatelaine startled Monot from a meditative mood by asking: "Dreaming of Paris, old friend? Has Avignon bored you?"

Monot smiled warmly. "On the contrary, Michel, it is charming. I only wish I could stay longer."

Chatelaine showed concern. "Oh! Then you must leave?"

"I am afraid so. On the nineteenth."

As he spoke the last words, Jeanne looked up quickly. Monot answered her with a reassuring smile.

It was the night of September 18th.

The evening had been spent playing baccarat. Jeanne seemed to be paler than usual, and once or twice Monot saw her hand tremble, but otherwise she controlled herself.

When it came time to retire, Monot strolled out onto the veranda for a final smoke. He was joined by his host. In a few moments, Jeanne appeared.

"Hadn't you better go round and see that we are all locked up, father?" she suggested.

Monsieur Chatelaine went inside. Jeanne whispered rapidly to Monot.

"I must be with you when—when it happens! I simply must, monsieur! I couldn't bear it, waiting in my room! I should go mad!"

He tried to coax her to remain in her room, but she would not hear of it. Monot shrugged; it really made little difference, after all.

"Very well, child. Come down again in one hour. I warn you, there may be a long wait."

"Anything is better than waiting alone! I shall be here."

They went inside. Monsieur Chatelaine had finished his rounds, quite to his satisfaction. Good nights were said, and all retired.

When the house was quiet, Monot put his head outside his bedroom door. All lights were out. He had made it his business to know the position of every piece of furniture in the place; he would not blunder up against anything. Silently and swiftly, he made his way downstairs.

In the library, he wasted no time. He went to the windows and unlocked them. He made sure that his small flash light was in working order. Then, near the door, he awaited Jeanne.

In half an hour, she appeared. She had made herself as invisible as possible in a dark dressing robe. When a chance gleam of light struck her face, Monot saw how wide and terrified her eyes were. Speaking lightly, he tried to ease the strain for her.

"Do not take it too seriously, my dear. It will all be over in a moment. There will be no trouble."

Then the long wait. Monot had hidden himself and the girl behind a large bookcase which stood in an aperture in the wall. He had so arranged it that he could step aside at an instant's notice and cover any one in the room.

The fearful ordeal would have driven many of her sex into hysterics. But Jeanne stood it bravely. Only her quick, hard breathing told Monot how difficult it was for her.

Long, slow hours seemed to pass. As a matter of fact, only an hour and a half had gone by. Then, suddenly there was a faint sound outside one of the windows.

Monot put a firm, controlling hand on Jeanne's arm. "Quiet, now, child. Subdue your breathing. Remember, everything is perfectly all right."

Like rapier blades, Monot's eyes lanced the darkness. They seemed literally hypnotized by the window where the sound had come from. The little detective appeared frozen in his tracks, but ready to pounce at the climactic moment.

Softly, a window went up. A light, athletic form raised itself agilely to the

sill. A silent slide, and it was in the room. It was black, and muffled, and the hat brim was far down over the eyes. It paused, tensed.

Monot drew back behind the bookcase; he calculated what would happen next. Surely enough, a small flash went on, swept erratically round the room. It was only a gesture. The man seemed to know that he would be undisturbed.

He made swiftly for the safe, with the sure step of one who knows exactly what he is about. His quick breathing told of his excitement. Monot, his iron control tried to the utmost, waited. There came the sound of a safe dial being manipulated. Minutes of this. Then a low curse, followed shortly by another. The man was having trouble opening the safe.

Monot waited for no more; it was needless. In a single moment, he stepped nimbly away from the bookcase, his flash light in his left hand, his automatic in his right. The flash cut the darkness. It struck upon the profile of the man, the same instant Monot ordered curtly:

"I have you covered. The game is up, Rouher!"

Monot had no sooner said it than he nearly dropped his flash light and gun from shock. The trapped man had wheeled—faced the detective. Monot's light caught him full in the face. The little criminologist fell back a pace in total astonishment.

"*Mon Dieu!* Armand de Bernays!"

A scream followed immediately upon Monot's exclamation. It came from Jeanne, who had seen. Then behind Monot came a low moan, and the sound of a body slipping to the floor. Jeanne, the dreadful tension broken, had fainted.

Armand emitted a snarl like a trapped wolf. His head lowered, and his hands clawed. He started forward.

"You—you—swine of a detective!"

Monot's gun jutted forward into the ray from his flash.

"Stay where you are, De Bernays! I warn you I would have no qualms about shooting you just as I would shoot a rat!"

The raised voices startled the rest of the household. Monot heard the others coming. He stepped to the electric-light switch, and the room glittered with light.

Monsieur Chatelaine entered the room first, followed timidly by madame, Leon, and Mathilde. Chatelaine's mouth went tight and white, as if he had been struck a blow, when he saw young De Bernays. Madame cried out, and might have fainted had not Monot prevented it by saying quickly:

"Please attend your daughter, madame. The strain proved too much for her."

Monsieur Chatelaine was utterly bewildered. He gestured, pathetically, as if he wanted to be told it was all a nightmare.

"But, Monot—Armand! What does it all mean?"

"That the young gentleman is a blackmailer," replied Monot levelly.

"Blackmailer!" Chatelaine cried. "But—why?"

Monot shrugged. "One usually resorts to blackmail when one needs money desperately."

"But—Armand—money! The De Bernays are wealthy!"

Monot pointed out: "There are limits to even a rich father's generosity. It takes no great deduction to comprehend that Armand must be very deeply in debt. High gambling, very likely. Am I correct, young man?"

Armand snarled. "To perdition with you! I have nothing to say!"

Monot threatened quietly: "I rather think you have. It may help to lighten a long sentence."

The idea of prison and disgrace being thus pointed out to him, the young scapegrace turned a sickly yellow.

"Oh, messieurs, not that! My father!

My family! It would mean everlasting shame!"

"It is rather late in the day to think of that," said Monot dryly. "The decision rests with Monsieur Chatelaine as to whether he will prosecute. Perhaps, if you tell us the whole truth, and confess your lies——"

The suggestion was well delivered. Doubtless, Monsieur Chatelaine saw the scandal, the sensationalism, the intolerable disgrace which public prosecution would place on both families. In such cases, the world cares little for the right and wrong of a thing; the innocent are pilloried with the guilty.

"If you confess everything," he spoke sternly, "I shall not prosecute. Not for your worthless sake, but for the sake of all the others."

Armand gave in.

"I am hopelessly in debt," he confessed grudgingly. "I was, and still am being forced to the wall by my many debtors. It is as you said, monsieur: gambling. I have never been able to stop. Everywhere I travel, it is gambling, gambling! I could not ask my father for more. He has refused me twice, and, in any case, he would throw me out and disown me if he ever knew of the tremendous amounts of my debts."

Monsieur Chatelaine interposed in a cold, hard tone: "So you sought to marry my daughter and her dowry, as a way out."

Armand cringed as if struck. Then he rushed on with desperate defiance: "Yes! What does it matter now? But the stupid conventions of betrothal were too slow. Something else had to be done."

Jeanne, revived, was weeping softly, but, ignoring her, De Bernays went on: "Well, in traveling, one learns that the world is a very small place. One meets distant acquaintances, and acquaintances of other acquaintances, and so on. Thus, one day, at Monte Carlo, I ran across an old friend. We chatted. Eventually, I informed him of my betrothal. He wished to know the lady's name. I told him. He laughed lightly.

" 'Why are you laughing?' I asked.

"'Please take it in the right spirit,' he said; 'the lady's name is not new to me.'

"'What do you mean?' I said.

"Then he told me that, when he had been visiting a place farther up on the Riviera, several months ago, the little colony had one day buzzed with whispers about a certain escapade of one Captain Rouher and one Mademoiselle Jeanne Chatelaine."

"That is a lie!" shouted Monsieur Chatelaine.

"Quiet, old friend." Monot laid a restraining hand on Chatelaine. "You have my word, it is quite all right. Let him finish."

"Lie or no lie," Armand continued hastily, "I was desperately in need of money, and saw my chance. I got more details from my friend. Then I made the journey to the château, purchased the register records from the proprietor, who had no further use for them anyway, and perfected my plan.

"Lyons was my headquarters. No one, however, would have found me at the address in the Rue Constance, for I received letters through a hired accomplice who would not talk. From there I worked my periodic schemes to obtain money, pretending I was Rouher. Meanwhile, every one thought I was on my travels."

He stopped abruptly, fidgeted with the arms of the chair, and blurted out: "Need I say more?"

"No, De Bernays," said Monot. "That tells us everything."

Madame Chatelaine's voice was overflowing with contempt and loathing. "For shame! I did not think any one so despicable existed."

Armand, his defiance wearing out, was getting a little hysterical. "I was

desperate! Desperate, do you hear? I would have done anything!"

"Yes," Monot murmured quietly, nodding his head. "It required desperation—and a streak of the rodent."

Monsieur Chatelaine pointed to the door. He spoke grimly, and his hands looked as if they would have liked to be grasping a whip.

"Go, De Bernays. Do not ever let us see you again. Do not let us ever hear of you again."

Like a properly whipped cur, Armand slunk through the doorway. His last glance was at Jeanne. She seemed strangely unmoved. Monot thought he observed even relief in her bearing. It was only a moment before the reason was apparent.

Monsieur Chatelaine spoke gravely: "It has all been very unfair to—what is his name?—Captain Rouher. Thinking ill of a man is, to me, the same as punishing him actually. I take your word that he is a gentleman."

Jeanne had gained a new strength from the trying experience. She said quietly and confidently: "He is a gentleman, and I love him."

Monot had once told Jeanne that fathers often understand when one least expects them to. Now Jeanne knew it for truth. Monsieur Chatelaine chuckled, put his arm around his daughter, and kissed her affectionately.

There are only two other things to note.

One was that Monsieur Monot left the next day, as he had said he must. There were reluctant good-bys. He must return very soon to visit them again. And, beneath Jeanne's gentle adieus, under her very ladylike composure, was the frank adoration that a girl gives to one she considers her hero!

The other thing happened several months later. It was an envelope which came to his office. It contained the announcement that Monsieur and Madame Chatelaine would give their daughter in marriage to Captain Jerome Rouher, and there was a separate personal note, pleading with Monot to be present.

Monot jumped up like a pleased boy.

"Will I be present! I should like to see anything stop me! Bless their young hearts!"

Coming Next Week, "SCREWS," a novelette, by CHRISTOPHER B. BOOTH.

POPULATION INCREASING

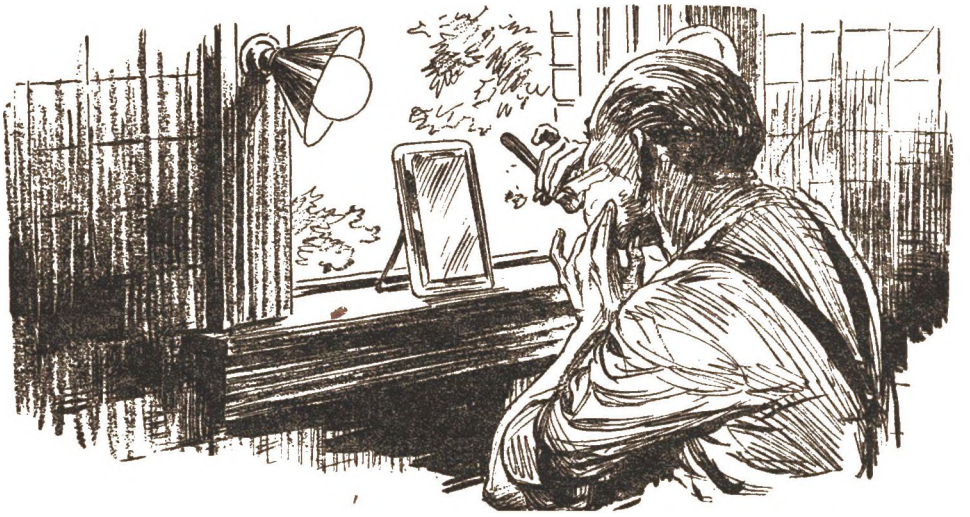
WHEN the population of a town increases, whether the town be a new one or an old one, the consensus of opinion is that the reason is due to energetic members of the town residents or because of the strategic location of the town itself.

But there is one community whose increase in population is a blight upon the surrounding district. An increase in the number of inhabitants whether they be transient or permanent is looked upon with considerable disfavor, and reasons for the increase are looked into with great assiduity. Lecturers, throughout the country, talk at length about this community and not one of the listeners is pleased with the evidence placed before him.

The latest report on the particular community, which is Sing Sing, gives the number of residents as twenty-one hundred. It is the highest mark in fifteen years.

Greedy Fingers

SHE WANTED HER LITTLE GREEN NOTES TO STRIKE TERROR IN HER ENEMY'S HEART.



By M. I. H. Rogers

Author of "Best Laugh," etc.

JENNY TOWER caught hold of the iron railing which inclosed the well of a sidewalk basement and clung to it for support.

She had heard of cultists who fasted for days in their quest of health, and wondered dully how they endured it.

"Perhaps," she thought, "it doesn't hurt when you do it voluntarily. Being slowly starved is different." Her knees trembled, and the cold, foggy air made little beads of moisture on her thin stockings and crept inside her coat collar. She couldn't think of anything but food: ham and eggs and biscuits; little commonplace warmed-over lunches; steaks, fried potatoes, soup.

Lights from the basement revealed the stark pallor of her face and the desperate, bewildered expression in her dark eyes. The iron railing felt cold and unfriendly to her numbed hands, and she swayed on her feet. The heedless night life of the city made a little half-circle detour around her and passed on.

"A thing to do—do it now," Jenny admonished herself weakly, unaware that she spoke aloud.

The stout, oldish man leaning against the other end of the banister eyed her curiously. Jenny felt his stare and was ashamed that her exhausted condition forced her to cling there until some degree of strength returned. She wanted to hurry on toward the bay and drown her gnawing pain in its cold waters.

As she gathered herself to move along, she heard from the basement the

first bars of a tune, played on an organ. A woman said, "Everybody sing, please," and her voice rang out clearly, followed by a hit-and-miss male accompaniment.

Jenny knew the tune; she had sung it many times in the little country church in the little country town where she had been reared. She listened, her lips forming the words, her eyes filled with tears as memory tore at her heart:

"Tho' like a wanderer,
The sun gone down.
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer——"

Suddenly, it seemed very simple. She turned and made her slow way down the iron stairs. The man at the railing followed her.

The big room below was clean and warm. At the far end, a woman stood on a platform beside the organ. She was singing, and the blond young man playing the organ looked not at his keys, but at her pale face with its great burning dark eyes.

The chairs were occupied by men: life's broken misfits; hardened loafers from the curbs; the homeless and luckless. Some were asleep, frankly there to escape the cold foggy night. Some joined the singing, and others listened —their eyes cynical, or curious, or dreary.

Jenny Tower went down the aisle and stopped before the platform where the other woman stood. The singer looked down at her in an annoyed way and continued the song.

As she waited, Jenny began to sense a chill, indefinable constraint in the place. There was something queer about this woman leader, something—for lack of a better word, Jenny called it—*unwholesome.* The black eyes in that pale face seemed to be consumed with a passion not entirely bred of the sacred music she sang.

"Well?" she inquired coldly when the song was ended.

"I'm hungry," Jenny said simply.

"Have you come to confess your sins?" the woman asked.

"I'm hungry," Jenny repeated, and added, "I'm a good woman."

Little cold silvery sparks came into the dark eyes of the singer. "Go and sit down," she said. "You're interrupting the service. I'll talk to you about your sins later."

Jenny turned and went slowly back to the rear. The oldish man rose and took her arm, guided her to a seat. She looked at him in bewildered appeal.

"She wants sins," Jenny said.

The man patted her hand and smiled at her—the saddest smile, she thought dully, that she had ever seen. Perhaps he, too, was hungry.

The woman on the platform talked on and on. She had a clear, cultivated voice with a slightly metallic twang; but Jenny didn't hear a word.

Her eyes were on the woman's hands. They were thin and cruel looking, like claws, and one knew they would also be strong and grasping. They weaved about as the woman talked, and to Jenny's mind, fevered by hunger, they became of themselves living beings; now small and distant, now fiercely close with fingers so elongated they seemed to reach out and clutch at her. She became obsessed with a dread that they would tear open her breast and grope about in her heart for the sins their owner demanded in exchange for food.

In a panic of fear more terrible than her fear of death, Jenny got to her feet and went blindly out. The man followed.

Hopelessly, she moved down the street, intent upon her destination. The stranger close behind. When she started out upon the pier he approached her, touched her arm, questioned her.

Past subterfuge, Jenny told him what

she meant to do, and he led her back to the lighted street, into the nearest restaurant and ordered hot soup, a chop, warm milk.

While she ate, he told her his name was Ralph Harasthy, that he wanted to help her, and bit by bit, she gave him her story. She was a stranger in Califran, her money eaten away by hospital bills and the burial of her husband. She told of her subsequent grief and exhaustion, her inability to find work, and at last of being put out of her cheap room, her belongings kept by the landlady.

The man was so kind and gentle, so unmistakably anxious to help, that Jenny put herself into his hands. She accepted the card and money he pressed upon her, promised to come to his office the next day to see about work, and let him put her into a taxi and send her back to her room.

Jenny worked hard at the job Ralph Harasthy created for her in his office, and soon made herself a useful part of the system there. With regular wages again, she rented a small flat and went back to housekeeping—the one work she really loved. She was almost content, lacking only some one to take care of, to complete her happiness.

Compared to the little Ralph Harasthy had told her of himself, Jenny knew quite a lot about him; among other things, that he was unfailingly courteous and kind to every one he contacted, and that though married, he was lonely and unhappy.

Sometimes about the office, she caught him regarding her with the wistful intentness of a small stranger at a children's party. One night, as they left the office in the same elevator, prompted by his air of loneliness, she impulsively asked him to have dinner with her at her flat.

"You know," she said, "I owe you a meal. I'm broiling a steak. Men always like that, and you look to me like a man who has to eat alone to-night."

"You're a good guesser," he answered, making no effort to conceal his pleasure. "You bet I'll come."

Jenny was never to forget his joy in that simple homely meal. It made her wonder what his own home could be like. It was not long after that he asked if he could rent a room in her flat and eat dinner with her now and then. He asked so wistfully, so like a lonely unhappy boy that she consented.

He moved in, and they settled into a routine. He didn't sleep there at first; using the room only as a sort of haven in which to freshen up; a place to bring his pet belongings.

Bustling about in one of her yellow house dresses—they were always yellow—preparing dinner or sitting opposite him at the table, Jenny saw more clearly than ever, his kindliness, and chivalry, and loneliness.

One day he came bringing his books, his reading lamp, a big old leather chair, and his clothing, and that night at dinner he told Jenny he had asked his wife to divorce him, and she had refused.

"Emma doesn't believe in divorce," he added. "She says it's just another way of breaking the seventh commandment. I've left her. I can't live her way any longer."

About a week later, Jenny received a letter from Emma Harasthy. It was short, asking for an interview and requesting a reply by mail. Wondering and annoyed, she had no wish to meet the woman who had made Ralph so unhappy. Jenny answered naming an afternoon when they could be alone. She was only working half a day at the office now. With Ralph Harasthy's board money, she could afford to be at home more.

When Jenny opened the door on the appointed day, she looked into a pair of

black, angry eyes. At first, her visitor seemed to be all eyes, and then Jenny recognized the pale face, and greedy curling fingers, now twisting at a pair of kid gloves.

"I'm Mrs. Ralph Harasthy," the woman said and walked arrogantly into the little parlor. Jenny closed the door and faced about.

"I know you," she answered coldly. "You're the leader of that mission. The woman who wouldn't help me when I was starving. Now I understand why Ralph Harasthy is so sad."

"He has found consolation, I see." Without asking permission and ignoring Jenny as if she were a spot on the rug, Emma Harasthy stalked through the flat; into the yellow kitchen filled with the odor of baking pie and the song of the canary; through the dining room and into the bedroom of Ralph Harasthy.

She recognized the leather chair and stood still to take a long, slow look about. There was something terrible in the anger which flashed across her face at sight of that comfortable room. It was like the awful wrath of a strange, thwarted god.

She went then into the bathroom which served both the bedrooms. Ralph Harasthy was a crank about shaving. Being also an early riser, to offset Califran's many foggy mornings, he had installed a powerful electric light at each side of the window. He would put his shaving mirror on the sill, open wide the unscreened window, and turn on the lights, making a daily rite of it. This odd custom was very evidently a familiar one to Emma Harasthy.

She casually opened the window and looked out.

Jenny, meanwhile, moved around her and stood backed against the other door, the one opening into her own bedroom. When her visitor drew her head in from the window and straightened her hat, Jenny spoke quietly:

"You can go out the way you came, Emma Harasthy. This is my room."

"Ralph has done well," his wife rejoined. "He has hidden his life of sin beneath the trappings of a home. His paramour, a street woman, masquerades as the excellent wife of Mr. Average Man himself. You may congratulate Ralph for me, and tell him"—she raised one lean hand to heaven and again her eyes were filled with that strange black light—"that God is not mocked. Ralph has lost his soul; he will be destroyed. Look to yourself, young woman."

If Jenny hadn't been so angry, she would have been amused at the dramatics of this intense creature, preaching and condemning in a white-tiled bathroom. But she was angry, and she sternly accompanied her visitor to the door. When Emma Harasthy swept out into the hallway, she took with her Jenny Tower's peace of mind. So that was how the world looked at their arrangement? Paramour!

"I can't help it," Jenny declared. "This is the first home Ralph Harasthy has had for years, and I'm not going to turn him out to keep my silly good name. What did the world ever do for me? Let it think what it wants to. Let it!"

She returned to the kitchen and took the pie from the oven, slamming the door with unaccustomed vigor.

"I won't say a word to Ralph about it," she told the canary. "He has troubles enough. This call didn't mean anything. It was just spiteful curiosity. Now, if that woman was the divorcing kind, it might mean a scandal."

Jenny kept her word. She said nothing to Ralph of the visit, and after a few months had drifted by uneventfully, she half forgot it herself in the contentment that gradually filled her heart. Now and then, when something reminded her of that call, she shuddered

a little over the terrible, vengeful look she had seen in Emma Harasthy's black eyes, and those greedy, cruel hands.

Spring came and the flats were being given their annual coat of paint. While preparing breakfast one morning, Jenny began to plan her own house cleaning. She would take a few days off from the office and do it all up at once, bring in a couple of her protégés, and let them help.

She smiled happily at the thought of these protégés. Ralph had created a trust fund for her from which she drew a hundred dollars a month. He said very seriously that it was to keep her from ever getting hungry again in case anything happened to him and the office. She wouldn't use it for herself. Working through an employment bureau, she spent the money helping the aged, the untrained, and the unfit who couldn't hold a job.

Still smiling, she turned the fire down under the percolator and up under the frying pan, and stepped back into her bedroom for a handkerchief.

Ralph was shaving, and she heard his voice in a cheery greeting, which might have been: "Hello, there, you're up with the sun."

Jenny thought idly that he was speaking to the painters and wondered that they were at work so early; it was not yet seven. Back in the kitchen she fried the ham, slipped the eggs into the pan and connected the electric toaster.

Tapping at Ralph's bedroom door she called, "Breakfast in three minutes," and waited with a smile for his usual answer. It didn't come. She called again, more loudly. Still no answer. She rapped on the door and listened; opened it a crack and looked in. He wasn't there, but the bathroom door stood open; he must have heard her. The continued silence gave her a queer turn.

"Ralph," she called, "breakfast is served!"

Suddenly, panic seized her. She threw open the door and ran across the room.

Ralph Harasthy was lying huddled on the floor, face downward, and there was blood all about him.

Jenny screamed, one terrible scream that brought her neighbors into the hallway, before she dropped down and tried to raise him. Blood from a terrible gash in his throat flowed over her hands. He gave her one look unforgettable in its poignant grief and incredulity before the light faded from his eyes.

She laid him down again and ran sobbing to open her door and implore the alarmed tenants to phone for a doctor and ambulance.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Tower?" the landlady asked, pressing through the little gathering. At sight of the blood on Jenny's hands and dress, she cried, "Are you hurt?"

"No, it's Mr. Harasthy. I think he's dead!" Jenny exclaimed.

The landlady took charge, directed one to telephone for the ambulance; sent another scurrying for the doctor downstairs; asked the others to go back to their rooms, and followed Jenny into her flat, now filled with the odor of burning eggs in ham grease.

Jenny remembered the next few hours only as a confused period when policemen asked questions, and detectives made measurements, and photographers took pictures, and fingerprint men went about sprinkling black dust on her once immaculate tiling and woodwork; for Sergeant Wilson Sheed of the homicide squad had decided at a glance that it was not suicide.

With throbbing head and aching heart, Jenny answered the sergeant's rapid-fire of questions: Who? What? When? How?

Then he asked one that brought her up with a start, cleared her brain as the wind sweeps away a fog.

"Do you," he said gruffly, "know any one who hated Mr. Harasthy?"

Jenny hesitated. She did know some one who hated him, bitterly, but she didn't want to bring his wife into this.

"He couldn't have had any enemies, Sergeant Sheed; he was too kind and good," she said, but a terrible question was forming in her mind, one she hardly dared shape even in her thoughts.

"Won't you look outside the building?" she asked. "His murderer couldn't have been in the flat."

"This was an inside job, ma'am, but we'll give everything the once-over," Sheed answered. "Now if you'll dress, I'd like you to go to headquarters with me."

At police headquarters, Jenny found herself in a room with the chief of police, Sergeant Sheed, a stenographer, and another man—a deputy district attorney. Sheed did most of the questioning, and her first answers revealed that Ralph Harasthy roomed and boarded with her and that she was employed in his office from nine until twelve noon daily. Jenny saw that the men did not believe in the innocence of this relationship, and for the first time, fear for herself touched her with warning fingers.

"Not me?" she exclaimed. "You don't suspect me of killing him?" Her hat was a bit to one side, and her eyes were big and black and incredulous under its tipsy brim. Sitting there in the straight chair which was a bit too high for her, her feet hanging, toes turned in, she was such a woman as might be seen by the dozen marketing, or sweeping the sidewalks in front of small suburban homes, one of that vast multitude called the American housewife; attractive, competent, thrifty.

"But you don't understand! Why, Ralph Harasthy once saved my life. I'd have done anything in the world for him."

At the shocked protest in her voice, the chief of police stirred uneasily and fumbled the papers on his desk.

"We suspect every one who had an opportunity, Mrs. Tower," he said. "You're not under arrest, but that's the way the law works. If you will answer our questions, we'll treat you right."

"But if I'm suspected, shouldn't I have a lawyer?" Jenny asked uncertainly.

"If you wish to, of course, but we'll have to question you anyway, and it'll look better if you answer us now."

"All right, I'll answer you," Jenny agreed. "I've nothing to hide, nor to be ashamed of."

And so Jenny answered questions and the stenographer made them a record with his pothooks, and when the chief and Sergeant Sheed and the deputy district attorney were through with her, they had a beautiful case, lacking only that one essential—a motive.

Jenny had stated that she and Ralph Harasthy were alone in the flat; that there was no place where the murderer could have concealed himself; that even if there had been, she had screamed immediately upon finding the body and any one who hoped to slip out while she was bending over the dying man, would have been detected by the other tenants drawn to the hallway by her outcry.

She had explained that the stairway and elevators were at the front of the house and that there was no rear entrance except on the first floor; the flats being equipped with dumb-waiters and garbage chutes.

She saw Sergeant Sheed lay on the desk an old razor, heard him explain that he found it, cleaned, in the medicine cabinet; that Harasthy had not been killed with his own razor, as it was picked up covered with soap, but no blood, from under the lavatory where it had fallen from his hand. Sheed added significantly that Jenny's razor was the only other weapon found in the room.

There followed some subdued arguing; Sergeant Sheed insisting upon an arrest and the deputy opposing such action. The latter declared that they had no case until they found a motive, and Sheed had to admit that Jenny's neighbors thought highly of her and had never heard quarreling from her flat.

"Well, what about this here Harasthy's will?" Sheed demanded. "He's a rich man. Maybe he left her a slice of his money?"

"He didn't!" Jenny interrupted. "Mr. Harasthy created a trust fund for me a few months ago, but it's not at all affected by his death." She got to her feet with dignity. "Now I've told you everything, I'll be going."

There was a moment of surprised silence, then the chief said: "Very well, Mrs. Tower, and thank you. I must ask you not to leave the city until we give you a clearance."

"I don't intend to leave until the murderer of Ralph Harasthy has been found and punished. Good day to you all." She looked them each in the eye, in turn, and walked from the room.

A brave withdrawal, but they couldn't see the panic back of her brown eyes, nor feel the wild irregularity of her heartbeats. To her grief at the hideous death of a dear friend and benefactor, was now added this fear that she was to be accused of the crime.

"The police won't look very hard for any one else," she reasoned. "They're so sure I did it. Now all they want is my motive, and any fairly reasonable one will do." The thought of being hung for such a crime was horrible. It was doubly bitter to think that Ralph's killer would go unpunished. Free to walk among his fellows. Free to kill again.

Jenny went directly to the office of the only lawyer she knew anything about. Satisfying him that she could pay his fee, she told her story.

He was a small, smooth fellow, carefully groomed as to dress, manner, and mind. He listened gravely to her, and, when she had finished and waited his opinion he said confidentially:

"Of course, of course, but now, Mrs. Tower, if you will just take me into your complete confidence, I'll be much better able to help you."

Jenny looked at him in perplexity, started to expostulate, and then, understanding his meaning, rose to her feet.

"I must withdraw my request for your services," she said. "Kindly tell me what I owe you for the time I have wasted." Nothing he could say moved her. She had no further use for him and the time to cut him off was the present.

It was nearly four p. m. when Jenny Tower went out onto the street again, a forlorn little figure, feeling incredibly alone and drained. Perhaps a cup of coffee would help. She remembered that uneaten breakfast with a shudder.

In a booth at the back of a café, she drank her coffee and faced her problem. There would be no waking moment until the killer was apprehended, when she could be free of fear of arrest. There was no one to whom she could turn. She had been in the city long enough to make a few acquaintances, but no close friends. The problem was one she must tackle alone; to hunt out the real murderer while the police hunted for a motive.

"I was alone with Ralph in the flat," she thought. "I didn't kill him, and there was no way for any one to get in or out without my seeing them, therefore he must have been killed from outside. But that isn't possible. No ladder would reach the third floor, and the fire escape is nowhere near the bathroom window." Then she remembered.

"Those painters!" she exclaimed aloud. A girl in the booth across the way looked up in startled surprise.

Jenny reached for her check and hurried out, praying that the police and the curious would be gone when she reached home. She had told Sergeant Sheed that Ralph was speaking to some one just before he was murdered, but that officer had pooh-poohed the idea.

"Talking to himself," he snorted, "or singing. There wasn't any one for him to speak to."

"But there was," Jenny thought as she hurried homeward. "Those painters. They must have seen his killer."

Arriving at the flats, she took the elevator to the fourth floor and climbed the short stairway to the roof. Beside the coping at the rear of the building she saw painters' equipment, and, leaning over, she looked down upon a plank swinging on ropes. It was just below her own windows. Two men stood on it painting the wall.

They looked up when she called. "Will one of you come up here a minute?" she asked. The men spoke together and then, one at each end of the board, they pulled on ropes and the whole thing came up to stop just below her.

"What time did you come to work this morning?" Jenny asked.

"Eight o'clock," the taller man said and looked at her questioningly.

"Just an hour too late to see the murderer," Jenny thought as her hopes went crashing. But who had Ralph spoken to? She felt sure the killer had used that swinging board to reach their bathroom window.

"I'm the lady from the flat where the murder was committed," Jenny told the men. "I want to find out about this board thing."

"You mean our scaffolding?" the tall man asked.

She nodded, shuddering at the name. "Where did you leave it last night?"

"Why we just put it over here. It was hanging about where it is right now."

"Do you get on it from the roof?" she asked.

"No, ma'am. The upper flat is empty and the landlady leaves it open for us. Say, miss"—the man dropped his voice confidentially—"what's all these questions for? A dick was up here snooping around too. They don't think we had nothing to do with this murder, do they?"

"Of course not, but I can't answer any questions as yet." Jenny favored him with the best smile she could summon. "Does it always take two to operate one of those scaffolds?"

"Yes'm, this kind does."

"Did you notice anything different about it this morning? I mean had it been moved, or anything?"

Before the taller man could answer, the other one broke in eagerly: "We hadn't used it yet, miss, but I think it was a mite lower this morning. I got a good eye, and I say it looked lower."

Then it might have been used. Jenny thanked them and went thoughtfully down the stairs. She had learned three things, though they might all prove useless. First, the upper flat, directly above her own and giving access to the scaffolding had been left open last night. Second, the scaffolding might have been moved either last night or this morning while the painters were away. Third, it took two persons to raise and lower it.

She paused on the fourth floor long enough to scout through the empty flat in a vain hope of finding some tangible clew, but found nothing. At the rear windows, she stood a moment. How easy, how eminently easy it had been for the killers! Even if Ralph's body had been discovered sooner, if Jenny had heard him fall, they could still have gone quietly out the front way while people gathered in the rear hall.

The very location of the building, and of her own flat, made the crime easier. The building stood at a right

angle with the hotel which formed the end of the alley. The hotel was closed for repairs, and the entire length of the alley across from the flats was taken up by the blank wall of a theater. The building on the other side of the flats was two stories lower, and the chance that any one there or in the alley might see the murderers was slim.

Jenny's spirits were at a low level as she let herself into her own flat. Tears of gratitude surged to her eyes when she found that her landlady had cleaned up the bathroom.

Thinking had ever been a clearer process when beside her kitchen table, so Jenny laid aside her hat and coat and went out there with pencil and paper to figure things out.

She had learned now that first there must be a motive. Who had one! She remembered Sergeant Sheed's question: "Do you know any one who hated Ralph Harasthy?" She also recalled her own immediate reaction. She brooded upon it now. Let the shadowy thought in her mind take on substance, come out where she could look at it.

Emma Harasthy hated her husband with a bitter, destructive hatred. Was it strong enough to make a killer of her? Even granting that, where would she find an accomplice to commit the act for her?

"She's capable of doing it herself," Jenny thought, remembering that bathroom prophecy: "He has sinned and he shall be destroyed."

But Emma Harasthy was a religious woman.

Jenny stood that fact up and questioned it. Was she? Did good people harbor thoughts of hatred and vengeance? Were they greedy and destructive? No. There was something unnatural about that woman's religion, something dark and unholy. Jenny's own experience at the mission proved that.

Suddenly, Jenny found what she had been searching for. She saw again the woman singer, her black eyes blazing with a strange light, and the blond boy organist who looked not at the music or the keys.

"Oh, horrible, horrible!" Jenny cried aloud, and hid her face.

That night, avoiding the reporters by slipping down the stairs and out through the alley, Jenny visited the mission and confirmed her suspicions that there was something more than appeared on the surface between Emma Harasthy and the organist: something sinister. The woman had not allowed the death of her husband to keep her from the platform. The boy also was there, pale and nervous, and with the look of a boughten slave in his blue eyes. There was gloating triumph in Emma Harasthy. She seemed taller, her eyes more strange in their black light as she talked of a god who worked in mysterious and terrible ways to save a wicked people from its sins.

When Jenny returned home, the world seemed no longer a good place in which to be. From then on until the end, she slept and waked with but one thought: How to prove to Sergeant Sheed and his cohorts of the law, that the leader of a street mission and a fair-haired boy organist had committed a brutal murder.

At first, when she opened her door to find him standing in the hallway, Jenny thought the man was from the district attorney's office. Then he smiled at her, the smile of one who has found bread where he expected mud, and Jenny found herself shaking hands with him, asking him in. At no time, then or later, could she explain the flood of liking and relief that swept over her.

"My name's Barry Barton," the caller said as he stepped into the parlor, "and you are Jenny Tower?" Jenny nodded.

"I'm representing the Bingham Life

Insurance Co. I've come to you about a policy taken out in your favor by the late Ralph Harasthy."

The color drained slowly from Jenny's face while terror filled her eyes. Words formed themselves in her throat, but her lips couldn't speak them. She lowered herself into a chair and motioned the man to sit down.

"I came to you first, Mrs. Tower, because of the rather odd circumstances under which this policy was issued. Odd, in view of what has happened."

"Tell me," she whispered aware of his intent regard.

"Last fall, a woman whose description tallies accurately with your own appearance, made application for this policy. She signed the name 'Jenny Tower' to the application, gave a post-office box number as address; instructed the agent to arrange by telephone with Mr. Harasthy for the physical examination, and send the policy to her. She agreed to remit promptly for the premiums, and gave the clerk to understand that she was Mr. Harasthy's secretary.

"The clerk thought nothing of it at the time. Many busy men allow their secretaries to arrange such matters for them. It was only because of this murder that I was brought into it. I'm a criminal investigator for several insurance companies."

"How much?" Jenny asked, still whispering as one in the presence of death.

"Thirty thousand dollars, Jenny Tower."

"When?" she asked.

"The fourth of November."

Her eyes narrowed. "The sixth is my birthday," she remembered aloud. "Mr. Harasthy gave me that week off and I went to Los Angeles on the steamer. I couldn't prove where I was. I didn't meet any one I knew all the time, and I didn't go to a hotel. I took a little apartment."

She brooded for a moment, her eyes dilated with terror, an expression of hopelessness on her face.

"Here, at last, is Sergeant Sheed's elusive motive, made to order." She laughed bitterly. "That's just it, Mr. Barton, it's made to order. Isn't it a joke on me? She's far more clever than I gave her credit for being; deadlier than I ever imagined."

Barry Barton's grave scrutiny seemed to open up, warm and soften while he watched her shake her head from side to side as one in pain.

"She?" he asked. "Who is this she?"

"Emma Harasthy! Ralph's widow. She impersonated me with the insurance company. I never heard of this policy until this moment. Do I look like a murderer, Mr. Barton?"

"You look like somebody's favorite aunt," Barry said and smiled for no reason at all, except that she needed a smile. "You ought to be baking spice cake or mending a broken doll."

"You're kind, Mr. Barton, but unless I can accomplish the impossible, I'll be hanged for murder." She covered her face with her hands and rocked back and forth despairingly. "That woman has framed me in the cruelest plot one woman ever devised against another."

"That's no good," Barton said, a sharp edge to his voice. "Snap out of it, and tell me all about this. You don't look like the crying kind to me."

Jenny fumbled for a handkerchief and wiped her eyes. "Thanks, Mr. Barton, I don't often snivel; but I'm frightened. Can't you see that I'm spun like a fly in a web, bound hand and foot for the satisfaction of the law?"

After a moment, she began her story, going back to her first meeting with Ralph Harasthy in the basement mission. Her caller listened quietly, his eyes rarely wavering from her face; kind, encouraging, sympathetic eyes—eyes it would be hard to deceive.

"Then," she finished, "Ralph left his

wife and, Heaven forgive me, I made a home for him."

"Why do you say that, Jenny Tower?" Barton asked.

"Because I had taken from Emma Harasthy's hands one of her possessions. That she no longer valued it made no difference. She never relinquishes anything that has ever belonged to her."

"You imply——"

"I charge, Mr. Barton, that she would rather destroy a thing than let it pass into the possession of another," Jenny said with that deep conviction which lay back of her every word.

"It's incredible. She's a devout woman, almost a fanatic," was his slow answer.

"I wish," Jenny pursued unhappily, "that I could leave religion out of this. I have my beliefs, you have yours, without which life would be unbearable. Religion should be beautiful, comforting; but Emma Harasthy twisted and distorted it so hideously that it influenced her to terrible things.

"It permitted her to involve an infatuated, emotional adolescent in a brutal murder."

"The boy organist?"

Jenny nodded, her eyes compassionate. "You see, Mr. Barton, what I mean when I say her religion is a part of her we cannot ignore if we are to understand this crime." She paused to look at the investigator with troubled eyes.

"I don't mean that she's a hypocrite. It goes deeper than that. She believes herself divinely appointed to make the world good—as she sees good. Whatever she does is right. But, Mr. Barton, her eyes betray her, her eyes and her hands."

"You were almost crazed by hunger that night," Barry offered. "Her hands became symbolic to you."

"Go see them for yourself. Then you'll believe me. They are thin and greedy. They curl like the tearing talons of a predatory bird. They give the lie to her pose of ministering saint in a water-front mission—ministering to *men;* women are not welcome. Service such as she pretends would make her hands beautiful, were they ever so knotted and rough."

The intensity of Jenny's conviction communicated itself to her listener. "I've known such people," he admitted.

"Who else knows about this policy?" Jenny asked.

"No one outside the Bingham office. I came to you first. I don't like bringing the police into this sort of thing if it can be avoided."

"But they may learn of it at any time?"

Barry nodded. "It seems quite incredible," he repeated thoughtfully. "How could she trick Mr. Harasthy into signing the papers if the policy was made out to you? He would have noticed that."

"It is unlikely he even saw it. I think she just told him that she wanted to take out another policy, probably said it was to help some struggling young salesman. Oh, I knew how he hated to argue and quarrel with her. He must have accepted the doctor's examination, signed the application, and forgot about it. She just destroyed the policy when it was mailed to that post-office box addressed to me; or perhaps she is hiding it away to use later against me.

"But your signature on the application you claim was signed by Mrs. Harasthy, was passed as genuine by the experts," Barry declared.

"She got it from the note I wrote in answer to her request for an appointment. She's clever enough to imitate my copy-book writing—a smart child could do it." Jenny tightened her grip on the chair arms. "I'm to be hanged to order," she whispered, "and I shall be free only until Sergeant Sheed learns of this policy."

"Let's not look forward to that," said Barry. "Will you tell me your theory as to how this crime was committed?"

"It's pitifully simple. If the police had not been so sure that they had a cut-and-dried case against me, they'd have figured it out, just as I did. I believe Emma Harasthy and her accomplice slipped into the flats before any one was astir. They brought with them painters' overalls which they put on in the empty upper flat.

"She knew the plan of the building, knew Ralph's habits, and it was *her* hand that killed him. I don't believe the boy knew what she intended doing until it was done. His love—that terrible, piteous first passion of a boy for an older woman—has kept him loyal.

"They stepped out onto the scaffold, lowered it to a level with our windows, and waited for Ralph to raise the window and turn on his lights. It was a foggy morning, and, with the hotel closed, there is little traffic through the alley. If any one had seen them, they would have mistaken them for painters, just as Ralph did.

"When he spread the lather on his face, and opened the window, that woman moved over. At sight of her overalled legs, he leaned out in his friendly way to speak, turning his face up to hers, his poor throat bared for the blade. He said only a few words when he recognized her, saw the razor, had one instant's terrible comprehension of what it meant, and then that wicked slash driven with all the strength of her vengeful hand—and death."

Jenny covered her face with her hands, and Barry Barton sat immersed in thought. If Jenny Tower was innocent of the crime, and he could not believe her guilty, then her theory was plausible; more, it was convincing.

"Why do you insist that the woman held the weapon?" he asked. "I can see such a woman bending that boy to her will."

"He's her slave, Mr. Barton, but he's just a boy. She would never trust the job to him, nor subject him to the questioning that might arise later. It was one piece of work that couldn't be bungled."

"I must agree with you, Jenny Tower, that the boy was ignorant of her true motive when he lowered her to that window."

Jenny uttered a little choked cry of relief. "Then you think I'm right, Mr. Barton?"

"You sound right," he answered gravely. "To-night I'll go to the mission and see her for myself."

"To have you believe in me! Willing to help——" Jenny's black eyes filled with tears.

"Forget it," Barry said, discomfited by the swelling in his own throat. "I'm going to send you a good lawyer—none other than Girvin McCann. Tell him everything. He'll know how to get you out of this."

"*You'll* get me out," Jenny said. "I'm putting my trust in *you*. I'm not a pretty flapper, Mr. Barton, to show my knees and make eyes while a lawyer weeps over the jury."

"You're the bravest woman I ever knew," Barry answered. To himself he added: "And you're in one awful fix." He was abashed by the faith shining in her eyes. She was putting it up to him. Unconsciously, he squared his shoulders. "I'll do my darnedest, Jenny Tower."

"I know you will, and, if you fail, don't feel too bad. We all have to die sometime." She smiled tremulously and hurried on before he could speak. "When you go to observe Emma Harasthy to-night, watch her hands. They will witness for me."

"Have you any plan at all?" Barry asked.

"Come back to-morrow and tell me what you have seen. Then, I'll tell you my plan."

When Jenny opened her door to Barry Barton the next morning, he wore a very grave face.

"You are right, Jenny Tower," he said. "They're as guilty as sin." He came inside and paced the little parlor restlessly as he told of occupying a front seat at the mission; of the black light in the woman leader's eyes; of the blond boy with the very pallid lovesick face.

He told of a curious thing that happened. A messenger came down the aisle with a green envelope. He said it was urgent and the woman excused herself to open it. She drew out and opened up a single sheet of paper and turned ghastly. Barry paused in his movings back and forth.

"I could look right up into her face from where I sat. Whatever she received, it was shocking. The boy stared at her with an intent, frightened look. She motioned him to play, and he obeyed; but his fingers fumbled the keys. I'd give a good deal to know what was on that sheet of paper," Barry finished.

Jenny was smiling, a queer, knowing look in her eyes. She went to her desk and picked up a small package.

"The only chance I have against the incriminating evidence of that insurance policy," she began, "is in a confession by Emma Harasthy, Mr. Barton. I think——"

"How about the boy?" Barry interrupted.

Jenny shook her head. "An older man might, to save his neck, but not that boy. He'd die for her." She came and sat down, with the package in her lap.

"What you've told me fills me with hope. I'm going to ask a favor of you. If I'm arrested, will you open this package and follow the instructions you'll find inside?"

Barry looked from the small bundle to her expectant face. "Of course, I will, Jenny Tower. Is that all you want me to do?"

"Yes, we can only wait now. I've seen Girvin McCann and he has been most encouraging, but I'm counting on you and this package."

A few days later, a very triumphant sergeant of police came to Jenny's door with a warrant for her arrest, charging her with the murder of Ralph Harasthy. She submitted without protest. Sergeant Sheed waited in the little parlor for her to dress and pack a bag; in the bedroom Jenny tore two green envelopes into bits and then burned them in the incinerator of her stove.

Jenny had her first visitor just two hours after she was placed in custody. When the matron took her to the visitor's room, she found Barry Barton pacing the floor, his usually gentle eyes blazing with anger.

"The condemned fools!" he exclaimed. "You poor little thing!"

His indignant sympathy was too much for Jenny. She had fought despair every waking moment since her arrest and dreamed of the gallows nearly every sleeping one.

"Don't!" she cried. "Please, Mr. Barton, or I'll crack up." All the horror and grief and fear that she had been suppressing since Ralph's murder thickened her voice and dulled her eyes.

Barry seized her extended hands and pressed them confidently. "You don't understand," he said. "It's just because we are getting close to our goal that I'm angry. A day or so longer and this murder charge never would have been made against your name."

"You are still hopeful?" Jenny asked tremulously. "Somehow, I find hope a mighty elusive quality these days."

"You mustn't give in now when you've been so splendid," Barry said as he put her in a chair and sat down beside her. "Girvin McCann is to meet us

here directly. We want your approval of a new scheme. We've been working hard."

"Did you open my package?"

Barry hitched his chair around so he could look directly in her eyes. "Of course, at once. It had tantalized me long enough. When I saw all those neat little green envelopes addressed to Emma Harasthy and dated, I said to myself, said I: 'That Jenny Tower's a deep one!' I'll mail them, though curiosity consumes me utterly. It was you who sent her that shocking message?"

Jenny nodded gravely. "That was the first, though I sent many more before they arrested me; by every mail, and by special messenger at odd and unusual hours of the day and night."

"She might trace them back to you. The police could make your messenger talk."

"Possibly," Jenny admitted serenely, "but she'll never show that envelope's inclosure to the police. My messenger is loyal. Even if she had him followed, he was well supplied and needed to make no contact with me."

"And the purpose of all this, Jenny Tower?"

Jenny leaned forward, her face like that of an avenging angel. "To make her afraid; to force her to suspect that her accomplice has turned against her, or betrayed their secret to another. To make her suffer as I have; to feel like a trapped animal; to think frantic, helpless thoughts; to be so full of terror that, when the time comes, perhaps the steel of her nerve will break."

"You, too, can be a little like steel," Barry mused as he looked at Jenny's stern face. "What could you have put on that sheet of paper to so appall her?"

"Wait, my friend. It is best for you to know nothing more of this now."

At that instant, their attention was attracted by the arrival of Girvin McCann. The lawyer came straight to them and took Jenny's hand. After a few words of condolence, he plunged into the details of the plan they hoped to put into execution that very afternoon: to bring in the boy organist and put him over the jumps.

Jenny listened, growing more and more dubious as the lawyer expounded: "We'll reconstruct the crime for him, as we think it happened, except that we'll cast him in the rôle of principal. Then we'll tell him Emma Harasthy has confessed that she was forced into helping him, and was ignorant of the actual crime until she read of the murder in the papers. We'll tell him she is in love and wants to marry another man. We'll promise him clemency if he confesses and saves the State a trial." McCann looked at Jenny triumphantly. "It's as good as over, Mrs. Tower," he concluded.

"The boy won't tell," Jenny said.

"He's a weakling," Barry declared.

"Yes, I know, but haven't you ever felt the strength of the weak? A silk thread across the nose of a recumbent man is as strong as a rope; and think of the overwhelming force of an idea." She put her hand on Barry's arm.

"Please don't think I lack confidence in you and Mr. McCann. You are both so kind and so clever. It's just that I feel so strongly about this boy." She looked at them appealingly.

"What's on your mind?" Barry asked, not concealing his disappointment.

"I don't want to interfere with your plan. Please go ahead with it. But will you do something for me? Get Emma Harasthy here, too? Just in case the boy stands firm? Listen!" Jenny explained her own scheme so earnestly and convincingly that the two men were won over, though they persisted that the boy would confess.

"Remember," Jenny warned as they left her, "let Emma Harasthy catch a glimpse of him after he has been questioned, but don't let him see her. Above

all, they must not speak to each other."

Jenny looked at her watch. One o'clock. They would be bringing in the boy now. Would he, after all, be weaker than she had thought? Could they make him tell?

She folded away her sewing and got up to pace back and forth across the room where she spent her waking hours with half a dozen other women prisoners also awaiting trial.

This afternoon would settle whether she was to be cleared now, or forced to go on trial with her case depending upon an unproven theory and the eloquence of the best criminal lawyer in Califran. She shuddered from the thought of how that trial might end. They had so little: the idle speculation of a painter that his scaffolding had been moved; a theoretical accusation against a wealthy social worker; and against them that hideous, unbeatable motive supplied by the policy.

At two thirty, the matron unlocked the door and beckoned to Jenny. Downstairs, she found Barry Barton and Girvin McCann waiting. One look at their faces told her they had failed.

"You were right again, Jenny Tower," Barry said soberly. "Nothing we could say moved him. He went to pieces when we told him Emma Harasthy wanted to marry another; but it was purely a physical collapse. To every question he repeated that we had invented the story, that he and Mrs. Harasthy were innocent."

"Is she here?" Jenny asked grimly.

"Yes. In the district attorney's office, and he's pretty sore. He thinks we've stirred up a mare's nest."

"Did she see the boy?"

Barry nodded. "At the far end of the corridor with two officers holding him onto his feet. You should have seen her eyes. She's madly in love with him."

Jenny visibly shook that thought aside. "Has any one talked with her?"

"Not yet. We're letting her fry a while," McCann answered.

"Let's go," Jenny said. "You know what to do, Mr. McCann."

In an inner room, Jenny and Barry Barton stood behind a wide-open door and strained every faculty to comprehend what transpired in the district attorney's office. They could see nothing, and dared not move lest their presence be betrayed.

"I still do not understand why you have asked me to come here!" they heard Emma Harasthy say in her arrogant, metallic voice.

"It is necessary in order that you may enter a formal denial of certain charges made against you by the organist of your mission, and set forth in his confession," came the district attorney's crisp voice.

There followed a few seconds of complete silence. The hidden listeners could hardly bear it. If they could only see! Evidently, Emma Harasthy was shocked beyond immediate speech.

"He came," the district attorney continued, "voluntarily, as he put it, 'to clear my conscience.' We listened to his story, of course. That is our duty, and it is further my duty to read you a copy of the confession and receive your denial or corroboration."

Paper rustled and the district attorney cleared his throat impressively. Still Emma Harasthy did not speak. Then he began to read from the manufactured confession, prepared by Girvin McCann, wherein the boy organist supposedly set forth the secrets of guilty love and murder.

"All lies," Emma Harasthy said coolly when the reading was finished. She had regained her iron control. "The boy is insane."

"True, if you can call love a form of insanity; the boy's in love." That

was McCann speaking for the first time.

"In that case, would he slander the one he loves?"

With those words, there fell a silence fraught with meaning. Emma Harasthy had committed her first stupidity. She had admitted her affair with the boy. Her sharp gasp showed that she realized its importance. In her excitement, Jenny squeezed Barry's arm until it ached.

Girvin McCann chose to ignore the slip. He said: "The boy did not slander the one he loves." Another moment of silence burdened with a thousand conjectures for the two in the small room.

"You mean?" Emma Harasthy whispered the words like the first sigh of winter over a dying autumn. Gone was the arrogance from her voice. For the moment, there was left only the poignant pain of a lost love. "You mean that—he—loves some one else?"

"And how!" McCann put in fervently. "Wants to marry her. Cute little trick about sixteen with red hair and big gray eyes." He went on describing the mythical girl fluently. "Boy said his conscience bothered him," he added.

The district attorney snorted derisively. "The poor sap thought all he had to do was come in here, spill the story, and walk out free to marry his sweetie. We're holding him until we get this straight."

If Jenny hadn't known different, she would have sworn those two old foxes were speaking the truth. She almost pitied that woman in there with them.

Emma Harasthy evidently believed them. The boy must have told, or how could they have known all those details? She accepted the inevitable, but all the mad love she had experienced for the young musician must have turned to gall in her blood.

"That's why he sent me those letters," she thought aloud. "To scare me away so he could marry that girl. When he found I didn't get scared, he came to you. Well, he isn't going to run off with any one—not for a while at least."

The unborn pity died in Jenny as she heard that new clanging note in the voice of the other woman; a commingling of anger and passionate despair; the thwarted ardency of a mature woman burning itself out in revenge upon the youth who had spurned her for a younger woman.

"He helped me kill my husband," she cried. "I had a vision showing me that Ralph was living in sin, that it was no longer good for him to remain alive, and so I killed him, and that traitor helped. I'm prepared to tell everything."

Jenny was crying, tears of compassion running down her cheeks. Barry closed the door gently, shutting out that bitter voice.

"You are right, Jenny Tower," he said. "Emma Harasthy would rather destroy what was once hers, than have it pass into the hands of another."

"Oh, Mr. Barton, that pitiful, brave, loyal boy. What will become of him? That monster has ruined him utterly."

Barry put his arm about Jenny's shoulders. "She thought *he* sent her the green envelopes," he said. "Are you going to tell me, Jenny Tower, what was in them?"

"Nothing but a rough drawing of a razor," Jenny said between sobs. "Oh, take me out of here, please, quickly."

Popular Detective Story Writers

M. I. H. ROGERS

By D. C. Hubbard

YOU never guessed it, did you? We certainly were taken by surprise when M. I. H. Rogers wrote to us, after we had been buying stories for several years, to find that we had been corresponding all that time with a woman. We simply took it for granted that she was a man, and we defy you to tell us whether a story is written by a man or woman.

Mrs. Rogers was born in San Diego, California, and has bred within her all the love and devotion that Californians always seem to have for their homeland. During her "growing-up" years, Mrs. Rogers tells us she was pretty much of a tomboy. She loved to do the daring stunts that only boys are supposed to do, but her spirit was no less brave and her skill no less perfect than that of her masculine playmates. There wasn't a tall tree in the vicinity of her home that she could not and had not climbed. One of her choicest exploration tours was down the center of an old flume which crossed the town from the hills to the bay. No stouter heart beat than hers when she balanced herself nicely and walked along the tops of presumably inaccessible fences. At that period of her life she could easily have qualified as a tight-rope walker in any circus.

But, of course, there were rainy days and days when the spirit of restlessness was held in abeyance. These were the times when she delved into books and read with as much vigor as she put into every one of her actions. The best part of her schooling was the reading part, for here she could lose herself and allow her imagination to roam.

After two years in high school, family finances made it necessary for her to look into the future for a means of livelihood, so she took up a business course. The next six years were spent in offices, taking shorthand notes, transcribing them, and doing the usual round of secretarial duties. But she was not destined to spend her life this way for long. Soon she met Mr. Rogers, whom she married. The next few years she spent wandering happily all over California with her husband, accompanied by their small son and a big Airedale. She absorbed atmosphere and met with various experiences which enlarged her viewpoint and prepared the way for an occupation about which she was beginning to think.

M. I. H. ROGERS

Returning to San Diego, Mr. Rogers held a position on the night force of a newspaper. The little son was put to

bed at seven, and the long evening stretched interminably before the young wife. What did she do? Hunt up friends who would go to the movies, play bridge, and help her idle the hours away? No; Mrs. Rogers was too wise to waste time and too energetic to do nothing. Once, in the early days, she had had an inclination to write, which is apt to be the outcome of the voracious reader sooner or later. She had even gone so far as to take a correspondence course in short-story writing. This same course Mrs. Rogers found among her effects. She read it over again. Then she subscribed to a scenario-writing school. Genius was groping for an outlet!

Some one told Mrs. Rogers about a class in short-story writing at the high school in San Diego. She needed no urging, but joined it immediately. Years passed, and still the would-be writer kept hopefully at her chosen career. Although at times she became discouraged, she never completely gave up, and at last was rewarded. "The Hidden Ally" brought her first check from DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE. It was the very impetus she needed, and from then on she worked harder than ever.

Mrs. Rogers' boy is fifteen now, and she no longer has to put him to bed at seven o'clock. He goes himself at nine, and her evenings have the same number of hours in them, but, oh, how short they seem! It is because she is struggling to get "Fog" Bibecot out of a terrific jam into which she has just gotten him. She can't quite decide whether to kill one man or two. Right up until three o'clock in the morning she keeps at her work, when her husband comes home, and then they call it a day.

Much of her story material, Mrs. Rogers says, she gets from the newspapers, but she adds: "Story stuff, like gold, is where you find it." Her ambition is to take a trip around the world after she has sold enough stories to pay for it. She says she will be quite satisfied if she can succeed in making even a few people forget their own very real troubles in the imaginary ones of her characters.

One of the reasons for the success which Mrs. Rogers has already achieved is credited to her husband and son, who believe in her and urge her to further efforts. Then there is another real reason for her success, and for success in almost any line of work: she loves it. What greater driving force is there than that?

Enthusiasm is the keynote of Mrs. Rogers' character. It was this in her make-up that made her want to climb trees, read books with an insatiable interest, and sit up till three o'clock in the morning mastering an art that can only be mastered by hard work and tireless driving power.

Among Mrs. Rogers' best stories which have appeared in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE were: "Flying Vengeance," "His First Mistake," "$5000—Dead," "Sealed Guilt," and "Whispered Orders." No doubt, some of the others were your favorites, but we know that you agree with us that it is hard to select them because every one is a thriller.

Killer's Ticket

HE WAS GOING TO SHOW THE IRON HAND TO WISE GUYS AND DOUBLE CROSSERS.

By Donald Van Riper

Author of "Death Warrant," etc.

"THE bird that first called you 'Cupid' sure must 'a' had a sense of humor," observed "Bunk" Coulter as he looked up from jotting down the orders of his chief.

Cupid Burkett glared at his henchman. Bunk Coulter was forever daring to make remarks like that, saying nasty things and yet contriving at the same time to smile in that easy, dumb way of his. Bunk Coulter was moon-faced, his nose turned up comically at the tip, and his eyes were bright, blue and wide. He was, beyond doubt, the least likely looking crook in the world and his abilities belied the evidence of his appearance.

Ever so often Bunk Coulter would get off a wisecrack at Cupid Burkett's expense, and Cupid would be on the verge of loosing his wrath when suddenly he would recollect how very useful Bunk was in his scheme of things. He would glare and set himself to snarl, and then he would wonder just what he would do without Bunk always at his beck and call. He was a big shot, and, like most big shots, he had come to feel that some far inferior person must be an integral part of his scheme of things. Bunk Coulter wasn't exactly indispensable, and yet Cupid Burkett could not quite picture himself operating without the happy-go-lucky, easy-going, and sometimes insolent Bunk.

Wherefore, the profanity which had stirred at the tip of his tongue remained unsaid. He allowed several seconds to pass before he spoke, and then his words

were as set as a mechanical man's might have been.

"I've even forgotten who did spring that name first."

Bunk chuckled, and the tiny lines deepened at the corners of his eyes, and his mouth shifted into a broad grin which exposed his extraordinarily large and gleaming teeth.

"It wasn't on account of my looks," admitted Burkett.

"I should say not, chief," said Bunk as he continued to grin. "Imagine a Cupid with big, bushy eyebrows and a lantern jaw and wearing a size seventeen collar. But I wasn't thinking about that. What struck me just now was that you sure are hard-boiled. You're out to get the mazuma and you're going to get it no matter how it hurts." He paused and laughed aloud. "No matter how it hurts—the other fellow."

"Meaning?"

Cupid Burkett's voice had dropped just a shade in tone to a pitch of repressed anger. Bunk noted this and, though he continued the conversation, he proceeded in a far more serious manner. No one knew any better than Bunk just how far a bit of raillery could be carried.

"I was thinking," sighed Bunk, "about this—ah—ah—ultimatum you're telling me to hand to 'Wire' Prentice. Wire isn't such a bad little guy, after all."

Cupid expressed himself first with a vicious grunt. "And who else would give him any more of a break than I have? He came to me and asked me to stake him to five hundred smackers and said he'd have the money back by yesterday morning. And when he didn't kick in yesterday, I said he could have till this morning. What better break does he want than that?"

"I saw Wire last night," said Bunk Coulter. "And so I happen to know that he'll come here this morning and ask you for just one more chance."

"And he won't get it," snapped Cupid. "I told him that, if he didn't kick in this morning, I'd broadcast it that he had four-flushed and welshed on me."

"You might as well hang a gambler as do that," remarked Bunk.

"Gambler!" snorted Cupid Burkett. "I always knew that, when it came to a real pinch, he would show up as a tinhorn sport. He's no different at heart than he was when his graft was reefing a poke or wiring some lad's watch out of his vest or snipping diamonds out of rings and stickpins. I've always said that a dip was the lowest form of crook and that 'once a dip always a bum' was a good rule to know. And this business of Wire trying to stall me off just goes to prove it. He was a sneaking pickpocket years ago, and the sneaking part has stuck to him."

"If you label him a four-flusher," reminded Bunk, "you'll never get the money. He'll have to quit gambling in this town, and, when he sees he's licked, he'll simply take a run out and never show up again."

"And as I told you before," answered Cupid Burkett, "the last notch I'll give him is until prompt twelve o'clock tonight."

"But——"

"Say," drawled Cupid Burkett. He leaned forward now, and the bushy brows seemed doubly fierce as he stared at Bunk. "What's eating you? I never heard you stick to a thing like this. I should think by now you'd know that with me—money talks. And that's the kind of talking I want out of Wire Prentice and in a hurry."

"But this time," persisted Bunk, "you might listen to reason. There's always some exceptions to a rule. And from what Wire Prentice told me, it's pretty plain he's getting a bad break all around."

"Bad breaks!" Burkett's tone was hard, packed with jeering contempt. "That's the battle cry of all failures. Luck lays them by the heels. Bad luck!

Always bad luck! The trouble with rats like Wire Prentice is lack of brains."

"Or having too much heart," added Bunk. Then, at the hint of a beginning snarl from Burkett, he hurried on. "That's what got Wire Prentice into this jam at any rate. He was broke when he borrowed the five centuries from you and he went out and won and——"

"Won?" roared Burkett, his voice strangely shrill with disbelief. "I thought he lost it."

"He won five hundred more," explained Bunk. "And that very same night he went down and put up the jack as cash bail for a friend of his that was being held as a material witness by the bulls."

A sudden illumining light showed in Burkett's eyes. He beamed suddenly. "Why didn't he tell me that? You mean that, as soon as this fellow is released as a material witness, the police magistrate will hand back the money to Prentice?"

Slowly, almost sadly, Bunk Coulter shook his head in denial. "No. When Wire Prentice put up the jack, he kissed it good-by. This fellow was a particular friend of his. And the fellow jumped that bail for keeps."

"Put up a grand for bail. And only a material witness. And the guy jumps out. What are you trying to do, Bunk? String me?"

"Not a bit, chief. You see, the stupid bulls had this fellow as a material witness, and they were looking for another lad on a murder charge. And all the while this fellow that they had as a witness is really the guilty party. So he wants to get out before the bulls get wise to the truth, and he sends for Wire Prentice, who just has about a clean grand, and they fix it up."

"The sap," muttered Cupid Burkett. "The everlasting sap. No more brains than a gnat. Just about the boob trick you could expect from an ex-dip."

"They were friends. I told you, chief, that it was a case of Prentice having too much heart. He explained it to me, and I swear I could understand just what made him do it."

"You would," said Burkett with a contemptuous grunt. "You're just the kind that would do a fool thing like that yourself. You laugh at me for being out for the dough, but, believe me, I'm using my brains and leaving my heart out of my schemes."

"I just couldn't help thinking. Suppose some one should come to me some day and say that the bulls had you, Cupid Burkett, in a jam like that. And there was no one else that would help. Why, say, I'd cough up a grand before you could bat an eye."

Cupid Burkett laughed outright. "Don't make me laugh, Bunk. If I should ever get in a jam like that—which I won't—I won't have to call on any one for the old do—re—me. I'll just cash a check with the chief of police and walk out. Like I always tell you, Bunk: money talks. Give me the old bank roll, and I'll get out of my own troubles. I'll let you and Wire and all the other boobs count on friendship. I'll count on the old jack."

"Just the same——"

"Just the same," echoed Burkett, "Wire Prentice has me stuck for five hundred bucks, and he has to kick in and in a hurry or I'll advertise him all over the town as a welsher."

It was useless for Bunk to say more. Indeed, it might be worse than useless, for, if he said too much, he might stir Burkett's latent anger to an open break and bring disaster on his own head. With a weary, suppressed little sigh, Bunk Coulter reached over and picked up a memo which he had made prior to the boss' arrival.

"Mitchell phoned first thing this morning and said it was O. K. for ten o'clock to-night. Said he'd be at the Black Dog then with the package."

Cupid Burkett nodded. "You can tend to that, Bunk."

"Not a chance," answered Bunk Coulter. "He hadn't hung up more than a quarter of an hour when Jed Spicer came here and tipped me off that Mitchell is going to hand you or me or whoever goes to the Black Dog tonight a nice little surprise package."

"Surprise package? What do you mean?"

"Jed Spicer says that Mitchell is pretending to kick in and that this new vice commission is backing him. They've put up the jack and they also took pains to mark every scrap of the money. They want Mitchell to pass you the dough, and then, when it's in your hands, they grab you and jump you for extortion and blackmail. Jed says they will stick you in stir for plenty if you fall for this."

"A frame-up?" Cupid Burkett's eyes were bleak and chill as he gazed intently and thoughtfully toward Bunk. "So Mitchell thinks he can slip a raw one like that over on me, does he?"

"What are you going to do, chief? Call him for it?"

"I'm going to do something," muttered Burkett. "I was the same as counting that three grand in the old war chest."

"Jed Spicer says that Mitchell and this new citizens' vice outfit are working hand and glove. That, if they don't get you now, they get you later. Mitchell plays in with them, and the bulls lay off Mitchell. According to Jed, they worked it clever. You see, they've been hounding and shadowing Mitchell until he was pretty near crazy. And yesterday, when Mitchell agreed to play you for a sucker, they quit tagging and trailing him. Of course, the bulls would know better than to be trailing him too close to-night anyway. They wouldn't want to be tipping you off that there was anything phony about your deal with Mitchell."

"They wouldn't be trailing him to-night—is right." Burkett's dark eyes lighted momentarily with a peculiar, vicious glint. "You know, Bunk, I've got to show the old iron hand again. Here's Wire Prentice trying to trim me out of five hundred, and next you tell me that Mitchell is trying to frame me for a set of pussy-footing reformers. Yes, Bunk, I've got to show the old iron hand." He paused for an instant of moody, scowling silence. Then, abruptly, he fired a question at his henchman. "Any other bad news?"

"No," answered Bunk. "Fact is, there was some good news. 'Red' Grady was here first thing this morning to make good on that bad check. Said that it wasn't his fault that——"

"As long as he gave you the cash," interrupted Cupid Burkett, "you can leave out the fancy excuses."

"I put the cash in the safe."

Burkett nodded. "Fair enough. And is there anything else new?"

"No. That's all. Any more orders, chief."

"You got that one about Prentice?" As Bunk nodded, he swiftly continued. "Then there's just this matter of Mitchell and the frame-up. And there's just one way for me to handle that."

"That way being?"

"Do it myself," snapped Cupid Burkett. "We're going to stage the old two-in-one act to-night, Bunk."

Bunk Coulter frowned. The stunt which Cupid Burkett referred to was not altogether to his liking. Some day Cupid Burkett, in his greed for easy money and underworld power, was going to overreach himself. If, on such an occasion, Bunk Coulter was doing his bit in what Cupid called "the two-in-one-act," the situation might be not too good for Bunk himself.

"Yes," drawled Burkett. "To-night you'll be here, dressed in the mixed tweed suit, wearing the big, black wig, and sitting at the desk with your back

toward the door. And the shade for the glass panel there in the door will be rolled up out of the way—just so that anywhere from six to a dozen people or even more will be able to swear that Cupid Burkett was right here in his office all evening. And, meanwhile, I'll be out on the q. t. tending to this Mitchell business."

"Say," protested Bunk, "you aren't going to even handle marked money, are you? You're not going to take the money and try to stow it until a few years blow by?"

Burkett shook his head in vigorous denial. "Not a chance. All I'm going to do to-night is to show the iron hand to all the wise guys and double-crossers."

Bunk Coulter nodded, but not the least, lingering trace of a smile was on his countenance as he did so. He understood now just about what action his chief was going to take to-night. He might have guessed, anyway, from the moment that Cupid Burkett had begun talking about that particular form of alibi making. Over a period of several years, that particular stunt had been pulled on four other occasions, and, in each instance, the same night had marked the passing of some underworld top-notcher.

"You mean that you're going to bump him?"

"I mean nothing," answered Burkett in a hard set voice. "And if you know what's best for your own health, you'll not even try to guess."

"But listen, chief, I've got a right to know. After all, if something should slip I'd be in a pretty mess. If you got nailed, they'd have me as a full-fledged accomplice and just as guilty as you in the eyes of the law."

"In the first place," answered Burkett, "nothing is going to slip. In the second place, you have a nerve trying to snoop into my business. And in the third and most important place, you know as well as I do that you're blame well paid and always have been for whatever you do."

"A lot of good money would do me if I drew a seat in the chair."

"Shut up," snarled Burkett. "Sitting there croaking about stuff that'll never happen! You know, Coulter——" He paused, and the significance of that chill, hard "Coulter" did not escape Bunk. "You know, Coulter, it begins to look to me as if maybe you had been working with me just a little too long. You're getting to talk a little bit too fresh and flip to me."

"You've got me wrong," protested Bunk. He had felt a horribly chill sensation at Cupid Burkett's words. With all the intimate knowledge which he had of Cupid Burkett's affairs, both past and present, there could be but one satisfactory ending of his employment as far as Burkett was concerned. Once let Burkett get the notion that he, Bunk Coulter, had outlived his usefulness and Burkett would see to it that his henchman died forthwith.

"Well, then, watch your step," warned Burkett. "And start in where you used to be: just taking orders and keeping a shut head. When I want your advice, I'll ask for it. And until I do, you can just keep your advice and comment for some one else. Get me?"

Bunk nodded meekly. It would take a fool not to understand Burkett at that moment. Had this been their very first meeting, Bunk would have known right then and there that Burkett was a potential killer. Bunk knew enough of the underworld so that he did not need to face a gun before he understood that some one else might go gunning for him. He was no big shot, and yet, because of certain facts, it was a cinch that, in his case as well as Mitchell's, the boss would delegate his shooting to no other hand.

"Well, then, I'm going. I'll meet you here to-night and early."

When he had gone, Bunk Coulter fell into a scowling study. It was suddenly his conviction that he had better watch every step he took. Without undue fuss and furore, he could quietly set himself to getting all his available resources into cash. That would require perhaps a week or ten days if he was to do it without causing talk. When he was set, he would simply walk down to the railroad station and fade forever from his native city. Bunk argued the subject back and forth within his own mind only to reach again the same conclusion. He had better clear out soon and stay out of town.

Meanwhile, all he had to do was to watch his step with Cupid Burkett. Yet he found himself wishing again and again that he could skip out at once. Something seemed to be warning him that a climax impended in the affairs of Cupid Burkett. When an outfit like that vice committee set out to get a big shot like Burkett, there was no telling what might happen. When a leader like Mitchell fell to double-crossing and frame-up and Burkett tried his extortion tricks on a fellow crook, there certainly was plenty of dynamite in the situation.

Contrary to his expectations, Wire Prentice did not appear at Burkett's amusement place in person that day. Instead, Prentice phoned in a thin, anxious voice to ask whether Burkett would allow him any more leeway.

"I'm sorry, Wire," answered Bunk. "I went to the bat for you. I told him all about how it was, and he said that twelve o'clock to-night was the dead line. He wants his five hundred by then or else you might as well pack up and leave town."

"That's handing it to me pretty tough," came Prentice's voice over the phone. "Unless I turn to some of my old tricks, there isn't a chance for me to make it."

"You better turn some of your old tricks then," answered Bunk. "He means it this time. Kick in before midnight or be kicked out of town to-morrow."

"It's a tough break," came Wire Prentice's voice in a crushed whisper. "Just the same, I'm grateful to you, Bunk. I know you did all you could for me."

Before he could answer, there came to Bunk Coulter's ears the clicking of the receiver as Wire Prentice hung up. It was a tough break at that. Poor Wire had quit swinging blackjacks and picking pockets long ago. Now he might have to ply again his rusty arts. Ten to one, he would mess it up. Wire would be in stir and Cupid Burkett would still be shy of that five hundred dollars. The whole matter seemed cruelly lacking in common sense.

Why, just this once, couldn't Burkett have a heart? All he needed to do was to wait a bit, and Wire Prentice would pay. Why couldn't Burkett let Wire ride a day or so more? The little ex-pickpocket would get a break with the cards, or the dice or the ponies, and everything would be jake. Why?

Why? Because Cupid Burkett was as hard and inflexible as steel. Because Burkett was out avowedly to get all the jack he could. Because nothing in Burkett's eyes counted as heavily as money. Money was to Burkett the means to more money, the one sure way to more and more power. The man was never satisfied.

Burkett owned this big gaming house and a great deal of property which brought high rents, and he had a controlling finger in some of the most lucrative of the underworld jobs. Yet he went on and on, seeking more wealth at every step, getting every last penny, and, when crossed, stopped at nothing in the way of collection or revenge.

The fact was that Burkett was essentially the same greedy, overly ambitious fellow that he had been from the first, except that his faults were now

magnified and such small virtues as he once had known had totally disappeared.

He was still ruthless, without one redeeming touch of mercy. He could easily wait for Prentice's five hundred dollars, and most certainly he could pass up his affair with Mitchell. Instead, it appeared certain that Cupid Burkett would make good his threat of showing the iron hand once more. He would make Prentice toe the mark to-night, and he would meanwhile calmly go about the business of killing Mitchell.

Uneasiness clung to all of Bunk Coulter's thoughts that day. Restlessness was still heavy upon him as he sat at the desk that night.

At the desk sat Bunk Coulter, dressed as his boss was dressed, and his shoulders above the back of the swivel chair were hunched high just as he had seen Burkett's shoulders hunched a thousand times. He was wearing a wig, and, with his back to the door, there was no chance for any one to believe otherwise than that the man seated there was Cupid Burkett. It was, after all, a marvelous alibi, simple and yet unbeatable. Through the glass panel of the door, any number of people would believe they had seen Burkett seated at that desk.

There was more to the arrangement than that, however. There was the secret entrance which led from the cellar below through a trapdoor in the floor of the closet. The closet opened on the office from the wall which Bunk was now facing. All that Cupid Burkett needed to do was to cross through alleys and yard space through the middle of the block and to slip through a cellar window. Then he could lock that window again and gain the closet from beneath.

By the time the clock on the desk showed quarter past ten, Bunk Coulter was in a dank sweat of nervous excitement. This business of waiting was not so good. By ten thirty he was shifting uneasily in his chair. Then, just when he was considering the worst possibilities, he heard the scraping sound from the closet. A moment later, three subdued, well-nigh inaudible tappings came from beyond the door.

Hastily he rose, walked over and went inside the closet. "Good," whispered Burkett. Then, without pause, Burkett opened the door just wide enough for an exit and stepped out into the office beyond.

Had any one been peering in at the office, he would have sworn that the same man came out of that closet as had entered it. However, no one was looking then or a few minutes later when Burkett called "O. K." in response to Bunk Coulter's signal.

The alibi was complete.

"The clothes?" asked Burkett.

"Dropped through the trap as usual," answered Bunk Coulter.

"And your alibi is the old one: the movies," said Burkett. "Fact is, you just came in from the movies. You saw a show last night and it's the same as to-night's. Right?"

Bunk nodded. He would have liked to ask a question; however, he checked his curiosity in favor of discretion. He was too near the end of things with Cupid Burkett, anyway. Then, before they could say any more, the phone rang.

"Who?" asked Burkett. "Oh, Prentice. Sure, tell him I can see him any time now." Burkett had left word out front that he would see no one till ten thirty. He turned now, grinning, and faced Bunk Coulter. "You see? When he had to do it, he came through. I'll bet he comes in here and planks down the five hundred he owes me. The iron hand, Bunk—just the old iron hand. That's what you have to show once in a while in this game."

He was still laughing as Bunk stepped over and unlatched the door for Wire Prentice.

Prentice stepped briskly up to where

Burkett sat at the desk, and, in the same brisk manner, he slid a thin sheaf of bills from his pocket. Slowly, from one to five, he counted and at each number a hundred-dollar bill was placed on Burkett's desk.

"And now," said Wire Prentice stiffly, "hand over that I O U of mine."

Burkett pawed the slip of paper from the top pocket of his vest. Wire Prentice tore it to bits, then, in the act of throwing the bits into the basket, paused, as if suddenly recollecting something, and slid them into his own vest pocket instead. Bunk smiled faintly. He had never seen a more studied insult in his life.

Burkett flushed as he paused in the act of pocketing the five century notes, and his mouth twisted as though he barely held back his wrath.

Prentice turned on his heel, winked slyly at Bunk Coulter as he passed, and left the office without another word.

Burkett snorted. "Cheap, dirty little rat. Trying to high-hat me. He had better watch his step."

Bunk said nothing. Again the desk phone was ringing.

This time Burkett did not speak. Bunk saw the hairy hand which gripped the receiver tighten until the big veins stood out just like cords. Slowly, Burkett dropped the receiver back on the hook.

"Murtrie," he whispered as much to himself as to Bunk. "Detective Captain Murtrie! On his way to this office right now."

Bunk braced himself. He remembered suddenly that uncanny sense of restlessness which had hung over him all day. When Murtrie's knocking sounded at the door, he responded with alacrity.

Murtrie stood a moment in the doorway. His close-cropped gray mustache shifted beneath the movement of his lips as he snapped an order at the man at his heels.

"Sullivan, you stay right at the door, looking through the panel."

Burkett, half risen, growled out a challenge: "What kind of rough stuff is this, Murtrie?"

Murtrie's slate-gray eyes fairly bored into Burkett. "Some time in the last hour, some one drilled 'Moose' Mitchell over in Kenyon Street. Moose Mitchell was on his way to keep a date with you at that dump called the Black Dog buffet."

"I didn't keep any date to-night," answered Burkett calmly. "If you'll ask around, there will be plenty of people who saw me here in this office."

"Of course," answered Murtrie. "I knew you were as innocent as a babe, Burkett. You always are."

"Anything I can do to help you, I'll do gladly."

"That makes it easier," answered Murtrie. "The only thing I want right now is to see the contents of your pockets."

Burkett scowled. "Ordinarily I'd throw you out about there and tell you to make a pinch or stay out. But"—Burkett eyed Murtrie, glance for glance—"just to settle things quickly, I'll let you frisk me."

Murtrie did not hesitate. He went at the task with speed, but it was clear that he feared failure. His thought was written clear on his face.

Then, at the very last, he stared at the five century notes, and again his mustache shifted as he smiled in triumph. "I'll make that pinch right now, Burkett."

Cupid Burkett stared at him with blank amazement on his face. "For what?"

"For murder," snapped Murtrie. Then he called out to his aid in the hall. "Come on in, Sullivan, and put the bracelets on Burkett."

"You don't dare," cried Burkett. "You haven't got a thing on me."

"I've got five of the thirty marked

hundred-dollar bills that Moose Mitchell was carrying to-night," said Murtrie.

"And while you're talking to me," responded Burkett, "the lad that handed them over to me is making a get-away."

"Who?"

"Wire Prentice," snapped Burkett. "He gave me those bills."

"All right. We'll pick up Wire and question him. But, while I'm here and have the color of a case against you, I'm going to solve that old alibi of yours, Burkett."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning that I'm going to search this place from end to end and see if there's any answer to the puzzle of why every time we think we have you—well—you have this same alibi."

"Go ahead and search, and I'll have you the laughingstock of the force."

"I will search," said Murtrie grimly. "You, Bunk, stand fast. Keep the handcuffs on Burkett, Sullivan, and an eye on Bunk Coulter."

Bunk watched Burkett as the search began. After the thorough way that the detective captain went through the office, there was not the least doubt that he would discover the secret exit in the closet. Burkett sat there with a gray look of horror painted upon his face.

When Murtrie returned to the room with the clothes, the wig, and Burkett's gun, the handcuffed man was well-nigh in a state of collapse.

"The clothes and the wig explain a lot," sighed Murtrie. "So does that trapdoor exit out of the closet. It would be a cinch for Bunk here to wear these clothes and the wig and sit at the desk and look from the rear just like you."

"You're crazy," whined Burkett.

"And this gun—also stowed in that cellar. If the bullets in Moose Mitchell came from this gun, we can prove it. And if we do, we will send you to the chair, Burkett."

"That's no gun of mine," shrieked Burkett. "Why not ask Bunk Coulter where he was to-night? I never saw that wig or the clothes before. Bunk's been posing as me somewhere."

Bunk Coulter stiffened, and then he laughed. At last, what final shred of compunction he might have felt about squealing was wiped out. That dirty rat, Burkett, was trying to shift this crime over to his shoulders.

"I was right here in this office," snapped Bunk. "I was faking an alibi for Burkett. He was gone from half past eight until half past ten. Look in that suit, Murtrie, bought from his own tailor, and you can prove he bought it himself."

"Don't worry, Bunk," said Murtrie. "We will prove plenty. And as long as he tried at the last ditch to shift this on you, I guess you will be a willing witness. I think, Burkett, you have done your last trick this time."

"I tell you Prentice gave me the money. He killed Mitchell."

"Time will tell," remarked Murtrie.

Time did tell—against Cupid Burkett. Wire Prentice explained the business of the marked bills at the trial.

"You see, I was hard up. I had to get five hundred dollars or get run out of town. And the crazy wild notion came to me that I would try and pick Burkett's pockets. I thought of the roll he always carried and figured that I would lift it and pay him off with his own coin. And that night I spotted him sneaking down a side street and then I lost him again. But a little while after, I stumbled over Mitchell's body on Kenyon Street. I was pretty desperate for jack, your honor, and I rolled the stiff. Three grand. And I rustled around and paid off Burkett the five hundred. And next thing I knew the bulls pinched me as a material witness."

Out of the court went Wire Prentice and Bunk Coulter, two men on probation to the judge.

"Funny," sighed Prentice, "how fate twisted around to get Burkett! You

might as well say that the five hundred he got from me was his ticket to the chair."

"He lived for money," observed Bunk. "And he'll die for it. Always said that he'd let money do his talking for him. Money talks. And at last money talked in a way he didn't like. If Murtrie hadn't found those marked bills, there never would have been even a pinch. Money talked that time all right. And when it did, he turned and tried to hang it all on me—or you."

"Me—I'm going to work for my living if it's only digging ditches, Bunk. I'm going to make good on probation."

"Me, too," agreed Bunk. "I've had enough of crime."

In Next Week's Issue—"LUCKY SEVEN," by LESLIE GORDON BARNARD.

HOW DEAFNESS BECAME AN ASSET

A JUNK dealer, who made his living on the water front of New York, quarreled with his sweetheart and killed her. He was indicted for first-degree murder and sentenced to go to jail from ten to twenty years instead of going to the electric chair.

Upon the recommendation of the assistant district attorney, the prisoner was allowed to plead guilty to first-degree manslaughter. It was pointed out that, due to the prisoner's deafness, a blackboard would have to be placed in the courtroom and every question and answer written thereon as under the law the defendant is entitled to hear every question and answer of the witnesses.

When the prisoner who had admitted his guilt appeared before the judge, the jurist wrote on a piece of paper: "Do you plead guilty to first-degree manslaughter?" The junk dealer nodded affirmatively, and the arraignment was ended. It is believed that this is the first time such a procedure has taken place in the courts here.

A PLANTER KEEPS HIS HELP

A LOUISIANA cotton grower had his own ideas about keeping his help to whom he had lent money and given clothes in times of need. Probably in no other industry would a proprietor feel he could force his employees to stay with him and work out money advanced to them. Lending money is considered a voluntary act, and collecting it is part of the risk involved.

The Southern planter pleaded guilty to a charge of holding his Negro farm hands in peonage as slaves. One of his men was found wandering about in the swamp lands near the plantation. He said that he had been chained to a tree and beaten by his employer and showed marks on his back from the brutal treatment. The planter denied ever having beaten the Negro but admitted that he had chained him to a tree while he went in search of another wanderer who owed him money and who he believed should be made to stay and work out his debt.

The cotton grower was sentenced to eighteen months in the Atlanta penitentiary.

Scars, Birthmarks, And Tattoos

By Charles E. Chapel

ALTHOUGH most police departments have discarded the Bertillon system of identification in favor of more modern methods, many of its best features have been retained. Of the three principal divisions of the Bertillon system, anthropometric signalment, descriptive signalment, and signalment by peculiar markings, the latter is the least known.

Signalment, or description, by peculiar markings is the observation of unusual conditions on the surface of the body caused by scars, tattoos, birthmarks, warts, or moles. Some of the questions which arise in the examination of these peculiarities relate to their permanence, age, and origin. Fortunately, there are many interesting cases which illustrate the basic principles of signalment by peculiar markings.

In 1834 a man by the name of Stile was tried in London for unlawfully returning to England in disobedience to a court order which had, in 1817, banished him for life. The man banished in 1817 was named Star; there were many persons ready to testify that Star and Stile were the same man, among these being the jailer who had had Star in confinement. During the course of his testimony at the trial, the jailer stated that the accused had a small tumor on his hand at the time of his confinement. Things looked black for the defendant because of the unhesitating, detailed description presented by the jailer, but this very thing eventually proved his salvation.

It is not a matter of record as to whether or not the lawyer had taken the case on a contingent-fee basis, but

we can well believe that he was anxious to gain an acquittal, for he pounced upon the tumor question, and called a surgeon to the witness stand to testify as an expert. This surgeon testified that it was not possible to remove a tumor without leaving a visible cicatrix, or scar. The accused was then called as a witness in his own behalf and caused to exhibit both hands, neither of which bore a tumor or any sign of a surgical operation. The lawyer won his case, and the world was given an excellent illustration of the fact that an indelible scar is left whenever an injury involves loss of the tissue of the true skin.

The unreliability of scars as a means of identification is one of the many objections offered to the Bertillon system, since scars, similar in both shape and location, have often been found on totally unrelated persons. One of the most celebrated cases of this kind was that of an impostor who impersonated an English baronet, heir to vast estates. It is a matter of record that the impostor succeeded so well that "he was sworn to be the baronet by eighty-five witnesses, among whom were the titled Englishman's mother, the family solicitor, one baronet, six magistrates, one general, three colonels, one major, two captains, thirty-two noncommissioned officers and privates of the army, four clergymen, seven tenants of the estates, and seventeen servants of the family."

The astounding thing about it all was that the impostor exhibited as proof of his identity peculiar markings possessed by the real baronet, such as "a fishhook wound on the eye, a mark of bleeding on the ankle, and a peculiar scar on the head." In the court proceedings necessary to invest the claimant with the estates, the impostor was cross-examined severely and shown to be a perjurer.

The age of scars is a case in point. A new scar is soft and pink; after a few weeks, it loses its softness and changes in color to a brownish white; with the passage of time, it becomes white and elongated in shape, but it experiences slight change in other respects. Unethical or ignorant medical experts may hazard a guess as to its approximate age, but cautious surgeons limit themselves to describing it as "recent" or "not recent."

The subject of wounds merits individual consideration, but scars and wounds are so closely related that we are forced to consider the question of whether or not the nature of a wound can be ascertained by examining the scar. In general, scars offer only a rough approximation as to what formed the original wound, for more depends on the structure of the wounded part of the body than on the nature of the wound itself. Straight, incised wounds, made by a cutting weapon, leave a straight scar, wider at the center than at the ends if the skin was taut in the place wounded.

Scars made by a cutting weapon operating in an oblique direction leave a scar of half-moon shape. A stab sometimes leaves a scar of triangular shape, while bullet-wound scars have irregular edges, are depressed below the surrounding surface of flesh, and present a wider wound at the exit of the bullet than at the entrance.

Wounds of the neck may appear to be greater in number than they actually are, if caused by cutting where wrinkles form folds in the skin. Scars are irremovable if caused by loss of bodily tissue, but they may become less noticeable with the passage of time and an increase in flesh. To reveal a scar, it is only necessary to chill the suspected area with an application of cold packs, or rub the skin briskly with a rough rag, which makes the surrounding skin red but leaves the scar colorless.

Can tattoo marks be removed? This question is an important one, since the identification of a living person or of a

dead body might rest on that one point alone. A nineteenth-century authority on the subject believed that the red tattoo marks were gradually obliterated by time, while the purple and black ones were more permanent. Modern authorities do not regard the color of the tattoo marks so much as they do the agent used for coloring. China ink, India ink, gunpowder, indigo, and soot, if well pricked into the skin, are regarded as indelible, while blue ink, black ink, cinnabar, and vermilion are considered to be temporary in effect. Criminals have often thought that they had succeeded in destroying the pigment, only to be exposed by police surgeons who have found the coloring substance in near-by lymphatic glands.

One method is as follows: The portion of the skin covered by tattooing is washed carefully with soap and water; then a number of very fine needles are suspended by silk threads in glycerole of papoid and then pounded into the tattooed skin until all the tattooing has received this counter-tattooing treatment. In order to attain success by this method, the needles must be driven into the skin with considerable force. The reason for this method is that the digestive principle of the papoid is brought in contact with the deposit of coloring matter, which is then freed from surrounding tissues. Part of the coloring matter finds its way to the surface of the skin; the rest is absorbed by the lymphatic system of the body.

Another method is to dip needles in a concentrated solution of tannic acid, and counter-tattoo the design on the skin, following this with a light coat of silver nitrate applied to the tattooed skin. The object of this method is to avoid leaving a scar. A scab results from this treatment, but it is usually of little importance.

A French criminologist cites an instance of a French prisoner who removed tattoo marks from his skin in a period of six days in order to avoid anticipated identification. He mixed lard with acetic acid to form a paste which he smeared over the tattooed area, following this with potash and hydrochloric acid, which he rubbed vigorously into the skin. At the end of this process there was an indistinct white scar, but no indication of tattooing.

These various methods of removing tattooing are old-fashioned and dangerous if employed by an unskilled person, yet criminals rely on them to-day rather than consult a doctor who is equipped with instruments and drugs which are less painful and more effective.

Birthmarks and other blemishes are as useful as scars and tattoo marks in establishing identity under the Bertillon system. They differ from scars and tattoo marks in that they cannot be produced artificially. If removed by surgery, they leave a scar.

A colorful story from the early history of Louisiana illustrates the importance of this kind of identification. A young girl was brought to Louisiana from Germany by her parents, both of whom died while she was still a baby. Some one, through avarice or malice, sold the infant into slavery; but, when she blossomed forth as a beautiful young woman twenty years later, she was recognized by some of the Germans who had accompanied her parents to the United States.

She brought suit in the courts for her freedom through the help of her immigrant friends, but her master had a covetous eye for her womanly charms and fought vigorously to keep her as his slave. Just as her German friends were about to abandon their efforts in her behalf, some one thought of two moles which they had seen on the girl's thighs while she was in infancy. These proved to be the only means of identification acceptable to the court, and eventually she received her freedom.

Call To Victory

HE FORGOT EVERYTHING IN AN EMERGENCY.

By Henry Patterson

Author of "Pretender," etc.

"WELL, if it ain't Doc Lawrence." Cautious restraint and soft insinuation tainted those seemingly innocent words of greeting with an unmistakably sinister threat. Indeed, the big man's mode of address told only too well that he had long since anticipated this moment. There was an utter lack of spontaneity and an all-pervasive air of cool, premeditated malice about him as he confronted the man at the desk. The casual, low-voiced greeting was in reality a masked and deliberate challenge.

The checking pencil in the hands of the man at the desk did not hestitate as it coursed down that final column of figures until it reached the bottom. Then and only after he had steadily underscored the total did Larry Gordon look up. At any rate, if he had expected that greeting to reduce Larry Gordon to a cringing, helpless wretch, "Bull" Decker was fated to disappointment. From the instant he had seen Decker entering the bank a few minutes before, Larry Gordon had been thinking as fast as he could. His best immediate action was to present a calm, unflurried front. The checking of those figures was acting, pure and simple, and yet it had been done smoothly enough to fool a far-brighter witness than the big, bulky, heavy-jawed fellow who stood there looking down at Larry Gordon.

True there was naught of defiance in Gordon's manner, but just as truly there was not the least hint of panic in the wide-eyed and sober look which he now fixed upon Decker.

"I shouldn't think," muttered Bull Decker, "that you'd be so keen about me calling you by your old moniker."

Larry Gordon did not answer until he had risen, walked over to the door, closed it, and returned to his place back of the desk.

"My old moniker," he said, "wasn't so far away from my real name, Decker. When you knew me, I was Gordon Lawrence. My right name is Lawrence Gordon. As for that nickname of 'Doc' I get that right here in my home town often. No, the moniker doesn't bother me much."

Bull Decker's coarse features contrived a most unpleasant grin. There was a leering look of triumph in the pale-blue eyes as he moodily regarded Larry Gordon. "Just the same, I notice you shut the door."

"Perhaps you want me to open it again?"

"As you want," sneered Decker. "Go open it. Go ahead and tell them that Bull Decker, jack-of-all-crimes, is here in your office. And then I'll tell them just what sort of a fellow you were when you were away from this little town of Northport."

Larry Gordon smiled ruefully. "If you figure that you can blackmail me, I guess I'd better go open that door now."

The grin returned to Decker's face. "Don't worry, Doc. I'm not after small change. I ain't asking you to kick in direct. I'm just here to see just what you and me can figure out about looting this bank. Me snooping out just where you had disappeared to sure was a wise hunch. What a cinch! Here you are secretary to the president of this bank. I might have known that a good-looking prodigal like yourself would light on his feet."

"I'm just a dummy here," protested Larry Gordon. "The president has to spend most of his time in his factories, and my job is to sit here in his office and kid the callers along."

"Don't kid me," warned Decker, "because I'm no small-town sap."

"I'm not trying to kid you," answered Larry Gordon.

"Don't," snapped Decker. "And don't think that I'm not wise that the president of this bank is your uncle. No use telling me a lot of bunk about not knowing what's what in here. You're the fair-haired kid in the Northport Trust. If there's anything you don't know about this joint, all you got to do is to ask dear old Uncle Wilbur Barlow."

Larry Gordon shrugged his shoulders helplessly. "Suppose," he said, "that I should refuse to buy you off one way or another?"

Again that wolfish grin flitted across Bull Decker's face. "Listen, Doc, don't think I walked in here without first having found out all I needed to know. I know your history frontwards and backwards. I know the dope on you years back before you beat it away and hit the road and the skids. And I know the dope on you since you quit the road and ambled back home to pull this come-back bluff."

A sick feeling of despair passed over Larry Gordon as he realized that Bull Decker was deadly sure of himself. Decker's coarse and ruddy face had all the inflexibility of chiseled stone as he eyed Gordon with a look that clearly challenged the younger man to call his bluff.

Larry Gordon moistened his dry lips and nervously cleared his throat before he could speak. "You're wrong about my uncle," said Larry. "He doesn't really trust me. The reason I'm his secretary here is that he wants to keep a close watch on me. I'm on probation in his eyes."

"All the more reason for you to do just what I say," snapped Bull Decker. "And then, too, there's a certain girl——"

"Leave her out of this," half snarled Larry Gordon.

"She figures in it whether you like it

or not," came Decker's cold answer. "Some of the things that I know about you would not sound so pretty to Miss Mary Holbrook."

"Leave her out," said Larry Gordon.

"No one could hardly blame her," continued Decker with a remorseless disregard for Larry's protest. "You have plenty of looks. And you've got a romantic history. Let's see what I've found out by talking to the town gossips. You were halfway or more through medical school when they tossed you out for raising the devil generally and particularly for assaulting a professor. Then you came home and hung around just long enough to get a rep as just about the wildest young man in this town of Northport. And when dear uncle gave you the gate, you hit out to be a bum and a crook. Right?"

Larry Gordon glared at Decker in helpless rage. He did not speak, for to speak would have availed nothing. He was face to face with an evil hour of reckoning and at the mercy of a crook without one redeeming bit of humanity.

"What happened then, I know. And what's happened since you came back?" Decker paused to give his words an added bite and emphasis. "You show up here again. You have been places and done things. You are that most interesting thing in Mary Holbrook's eyes—a black sheep at the gray stage in the attempt to go white. Some women just love to ruin men, but most women are simply dotty with the idea of saving and reforming them. The average dame will pass up a dozen saints and grab at a bum to marry. Right?"

In spite of himself, Larry Gordon nodded. Crude and brutal Decker might be, and yet he had shrewdly analyzed the emotional roots from which romance had sprung for himself and Mary Holbrook. He nodded and then gulped down at the lump within his throat. He had been a fool even to raise his eyes to a girl like Mary. He had been a fool to think that he could escape all consequences of his past. He might have known that some day, somehow, a crook like Bull Decker would find him out.

There was a long and ugly silence between them before a harsh and anguished whisper forced itself past Larry Gordon's lips. "You've got the whip, Bull. What are you going to do with it."

"Like I said before," said Bull Decker. "I'm going to make you step around and do just what I say. Just name the time and place for me to pick you up in my car to-night, and we'll hash things over."

"Out—out——" Parching fear made the words stick in Larry's throat. "Out—on the west end of town. Just this side of where the town road joins the main turnpike. Meet me there at—at—nine o'clock to-night."

He had no choice. His predicament kept pounding within his brain as he set the time and place for the meeting with Bull Decker. He had no choice. He was at the other man's mercy. Against the revelations which Bull Decker could make, all his struggle to come back really would appear to every one in the town of Northport as the sheerest hypocrisy.

These people in his home town would feel disgust at the depths to which he had fallen. For most of them, it would be enough that a man of Decker's stamp had been his companion in crime. They would scorn him for the days which he had spent in jail. They would shun him as if the shadow of his past were some intangible but utterly fearful leprosy suddenly exposed to their awakened vision. He, Larry Gordon, would be a pariah in their sight.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Bull Decker left his office. A

scant half hour before, Larry Gordon had been serenely unconscious of his past, but, at sight of Decker, it had all come leaping up like some savage creation of nightmare.

From three until five, he sat there at his desk with his hands functioning automatically at his work and one small part of his mind keeping an almost unconscious check upon that work. His mind was boiling and seething with terror and doubt. With the realization that for the first time in his life he was really afraid, he finally slumped down, head pillowed in his arms upon his desk.

It was five o'clock, and he had to wait for his uncle to appear. When he heard Wilbur Barlow entering the bank, he would sit up and put on a false show of that serenity which he would never know again. Such was his resolve, but there was an overwhelming power to this situation which was beyond his reckoning.

He had intended to seem calm and alert when Wilbur Barlow arrived, and yet he was not aware of his uncle's presence until the older man's hand rested lightly upon his shoulder.

He sat up with a start. There were policemen in this world who would have liked to have laid their hands on him with a gesture like that and with a far different intent. He stared up at his uncle with an expression that must have been startling.

"What ails you, Larry?" asked Wilbur Barlow. "You must have been having most unpleasant daydreams. Right now, you look as if you had seen a ghost."

He forced a smile and assumed a measured, calm voice. "Not at all. I was just a bit drowsy. You startled me awake."

"Work's all done, I suppose?"

Larry nodded. "All done. I was just waiting to see if you had any special instructions for me."

"No, nothing." Wilbur Barlow paused and looked thoughtfully at his nephew. "And do you know, Larry, it just occurred to me that I haven't needed to give you many special instructions lately. You've been holding down your job in fine style."

"Thanks." Larry was pleased. That uncle of his was a man most chary of outright praise. When Wilbur Barlow actually voiced his approval of any one or anything, he was convinced beyond any doubt. And then all his new fear came surging over Larry. What difference did his uncle's approval make? What his uncle did or said or thought could not in the least affect Larry's past, nor could it halt the evil advance of Decker against his former partner in crime. So he said that one simple word of acknowledgement and became silent once more.

His uncle was studying him thoughtfully now. "Larry," he said, "a year ago you came back here to Northport and pleaded with me to give you another chance. Much against my better judgment, I yielded. And, frankly, I never thought that you would make good. I thought that, after a few weeks, or a couple of months at most you would yield to the wanderlust again. Yet you did stick. You have really made a come-back. And such being the case, I wondered how you would feel if I suggested that you try to finish your medical training. Fortunately, your wild days were not vicious ones. There is no reason why you should not make your come-back good all the way by finishing out your training. I can finance you."

Would he like that? Would a man emerging from the depths be glad at a gleaming light ahead to show him the way back to the heights from which he had fallen? Only a few hours ago he would have danced like a kid at the thought that he could make his comeback a perfect thing. Only a few hours

ago, he would have been happier than in years at Wilbur Barlow's words, but, instead, he now was silent, tight-lipped, and his eyes must have shown something of his dull agony.

His uncle frowned. He was puzzled. "Perhaps you would rather stay on here at the bank?"

"No," sighed Larry. "No. It isn't that."

Wilbur Barlow smiled at a sudden thought. "Or perhaps you feel that a young man in love has no business to resume studying for a profession?"

Larry Gordon shook his head. "No. It really isn't that. And, anyway," he added quickly, "I guess I'm not the marrying kind. At least, I guess I'm not going to marry any one for a long time yet. Don't you see?"

"Frankly," answered his uncle, "I don't see. I thought you'd jump at the chance. Just why wouldn't you like to become a doctor? Here's the town of Northport with just one doctor, and that one old and gray in service and nearing the time when he'll have to quit. This town is a bustling, thriving little place. If you could be ready to step into Doctor Brandt's shoes, you would be doing yourself and the town of Northport a good turn at the same time."

Desperately, Larry Gordon gave the first excuse that he could frame. He must lie and make his uncle stop talking so. He could not bear to sit there and hear all his own vague dreams take life in Wilbur Barlow's words and know that his dreams must remain but dreams after all.

So he seized upon an excuse, the first idea that came flashing through his tortured thoughts. "I'm awfully grateful. And I'm sorry if you're disappointed, but I'm not cut out for medicine. I've thought about it; in a pinch, an emergency, I wouldn't have enough nerve. If I got to thinking that some one's life was hanging in the balance, I'd lose my grip. You see, I'm not just the type for a doctor."

"I see," said Wilbur Barlow. He paused, and, when he repeated the words, there was a searing quality to his inflection which hurt Larry Gordon. "I see."

A bit later, as he went along the main street of Northport, Larry Gordon walked with slow and listless step. He was like a man condemned who knew not the manner or the hour of his execution. He was going now to the Holbrook house. Yesterday, he had thought of the Holbrook house as his home. To-day he thought of it as the place where he had boarded for the past year. Yesterday, he had thought of Mary Holbrook as the girl he wanted to marry. To-day, he knew that for a man with a past there was no such thing as marriage. He walked now with the slow and lagging tread of dread as he neared the Holbrook place.

Sitting on the front steps and obviously waiting for him was Mary Holbrook. At sight of her trim, fresh youthfulness, he had to force each step as he advanced toward the gate.

She had risen to meet him. Their hands lay close together as he opened the gate.

"Oh, Larry, I met your uncle downtown to-day, and he was telling me that he was so pleased with you. He said he had a surprise for you. Teased me a bit and said that maybe I could get the truth out of you to-night."

"He asked me if I wanted a chance to renew my training for medicine."

"Larry," squealed the girl. "Oh, Larry! Just the thing you've been hoping for all along."

Like a dash of cold water, he flung his next words at her. "I told him I'd rather not."

"Larry," cried the girl. "Oh, Larry! You're just teasing me."

He shook his head savagely. "No, I'm not teasing, Mary."

"But, Larry, I—I—thought——"

"Let's not talk about it now," he said. "To-morrow maybe. I've got a headache to-night."

Lies and evasions! The full, monstrous nature of his plight smote him as he went silently past her and into the house. He must lie; he must forgo the very things he most desired; he must hurt the very people he loved. The appearance of Bull Decker on the scene meant that every fine thought and dream within his mind must be crushed.

He ate that night in moody silence, aware that the puzzled eyes of the Holbrooks were upon him, that Mary sat in stunned and awkward silence at her place next to his. After supper, he disappeared.

"I'll lie down for a while," he volunteered. "And, after a bit, I'll go out for a real long walk."

That was just another evasive lie. What would those friendly folks have done if they could have guessed the truth about his destination and errand that night when he left at a quarter to nine? What would they have made of the long and aimless course over which Bull Decker drove through the night while they talked? And what would have been their reaction to the final scene when Larry Gordon quitted the car once more?

"Then it's all set," whispered Decker. "You're to sneak out of the house and meet me here to-morrow night at twelve. You and me and the loot. Eh, Doc?"

"Listen," snapped Larry, "I've got to go through with this. And I'm not fool enough to think that I could stay here and bluff it out afterwards. After we get through looting that bank, there'll be too many earmarks of an inside job. But after we are through, we split fifty-fifty and then you and I split company for good."

"Fair enough," observed Decker. "And as long as you're speaking your piece, I'll speak mine. I'm not going to stand for any stalling. Just try to cross me up on this deal, and I'll not bluff—I'll act."

"I'm not going to stall," snapped Larry Gordon, "I've thought things all out. With my past hanging over my head, there never will be a place for me here in Northport. Which means that I might as well grab the game as well as the fame. I'll be here and ready to loot the bank with you to-morrow night at twelve."

"You've got a little more sense in your nut than you had this afternoon," commented Decker. "And just to keep it there, listen to me and listen sharp. To-morrow at twelve is the dead line. I'll park here and be waiting a little before that. Fail me or cross me; and I'll tell the wide world that Larry Gordon, alias Doc Lawrence, is nothing but a low-down crook. You go through with this or——"

The silence which swallowed the alternative was the most wicked weapon in Decker's lot. There were so many ways and means which Decker could take to spread his evil news about Larry Gordon. There were so many miserable consequences which could follow Larry's failure to keep that planned appointment on the next night.

Larry laughed, but there was a lack of sureness to the sound. His laughter was forced and strained, and clearly marked at its true value as a weak pretense.

"Hard guy, eh?" Decker sneered the words. "A great laugh that is, Doc. But just you do what I say or you'll be laughing on the wrong side of your face. Get me?"

"I get you," sighed Larry Gordon. He was weary. He was beaten. His come-back had come to naught. He was doomed once more to the hard and lonely way of the transgressor.

He was committed to his future course now beyond the possibility of escape. Of that, he was sure for he

knew full well that Bull Decker was a man who did not bluff. There was no such thing as stalling along and sparring for time with Decker. The latter's present attitude was ample proof if he had lacked any other. In the afternoon, Decker had sprung the trap on his victim, and that same night he had fully outlined and planned the robbery of the Northport Trust.

For days and weeks, all unknown to Larry, Bull Decker had been in and out of Northport, and now swiftly he was going to reap the harvest of the knowledge which he possessed concerning Larry Gordon. And if Larry Gordon failed to go through with the robbery of the bank to-morrow night, Bull Decker would have his vengeance at once. There would be no delay, no hesitation; the threatened exposure of Larry's past would be made with merciless swiftness.

His other choice would have been to defy Decker and take the consequences, but the full meaning of such action had daunted Larry. If Decker told, he would have to leave Northport, anyway. That being so, why should he not boldly become a partner in the loot as well as the actual robbery. Sooner or later, Decker or some one like him would tell the truth, anyway. So why not boldly turn crook again and take the stand openly?

Sooner or later, the truth about Larry Gordon woud come out and he would be an object of mixed scorn and pity in Northport. There was no romance, no real success, no future for such as Larry. It was up to him to get a stake and try for a get-away.

The next day was pure sham and hypocrisy for Larry. He wondered why no one read the guilty look upon his face. He marveled at the blindness of the people he met. He was a crook. He was a dangerous character, and yet they greeted him and talked just as they had always talked. He did not wait his uncle's return to the bank that night. He did not even eat with the Holbrooks.

He pleaded a headache again. If only they could guess the real truth! How that truth would jolt them on the morrow! Better that way! Better to jolt them savagely! Better to hit and run than to wait and grow more and more in their faith and favor until the inevitable disclosure was made.

All day and through the evening, his mind was giddy with his whirling thoughts, but, when at last he stood ready for his reëntry into a life of crime, he was calm and cool. At half past eleven, he was almost ready to sneak out of the house.

It was a quiet house now. The Holbrooks were asleep. Hushed and silent and dark was the house.

Shoes in hand, he would stealthily sneak away. No one would hear him. Not until to-morrow would they know that he had gone. As he passed the door of the girl's room, he halted. That was his final hurt—that he must sneak away without even a friendly farewell. She was in there beyond that door—the girl of his dreams, the girl he had hoped to marry—and here was he, a thief in the night, skulking off in the darkness.

And then came the sound which froze him in his tracks. From downstairs came the ringing of the telephone. As that sharp, insistent sound repeated itself, he stepped back toward his own door once more. By the third ring, he was reaching for the knob.

None too soon, for, from the far end of the hall, he could hear the sound of John Holbrook's sleepy voice.

"Ma! Ma, was that the phone?"

And then the answering voice of Holbrook's wife. "Yes, John, I'm just putting on my robe and slipppers."

At the fourth ring, Larry Gordon was back inside his room. He listened as Mrs. Holbrook hurried down the stairs. What could any one be phoning at this hour for?

"Oh, Larry! Larry!"

She was calling him! Had Bull Decker dared——

"Oh, Larry! Hurry! Get your clothes on." He could hear her hurrying up again, could hear her breathing sharply as she knocked upon his door.

"Quick, Larry! That was Jim Jackson's wife. They can't locate Doctor Brandt. And there's something awful wrong with their little boy. They thought that maybe if you got there you might remember something that could be done. They said the little fellow was choking for breath. Oh, hurry!"

He was hurrying. He was yanking on his shoes and snapping the laces into place. He took time to knot them carefully with a double knot, for a fellow running would fare ill with dangling laces. To the startled Mrs. Holbrook, his being fully clothed must have seemed in the nature of a miracle. For one instant, she stood with mouth agape, but, as he leaped for the stairs, she called after him.

"The little fellow's turning blue sort of, Larry. Hurry!"

And now at top speed, he took the course which he had expected to cover so stealthily. Not two hundred yards away was the place where he had agreed to meet Bull Decker. Just a bit this side of where the town road crossed the main turnpike! And another hundred yards beyond that crossing was the house of Jim Jackson.

Strange switch in action this! Here he was running like a madman to see if there was anything that could be done for Jim Jackson's little boy. Jim Jackson—one of the town constables! And he had planned to meet Decker along this route. A thief, a crook, running his heart out to see if he could help the son of the town constable!

And then he saw the car parked and with dimmed lights a few yards ahead. On he ran, and, at ten paces, Decker yelled to him. "Wait a minute, Doc."

"Out of my way," gasped Larry.

Instead of sidestepping, Decker stepped squarely in his path. He swerved but Decker reached out with a great, muscular arm and seized him.

"What's the matter with you? Crazy?"

"Let me go!" gasped Larry.

He tried to wrench himself free and failed. Then, as he felt Decker's great hand tightening its grip, Larry Gordon saw red. There was a boy choking and gasping for breath ahead there, and he, Larry Gordon, might just be able to help. He was on an errand of mercy, and this brutish hulk dared to halt him.

His fist smashed, with every bit of strength he could summon, full into the face of Decker's. He was free again. He must have been several feet on his way before the bulk of Bull Decker's body struck the roadway.

No time now to think of consequences! Only time now to run as fast as he could to where he saw the lights of the Jackson house a bit farther along the road.

At the door of the little house, Jim Jackson's first words told him practically all that he needed to know. "Doc Brandt was a little afraid the kid might be getting diphtheria."

When he heard this, he was not surprised at the sight of the boy. The face was mottled and congested. There was now no struggle for breath.

"Quick, Jim," yelled Larry. "A knife! Anything sharp! I've seen this done. It's a chance in a million, but it's the only chance."

And so, still shaking with the effort of his running, he seized the opened pocketknife which Jim Jackson handed him. No time for sterilizing! No time now but to act and pray!

His hand was suddenly steady. He had watched this being done while in medical school. There was a safe place fairly low down in the windpipe. There was a place where a slit could be made

so that the breath of life might get to the lungs.

The knife moved steadily, surely.

There was a curious little whistling sound, and then Larry Gordon began to shake again.

He had been in time. The boy was getting the air which the sealing membrane had cut off for so long. Larry sat down on the bed and trembled shamelessly. He spoke solemnly to Jackson.

"Say, Jim, I want to tell you I was scared. I thought first I was too late. And then I was afraid I wouldn't know how to do it."

"I thought you were crazy," gasped Jackson, "when you took and slit his throat like that."

Larry laughed. "It does look crazy. I'll never forget seeing it done in the clinic one day. It's emergency stuff, Jim. Tracheotomy, they call it. The membrane shuts off the air. There's tubes that do the trick better and safer. Jab them right through the membrane. But, when there's nothing else handy, even a penknife will do."

Doctor Brandt finally arrived. Even as he worked upon the little patient, the gray veteran heard the account of what had happened. "Perfect," he said at last. "Larry, you did a perfect job, and, beyond any doubt, you saved young Jimmy's life. You better get back to medical school, young fellow." He paused and chuckled. "Right now, they could complain that you practiced without a license."

"It was an emergency," observed Larry. "And, in an emergency, everything goes. Why, say——"

His roving eye had caught sight of the clock upon the dresser. Half past twelve! He had lost all track of time in the excitement of the last hour. He had stood by the boy until the doctor had come, and then he had lingered on and on while they talked and the doctor worked. Half past twelve! And he had had to meet Decker at midnight.

Instead, he had smashed Decker to earth with his fist! A curious wave of sick feeling assailed him. There could be no doubt now as to what a man of Bull Decker's make-up would do.

"I have to go," gasped Larry. "I have to get out of here."

"You better not," called Doctor Brandt. "You'd better be careful where you go. You've been prettty well exposed to this diphtheria, and, as I remember it, you never did have it as a kid. Seems to me that I'll have to quarantine the house."

"And then I'll sure get it," protested Larry.

Half an hour later, they were still arguing when the 'phone rang. "It's for you, Larry."

Larry went and heard the chill pronouncement of Bull Decker. "I rousted your uncle out and gave him the low-down on you—you rat. And, before I leave town in the morning, I'll wise up a few more people."

Before he could protest, the wire clicked in farewell.

At his elbow stood Jim Jackson. "Say," whispered Jim, "I was so close and that party had such a hard voice that I couldn't help hearing."

Larry forced up a rueful grin. After all, what did it matter now? Bull Decker had "spilled the beans." There was absolutely nothing to be done about it now.

"And listen, kid," continued Jim Jackson. "That sounded kind of nasty. If there's anything wrong, no matter what, that I can fix up for you, Larry I——"

Here was his one chance. Larry seized it. He beckoned and Jim Jackson followed him into the kitchen.

When Larry had finished talking, Jim Jackson's lined and weathered face was a study of mixed emotions. For several seconds, he was silent, stunned by what he had heard.

"And," he said at last, "you want me

to sneak down to the hotel in my constable uniform and try to bluff him out of town—right away. You think you can pledge your uncle to secrecy and skip out and no one will be any the wiser?"

"It's worth a try," answered Larry.

"Say," asked Jackson, "will he be armed? If I search him, will he have a gun?"

Larry nodded. "It's a good bet he will."

"And you swear he's a crook with a record? You swear there's a couple of unsolved killings that he was back of?"

"I can swear to it."

"All right then! Quarantine or no, I'm going to see this Mr. Bull Decker."

After Jim Jackson had gone, old Doctor Brandt spoke to Larry. "You better skip out too, Larry. Once you're out, you won't get quarantined. Better get on home."

Larry grinned. "I'll go. Thanks."

But outside he stared at the blackness of the night and wondered. There had been something queer about Jim Jackson's look. Well, come what might, in the morning he would know the best or the worst.

In the morning, he went to work as usual. He was a hero in the Holbrook house. He wondered just what sort of reception awaited him at the bank. Wilbur Barlow smiled at him as he entered.

"Did you hear about Constable Jackson. Went to the hotel and arrested a man who had just been assigned to a room. Went to search him, and the fellow tried to shooot him. Only Jim Jackson shot first. A fellow named Bull Decker! Funny, but he stopped at my house late last night and told me a lot of news. And I sent him packing as a liar and a sneak."

"He told you the truth."

"And my advice to you, Larry, is to tell the truth to the girl you want to marry and see whether she will forgive your past."

Larry nodded. "I guess you're right. I'll do it."

There was a sudden feeling of certainty in Larry that came with that decision. Of course, she would forgive his past. Hadn't hard-headed Uncle Wilbur brushed it aside with a laugh?

It was at noon that he had a private little chat in his office with Constable Jim Jackson.

"That'll be me and your uncle and the girl friend that will know the truth," observed Jim. "And I'm here to say that, if any more crooks bother you, you just let me know."

"Jim," sighed Larry, "you sure were lucky to get in the first shot with Decker."

Jim Jackson smiled queerly. "Larry, remember what you said last night? In an emergency, anything goes! Well, I was giving out one story, but here's one for your ears alone. After I arrested Decker in that room, I told him that I was going to shoot him. And, when he reached for his gun, I reached just a little faster and shot a little better. It was just a sort of duel, really. I gave him a shooting chance. But I was pretty sure that my gun was handy and ready cocked first. You see, Larry, in the pinch you came through and saved my kid. So, in another pinch, I rid the world of a worthless citizen and help you out of a heap of trouble. And I guess that, as an emergency man, I ain't so bad myself."

"Emergency," sighed Larry.

"Anything goes," added Jackson, "provided you are able to get away with it."

What Handwriting Reveals

Conducted By Shirley Spencer

If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned to Shirley Spencer, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. Shirley Spencer will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

Also, coupon—at end of this department—must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read. If possible, write with black ink.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in the department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Spencer cannot be responsible for them.

MRS. C. P., Detroit: This is an open letter to all those women who wish to make money "on the side." I have had so many married women write to ask if there was something they could do to earn some extra money to help out with the family budget.

There are many, many ways of turning domestic experience into a paying business, and there are hundreds of women who have built up a large and prosperous business out of a corner of the kitchen or front room. I can only suggest some of the many things.

The woman who writes a rather small script, using light pen pressure and ordinary, small capitals is the practical type that would do well with such home products as preserving, rug making, candy and cake making, as well as specialties of pastry and bread.

Those who write with a heavier pen pressure and have more artistic capitals and original formations are talented in artistic matters and could turn to interior decorating, sewing, making novelties or toys. If the capitals are large, graceful, and flowing, the writer would probably be successful in running an attractive tea room or gift shop, because the forward slant and graceful capitals indicate social grace.

If the writing is light and fine, with artistic capitals, the writer is more likely to enjoy gardening, and could start a small greenhouse or open a florist shop.

The woman who writes a large, flowing script, light or medium pressure, and long lower loops, will be successful in a beauty parlor. She could start one in her own home after taking a short course and installing a few of the necessary electric appliances.

Dressmaking seems to be rather go-

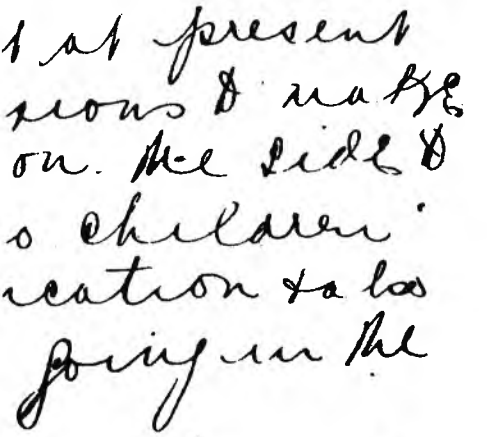
ing out of style, but the woman who is handy with her needle can make up women's dainty accessories and create a market for them. Her handwriting will have original formations and probably many triangular formations, which show technical skill. I know of one woman who designed a new type of apron and now has her own manufacturing plant. So if your handwriting is individual and contains unusual letter formations, you will know you have some original ideas which can be used in creating and inventing something that the public will like and want.

The backhand writer is not so social and will turn to the less social means, because such a writer is less objective than the writer who uses a forward slant. If your writing is large and sprawly, with careless letter formations and open "o's" and "a's," it is a warning that you are without business experience or practical ability enough to carry on a business. If your writing is like this, then you need to concentrate mentally, learn to be more thrifty and to be less talkative. These writers are wasteful with both their money and their mentalities.

The whole thing simmers down to this: Take stock of your special domestic gift and the chances for having the time and room to start in a small but businesslike way; then begin. Create an original twist to the necessary food or decoration or domestic need; then hammer away at the idea until you put it over. Start with a friend or neighbor as a first customer. If you have a combative t-bar in your script —that is, the bar that crosses the stem of the "t" with a downward stroke—then watch yourself when it comes to taking criticism. Watch your temper and remember that the public likes a pleasant and obliging person to deal with in business. If you have a long, straight, and fairly heavy t-bar, combined with medium-heavy writing, forward slant, and there is speed in the flow of the script, then your chances of making good are excellent, for this means that you have will power, energy, and force. These are needed just as much as tact and talent.

For the woman who has the opportunity to go outside of the home to work, there are all the different forms of office work. The writing of these women is uniform, has an even base line, normal slant forward, and medium pen pressure.

Every housewife has some one thing that she prides herself on. Exploit that.

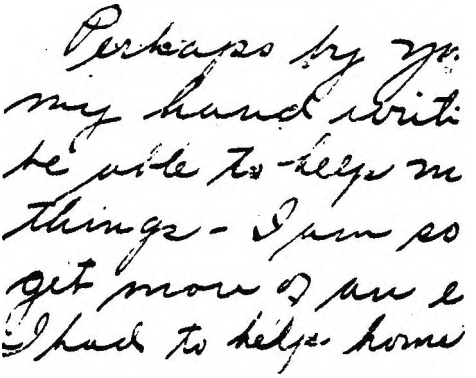


In your case I suggest the social position—either part-time office work, or selling in a store, or having a gift shop or tea room in your own home. You are able to manage well and work independently. Your personality is one that draws people to you. This all is shown in the large, rounded writing with the tall capitals, long t-bars, heavy pressure, and forward slant.

D. T. M., New York: You have been housekeeping for the last fifteen years and now are working in a store but are not satisfied, so you are in a similar problem to that just discussed. As you are artistic and creative, you should use your dreams for some practical purpose and not just "build cas-

tles." That won't get you far. That introspective t-bar tells me that you don't push ahead and make up your mind to play an objective part in life.

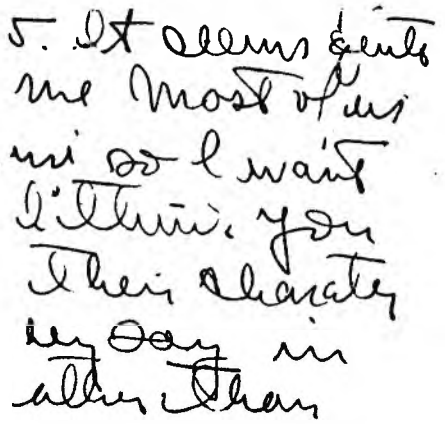
You are in a hat store and yet cannot think what you could do to get out of the rut. You must have observed while waiting on your customers, and must have stored up some ideas about hats. If you haven't, then there isn't much hope for your getting out of the rut. Make your experience count. Design some hats and see how artistic you are. Let your imagination roam around the store but not outside into strange bypaths. Learn the business. Pick up the new ideas and then start for yourself—in your own home or in part of another store, or take some more lessons on design after you have learned what you can from the store, then try for a position in a higher class store. Surely, you don't want just to dream about being somebody and something. Use your mind every minute. That is the only way to get ahead.



Your writing shows that you are practical, good-natured, and like the good things of life. You like your comfort a little too much. I don't find any literary talent.

D. C., Cambridge: Well, there is nothing small about your ambitions! With so many ideas, you are in danger of not hitting any of them. I believe that advertising is your best bet.

Your writing shows that you have original ideas and that you are flexible and alert mentally. You have an artistic sense, are rather temperamental, and could not do detail or monotonous work.



See all the movement in your script. Also see the round and looped letters, showing that you are indolent and like ease and comfort. You have plenty of energy, but need to concentrate. The vertical writing shows that you are self-centered and interested in your own advancement. Your mind is active, so that is why you like debate, but you are not logical enough to be a lawyer; you run on your emotions and intuitions too much. You are too impulsive for financial matters, I believe. You are not scientific enough for medicine, though you have an analytical mind. Advertising would include so many of the things you like that it seems ideal for you.

Don't forget to send in a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request for an analysis of your handwriting.

Handwriting Coupon

This coupon must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read.

Name .....

Address .....

Under The Lamp

By Gerard Holmes

This department is conducted by Gerard Holmes for those of you who like puzzles. If there is any particular kind of puzzle that you prefer, please tell us and Gerard Holmes will do his best to give it to you. Also, won't you work on a puzzle of your own, send it in, and let the other readers wrestle with it?

Answers to this week's problems will be printed in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

All letters relative to this department should be addressed to Gerard Holmes, care of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

GREETINGS from the Empire State, which is none other than New York State. If you solve No. 1 correctly, you will know more about this State of States.

1. ZNOY YZGZK CGY YU IGRRKJ OT NUTUX UL ZNK JAQK UL EUXQ, CNU OT YODZKKT YODZE-LUAX MUZ ZNK VGZKTZ LXUS NOY HXUZNKX, QOTM INGXRKY ZNK YKIUTJ UL KTM-RGTJ.

Quefanon, otherwise known as Arthur Haas, Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn, New York, makes a contribution wherein he uses every letter of the alphabet. He has named it "In Wonderland."

2. BAOOX CAZZE DAO-OZF GAHHZ JABBO. KAUUW LAHHO CA-ZZU KARRX. BAUUX LAOOX LAUUO. KAHHX MAEGO BA-EEX KAEEX. BAPPX KUAQE RUAEGO, SADLO, OMWTO GAOVO, TIYZO NQ-JQWAO, KAOGO KAGGO. MAOOIU

J H A K O M A O V X, F A O G O D A F F X L A - G G X.

To create wild thoughts in the minds of fans, F. H. Martin, 128 Park Row, New York, New York, has composed this crypt.

3. M E C C E V B F W D P E C, B D D P U S B L N K O X Q F F B U B B L O F Q L T, I E N D H F Q U P E L C W S N K X B F O I E B M M B, C V B R K F W Y V P U Q S W N F B L C N C P Q W F K C B.

"Cryptogramma," (Phyllis L. Jarvis) Fly Creek, New York, is heard from.

4. N B Y S M N C F F Q I H - X Y L Y X Q B U N B U X V Y W I G Y I Z N B Y M G U F F F U X, Q B I O M Y X N I X U H A F Y. I H B C M Z U N B Y L ' M E H Y Y, U M E C H A H O G Y L I O M K O Y M - N C I H M.

Answers to Last Week's Puzzles:

Quefanon, of Brooklyn, New York, composed this clever missing number puzzle.

1. 2.125)1517267. (714008
14875
2976
2125
8517
8500
17000
17000

From one of our oldest and most faithful fans, Monroe C. Sylvester, 144 Third Street, Troy, New York.

2. Mr. Cryptofan, Washington, District of Columbia. Do you know that
"Multiplication is a vexation,
Division is as bad,
The Rule of Three perplexes me,
Subtraction drives me mad"?

Wherein, Elijah Groves, 20½ South East Riverside Drive, Evansville, Indiana, hits the nail on the head.

3. Here and there a criminal may go through life uncaught, unpunished, but he is one in a thousand, and his own fears and imagination do to him what the law fails to do. He is in terror. There is no happiness in gains ill-gotten.

They have switches in the mid-Pacific. At least, W. H. J., Hilo, Hawaii, says so.

4. Sam soon saw he should not sit after a small switching with a supple switch by his sister.

PUZZLE FANS' HONOR ROLL

Send in your answers to each week's puzzles, ye fans, and watch for your name on our monthly Honor Roll.

Headquarters Chat

A. M. Clarkson, 105 Homewood Avenue, Toronto, Canada, tells in this clever letter of his various ardent affections for certain characters in your magazine:

"DEAR EDITOR: I have been a reader of your excellent magazine for at least fourteen years, with very few breaks, and am still alive. Regarding the different authors I make no comment, for I like them all. Concerning the numerous characters portrayed in the stories, however, I take the liberty of making a personal choice. So, if I choose to fall in love with Sue—Spud McGee's wife—and make an attempt to run away with her—well, let Spud watch his step, for when I get busy with a blackjack, I'm nasty.

"Then I have a sneaking regard for old Mother Hansen—haven't heard much about her lately—and if I do not succeed in passing, say, a phony five-spot on the old lady, I will feel that I have lived in vain. Touching Thubway Tham—I like that gink, and, should I ever run across him, Tham can have my leather and I will go to any speakeasy he may mention and buy him all the drinks; should that meddlesome geezer, Craddock, barge in, I will bust him, though I go to the pen for it.

"Likewise, and to go on, I've a fierce crush on that Molly woman—you know, John Doe or Dale Worthington's wife—and if I can get hold of Molly, Dale can go and sulk on the top of Mount Popocatepetl in Mexico for all I care. Then I like that French detective of the Sureté in Paris—Monsieur Monot.

"But why go on? *'Quantum sufficit,'* I hear you say—enough has been said. Best regards."

A new writer to the pages of your magazine, William P. Barron, now gets a "hand" from Hinda Rogow, 824 West 176th Street, New York, New York:

"DEAR EDITOR: In the May 17th issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE there appears a story, 'At the Appointed Time,' by William P. Barron, which is so gripping and lifelike that it haunts the memory.

"As there is no way of applauding a writer except by letter writing—which must, by the way, be quite a burden to a publication—I must, nevertheless, add my little fan note to the heap in praise of a worthy bit of very vivid writing."

The more expensive, but larger, magazine, *Best Detective Magazine,* is given mention by David Spear, 411 North Street, Middletown, New York:

"DEAR EDITOR: I have been a reader of your fine magazine for over five years. I started when I was seventeen years old. I am for Apple's unmentionable chink, his Rafferty, and the Crimson Clown stories. Let's also have more John Doe, Maxwell Sanderson, and Picaroon stories. They certainly are good stuff and a change from the other fiction.

"I am also a reader of *Best Detective Magazine.* It certainly deserves its title."

Mel Watt will now kindly step to the front and be prepared to bow, after

listening to this from Louis Sommers, Redwood Falls, Minnesota:

"DEAR EDITOR: Please permit a constant reader of your magazine to say a few words of praise about Mel Watt, the creator of the 'Les Joyeux Six' stories which have been appearing quite frequently of late. These stories are very cleverly written, and I think they compare favorably with anything now appearing in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, or any other magazine, for that matter. His stories are fine examples of cunningly woven plots that profoundly grip one's attention from beginning to end. I have read all of Mr. Watt's stories, and have found them all intensely interesting.

"Now, I do not wish to detract one iota from the credit that has been so generously conferred upon the many talented authors whose stories adorn the pages of this magazine, but to gently place a wreath on the brow of Mel Watt and thus welcome him to rub elbows with the rest of those whose brainy stories contribute so much to our entertainment. Here's hoping, Mr. Watt, that your typewriter will never break down, and that you will never permit Monsieur Monot to capture Duval and his gay companions."

From the Philippine Islands, at Manila, Miss K. C. writes us this:

"DEAR EDITOR: You don't get many letters from this part of the world, do you? I've never seen any on the Headquarters Chat page, so I thought I would write, just to let you know there are readers of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE over five thousand miles from the United States.

"The Picaroon is my favorite of all the characters in your stories. His whimsical mannerisms are simply delightful! All those gentleman crooks make good reading. Can't we have some more stories about Jimmy Traynor, the man who was partly a detective and partly a crook? He figured in 'The Monster in the Pool,' one of the most original stories I have read in your magazine.

"Edgar Wallace's short stories are awfully good. So are Charlotte Dockstader's tales about Spud and Sue. In fact, all the stories in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE are good, and I enjoy reading it immensely."

MISSING

This department conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable. Because "copy" for a magazine must go to the printer long in advance of publication, don't expect to see your notice till a considerable time after you send it.

If it can be avoided, please do not send a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that those persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

Address all communications to Missing Department, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

HARRY.—Anxious to hear from you. Please write to Betty, care of this magazine.

GRIFFITH or **GRAHAM, PAUL.**—There is a small check for you at this office. F. E. B.

WOSOBA, BENJAMIN.—Twenty-two years old. Six feet tall, one blue eye and one brown eye. Last known address was 666 Ashland Street, Omaha, Nebraska. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Oakley Everetts, Route 1, Belmar, Iowa.

OSBORNE, MRS. CLARENCE AGUSTUS, or **MRS. JOHN LITTLE,** nee **ISABELLE CHAPMAN.**—Born in Canada. Her son, Joseph Carl Osborne, was born June 21, 1879. Shortly after that she and her husband separated. Is believed to have later married John Little. Information appreciated by her son, Carl Osborne, 5385 Carlos Avenue, Richmond, California.

BORHN, BOHRN or **BORN.**—Genevieve Borhn was born December 15, 1905. She was placed in the St. Vincent's Orphanage, in New York City, and adopted from there in 1907. Would like to hear from any of her relatives. Address Genevieve, care of this magazine.

MITCHELL, BOB.—Formerly with the Jerome Comedy Company. Information appreciated by Natalie, care of this magazine.

HOFFMAN, ANNA B. or **AL.**—Last heard from in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1907. My father and mother. I was adopted by D. B. Shriver, of Ganns, Oklahoma, in April, 1907. Was born July 25, 1905. Information appreciated by Allen Ray Hoffman, 712 North Smelter Street, Pittsburg, Kansas.

COX, COLUMBIS ALFRED.—Dad died two years ago. We miss you. Please write to your sister, Mrs. Anita Drugg, R. R. 3, Box 309, Salem, Oregon.

TUTEN, HOWARD.—Please write to Mother, Box 244, City Point, Florida.

STEARNS, C. G.—Six feet tall, dark hair and eyes. No word since your letter of March 16th. Where are you? Please write to Lynette, care of this magazine.

PURNELL, FRED.—Forty-two years old. Auto mechanic, taxi driver and aviator. Last heard from in Washington, D. C. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Bob Wilson, 405 Jennings Avenue, Hot Springs, South Dakota.

DAVENPORT, MAY.—Last seen in Corpus Christi, Texas, in September, 1928. Information appreciated by Hazel Crow, 516 South Main Street, care of Ray Graham, Altus, Oklahoma.

MORRISSEY, HARLEY F.—A barber. Last heard from in Des Moines, Iowa. Please write to Lucile, care of this magazine.

ENGLE, E. E.—Five feet two inches tall, blue eyes and dark curly hair. Missing since April, 1929. Information appreciated by his sister, Lorraine Gable, 900 East Eleventh Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

CRYAN, JOHN WILL.—Last heard from in Artherley, Ontario, Canada, in 1918. Believed to have moved to New York State. Please write to uncle, Ila, care of this magazine.

MARVIN.—We waited for you at McAllen. Letter for you with our address is at the Galveston, Texas, post office. Mother, care of this magazine.

WRIGHT, WALTER.—Son of Jesse Wright. Left home about twenty-two years ago. Information appreciated by Mrs. H. B. Hamilton, R. R. 3, Fort Madison, Iowa.

JIM or **RED.**—About thirty-five years old. Has red hair. Left home ten years ago. Dad is sick and calling for you. Please write to George Milkovich, 6424 Beaver Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

GEORGE A.—Answered your letter immediately. It was returned from Gary, Indiana. Please write to Mary, same address, or care of this magazine.

ELLIOT, CLINTON C.—Would like to hear from any of his descendants. Lived in Iowa for some years, and then moved to Louisiana. Please write to Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Box 182, Custer City, Oklahoma.

LUDWIG H.—Last heard from in Rochester, New York, in May, 1929. Please write to C. E. P., care of this magazine.

SCOTT, LIZZIE MAY.—Please write to your sister, Mrs. Alice Scott Hawkins, Route 2, Jackson, Michigan.

WILLIAMS, HERMAN.—Please write to your daughter, Bernice, care of this magazine.

TAYLOR, JOE, and wife, **NORMA.**—Were married in January, 1928, at El Dorado, Arkansas. Had a grocery store in El Dorado. Their address was Route 3, Box 62a, El Dorado, Arkansas. Last heard from in May, 1928. Believed to have moved to Texarkana, Texas. Information appreciated by Mrs. T. G. Weens, Box 536, Whittenburg, Texas.

GEORGE.—Everything O. K. Mother needs you. Please come home or write to Martha Myers, Route 9, Knoxville, Tennessee.

SCHIVERDECKER, GRACE.—Sixteen years old. Had two brothers, Robert and Harold. Information appreciated by Russell E. Bynoe, care of this magazine.

MORRING, M. T.—Last heard from on the U. S. S. "Antaires," in Panama City, Canal Zone. Information appreciated by an old shipmate, O. J. S., care of this magazine.

WINTER or **SCHINNER.**—Would like to hear from any one having these names, from Bavaria, Germany. Please write to Mrs. A. J. Yancey, 1817 Twenty-first Street, Bakersfield, California.

LAURENCE B.—Please write to J., care of this magazine.

COREY, ETHAN ALLEN.—Last heard from in the spring of 1917. Please write to your mother, Lily Corey, R. F. D. 1, St. Albans, Vermont.

REAVEY, VIOLA, nee **ROGERS.**—Last heard from in Fall River, Massachusetts, in January, 1930. Information appreciated by her mother, Mrs. Jennie Rogers, 403 Pine Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

RUNSELMEYER, EMIL.—We are holding a letter for you at this office. Please send for it.

JOIE or **R. C.**—Formerly of Williamstown, Massachusetts. Last heard from in Vermont, in March, 1930. I can explain everything satisfactorily. Please write to Mary, same address or care of this magazine.

ATTENTION.—Would like to get in touch with the following: Captain W. B. Harrison, whose address in 1919 was 1460 St. James Court, Louisville, Kentucky. Second Lieutenant Joe F. Myers, whose last known address was 202 Riverside Drive, New York City. Second Lieutenant Richard T. Herndon, last address, 8 Leland Apartments, Houston, Texas. First Sergeant William A. Shields, formerly of Kingsville, Texas. Please write to Mrs. Edward J. Bayliss, Jr., 180 Franklin Street, Portland, Maine.

J.—Can't go on without word from you. Please write to Sissie and Bubbie, care of this magazine.

MONTGOMERY, JACK A.—Last heard from in Fort Smith, Arkansas, two years ago. Please write to your son, Jack, Jr., 1307 South Santa Fe Street, Chanute, Kansas.

YADWINSKI, or **OSMAN, JOE,** or **JOHN STRAUSBACH.**—Short and stout, with dark hair. May be in Canada, or in Detroit, Michigan. Information appreciated by his wife, Anna, care of this magazine.

HENERY, LOUISE.—Eighteen. Blonde. Last heard from in Rome, Georgia. Was adopted by people named Henery, when a small child. Please write to your brother, Trey W. Collins, Headquarters Co., 35th Infantry, Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, Hawaii.

STEWART or **MILLER, OPAL HILL.**—Last heard from in Patrick, Arkansas. Please write to your sister, Bonnie Hill, Route 1, Harris, Arkansas.

NOTICE.—I was born May 1, 1908. My mother, I believe, was a dancer, eighteen years old at the time. I was taken by Bell, of Detroit, Michigan, and adopted by people named Torstner. Would like to get in touch with my people. Please write to Helen Torstner, 319 East Eighth Street, Monroe, Michigan.

HANSEN, FRIDRICH.—A shoemaker. Formerly of Germany. Please write to your brother, Heinrich Hansen, 63 North Auburndale Street, Memphis, Tennessee.

JOHNSON, CHARLES ROBERT.—Six feet tall, blond, and weighs about one hundred and seventy pounds. Last heard from in the spring of 1929, in Seattle, Washington. Information appreciated by his mother, Mrs. Naomi Johnson, 108 East Fulton Street, Gloversville, New York.

WILKINSON, JAMES RILEY.—Last seen at McKinney, Texas, in November, 1888. Information appreciated by Joseph M. Raney, Jr., 186 North Twelve and a Half Street, Paris, Texas.

WILKINSON.—Would like to hear from any one having this name, who lives near Summit, Kentucky. Please write to Joseph M. Raney, Jr., 186 North Twelve and a Half Street, Paris, Texas.

SCOTT, MR. and MRS. ELBERT.—Mr. Scott is about fifty-five, and Mrs. Scott is forty-nine. They were married in 1892. Had three children—Elmer, thirty-seven years old; Maggie, thirty-four years old, and Sylvester about thirty years old. Were last heard from in Norman, Oklahoma, in 1921. Information appreciated by Joseph M. Raney, Jr., 186 North Twelve and a Half Street, Paris, Texas.

ANGUS, RICHARD and LOUIS.—Last heard from in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, about twenty-five years ago. Information appreciated by John O'Halloran, 315 East Hipe Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

LAWSON, NANNIE ELIZABETH.—Twenty years old. Black hair, brown eyes. Last heard from in Rocky Mount, Virginia, about three years ago. Believed to have gone to Tennessee. Information appreciated by her sister, Mrs. John W. Langley, R. F. D. 3, Jacksonville, North Carolina.

LYNCH, MRS. ANN.—Last known address was 1001 Mersey Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She and her husband, F. Lynch, were en route from County Cavan, Ireland, to Colorado, in the late 1850's. Information appreciated by her nephew, J. Montague, Cartre, Hagley Road, Stourbridge, England.

BLACK, HOMER.—Of Ensley, Alabama. Frances did not marry, but is still with me in Ensley. Have not heard from you for six months. Please write at once to your wife, Mary, 2308 Avenue H, Ensley, Alabama.

HENRY.—A navy man. On July 19 or 20, 1929, you made an acquaintance on the Fall River Line boat, bound for New York. Please write to Gerald, care of this magazine.

WILSON, CHARLES.—Last heard from in Dallas, Texas. Please write to an old chum, Texas Kid, care of this magazine.

TUCKER, ROBERT.—Light hair, blue eyes, and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. Father's name is George. Lived for some time in Kingston, Tennessee. Last heard from in Covington, Kentucky, in 1926. Please write to your old buddy, Jesse J. Hill of Hawaii, care of this magazine.

NEUMAN, MRS. EINAR, nee SIGRID STENERSON.—Left Norway, about thirty years ago, on the S. S. "Oscar II." Information appreciated by her cousin, Stener, care of this magazine.

LUCE, CHARLES LEONARD.—Twenty-six years old. Last heard from in Newark, New Jersey, in June, 1926. Mother is ill. Please write to Mrs. Cora A. Black, 1941 West Evergreen Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

MILLER, HOWARD, and ESTHER GARVIN.—Lived for some time near Los Angeles, California. Information appreciated by Wallace R. Springer, care of this magazine.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from members of Company D, Provincial Machine Gun Company, who served in Coblenz, Germany; and from members of Company H, Eighth Infantry, who served in Fort Motte, Charleston, South Carolina. Please write to Jesse A. Gross, National Soldier's Home, Johnson City, Tennessee.

MURRAY, NELLIE.—Red hair, gray eyes, five feet ten inches tall, weighs about one hundred and seventy-five pounds. Born in Glasgow, Scotland. Last heard from in Montreal, Canada, two years ago. Please write to your sister, Bella, care of this magazine.

SCHWAB, CLIFFORD A.—Five feet tall, light hair and blue eyes. Served in Coblenz, Germany; Fort Mott, New Jersey, and Fort Porter, New York. Formerly of Connecticut. Lived for some time in Wilmington, Delaware. Please write to your old friend, E. K., care of this magazine.

SPEAKMAN, WALTER.—Formerly of Pennsylvania. Believed to be in Montana. Please write to your pal of Fox Hound Days, care of this magazine.

THOMAS, WILLIAM H.—Five feet eight inches tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, red hair and brown eyes. Served in the A. E. F. in France. About thirty-one years old. Formerly of Maryland. Last heard from in May, 1919. Please write to your old pal, E. K., care of this magazine.

JACOBY, EVELYN.—Would like to hear from you. Please write to Tex, 155 West Twenty-second Street, New York City.

BRANDT, CHARLIE or KARL.—Last heard from in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Information appreciated by C. Brandt, Box 43, Towner, North Dakota.

YANK.—Glad to hear from you. Mother is well. Please write to her and to Grace, care of this magazine.

PENCE, REGINALD CECIL.—About forty-five years old. Last heard from twenty-three years ago. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Lorena Pence Stroup, R. F. D. 1, Whitehaven, Tennessee.

CORBETT, ALICE.—Last heard from in 1906. Information appreciated by her daughter, Mabel, care of this magazine.

FREDDY.—Of New Orleans. Am at the same place in Indiana. Please write to Florence, care of this magazine.

WILLIAMS.—Would like to get in touch with any members of a Williams family, who came to Des Moines, Iowa, from Illinois, in 1894 or 1895. Believe Mrs. Williams died in June, 1895, leaving two sons, one about four years old and the other less than a year old. They may have been adopted by a Mr. Anderson. Information appreciated by R. Gwin, care of this magazine.

HARMAN, GEORGE.—Was in Iowa about twenty-five years ago. Information appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Ada Packard, 720 East Mansion Street, Springfield, Illinois.

MANLEY, JACK.—Please write at once to A. M., care of this magazine.

WARNER, ANDREW J.—Five feet six inches tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds. Wears glasses, and the first two fingers are missing from his left hand. Left home, in Richmond, Virginia, in August, 1929. Information appreciated by Mary P. W., 1207 West Bay Street, Palmetto, Florida.

CRAFT, SIDNEY M., JR.—When last heard from, four years ago, was working in a garage in New Orleans, Louisiana. Information appreciated by J., care of this magazine.

DE VOE, HAROLD.—Twenty-seven years old. Tall, brown hair and eyes. Remember the girl you met in Montana? I received your letters from Williston and Minot, North Dakota. Have important news for you. Please write to F. H., care of this magazine.

ANTONI, MARGUERITE.—Eldest daughter of the late Duke Charles Ivan of Brandenburg and the Princess Marie Antoni of Florence. Is believed to have come to the United States in 1926, and settled near Buffalo, New York. Mother is now in Rome. Information appreciated by Richard Lee van Stubenlock, Jr., St. Claire Estate, Geneva, New York.

WARREN, HAROLD.—Nineteen years old. Six feet tall and has light hair. Left Omaha, Nebraska, in 1928. Believed to be in California or Kansas. Information appreciated by Joan Trinnes, Calvert Apartments, Omaha, Nebraska.

LAMON, JAMES CAMPBELL.—Six feet tall and weighs about one hundred and fifty-two pounds. Mother is Arina Lamon, of Nashville, Tennessee. Last heard from in Chicago, Illinois. Information appreciated by Sister, care of this magazine.

NOTICE.—About twenty-three years ago, Annie Moore placed a baby girl, Gertrude May, in a Salvation Army home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Would like to hear from Annie Moore. Please write to Mrs. R. H. Carr, 229 Broad Street, Salamanca, New York.

FLANAGAN, RICHARD.—Last heard from in Decatur, Illinois. Information appreciated by Mrs. Beulah Gravely, Glendale, Arizona.

CHEW, WILLIAM HAROLD.—Thirty-five years old. Weighs about two hundred pounds, and has light hair. Was in California seventeen years ago. Never mind the trouble. Stepfather is dead. Mother and I want you. Please write to Charles R. Towler, 424 South Cox Avenue, Joplin, Missouri.

HENDRICKS, EARLE.—Thirty-eight years old. Five feet eleven inches tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, and has brown eyes. Formerly of Alderwood, Washington. Last heard from, in November, 1929, in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Information appreciated by his sick father, Fred G. Hendricks, Mount Bullion, California.

RIVET, FRED.—Born in Cedar Springs, Michigan, in 1872. Information appreciated by his mother, Mrs. Frank Rivet, 309 West Ann Street, Belding, Michigan.

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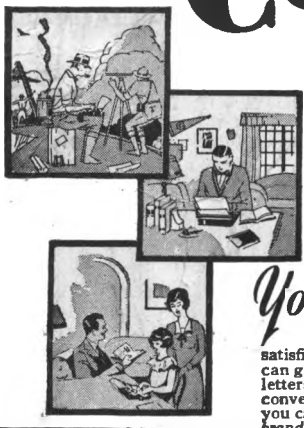

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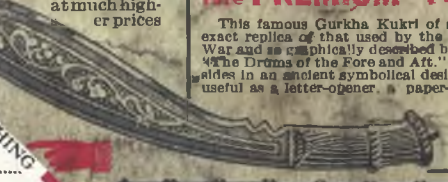

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