FLYNN'S WEEKLY

MAR. 5
10¢
PER COPY

Detective Fiction
With the Thrill of Truth

THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Charles Somerville

Looking toward the solution of the Hall-Mills murder mystery

Broadcasting calls for intense concentration and I find I am more comfortable and "at home" when enjoying a cigarette. I am fully convinced that there is nothing injurious to the voice in doing this—otherwise I wouldn't do it—and I find the height of smoking enjoyment in Lucky Strikes.

J. Andrew White

"This is WJZ"—A Voice Millions Hear

Clear, resonant, appealing, J. Andrew White's voice is constantly safeguarded

AS the dean of radio announcers, J. Andrew White's voice is known to people throughout the land. Mr. White has won a large following of admirers because of the constant dependability of his voice, ever in perfect condition. He smokes Lucky Strikes, both for finer flavor and throat protection.

Lucky Strikes have become the favorites of men whose priceless voices thrill their audiences, as they have with the millions because, first, they afford *greater enjoyment*, and, second, they are certain not to irritate even the most sensitive throat.

Smoke Lucky Strikes. They give added pleasure—you'll like them.

"It's toasted"

Your Throat Protection

Learn to be an ELECTRICAL EXPERT!

Thousands now earning $3500 to $10,000 a year

TRAIN AT HOME for a BIG PAY JOB

Men everywhere are thanking their "lucky stars" for having gone into Electricity. They have discovered it to be the easiest, surest and quickest way to Big Pay. Even ordinary electricians are making $50 a week; while thousands of "Cooke" trained men are earning $3,500 to $10,000 a year!

Be a "Cooke" Trained Man Yourself

There's no reason in the world why my now famous "Work Sheet" and "Job Ticket" method of training won't do as much for you as it has for thousands of others. Remember, my Course teaches Electricity along sound, practical Work Shop lines; is simple, thorough and easy-to-grasp; gives you, in fact, just the knowledge you need to fill a Big Pay, man-size job in this fascinating, billion-dollar business.

Extra Money While You Learn

With "Cooke" training you learn Electricity at home during your spare time. You learn easily and quickly, and you learn RIGHT. My Course is built that way. And with the five Big Outfits of tools and equipment I furnish, you can make extra money almost from the start. For I show you how to get spare time work—how to handle it—what to charge. Think of making $15 to $25 a week extra in this way!

FREE—"Secrets of Success in Electricity"

Don't let lack of schooling stand in your way. Few of my "boys" ever went beyond grammar school. Yet today, thanks to "Cooke" training, they are Big-Pay Electrical Experts, making many times the money they used to make. So do what they did—send for the book that brought them success. It is called, "Secrets of Success in Electricity"—and is the first Big Step toward a Big-Pay job. It's free. Send for it today—mail the coupon.

L. L. Cooke, Chief Engineer
L. L. Cooke School of Electricity
Formerly **Chicago Engineering Works**
2150 Lawrence Ave. Chicago

Ritch Makes $675 a Month

Dear Chief: When I look back to my $15 a week wages before I enrolled, it seems too good to be true that I am now making $675 a month. Send them to me if they want to know more about the way you train men for success, Chief.

J. E. RITCH,
102 Benemi St., High Point, N. C.

From $5 a Day to $550 a Month

Dear Chief:

When I enrolled with you I was loading coal at $5 a day. Cooke Training boosted me to Mine Electrician at $300 a month. Now I am in the Radio business in my spare time. My income is $550 a month. I have just bought a Studebaker Special Six with some of my earnings. Anyone wishing to know what I think of your Course, may find out by writing to me if they are not convinced by this letter.

CARL EVERETT,
Lock Box 545, Danville, Ill.

FREE BOOK COUPON

L. L. Cooke, Chief Engineer,
Dept. 173, 2150 Lawrence Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

Send me by return mail your big illustrated book, "Secrets of Success in Electricity." This is to come to me absolutely free of all cost. No agents will call.

Name.....

Address.....

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

The "Cooke" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention this magazine.

FLYNN'S WEEKLY

WILLIAM J. FLYNN, EDITOR

Twenty Five Years in the Secret Service of the United States

VOLUME XXII | SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1927 | NUMBER 3

THE RED STAR NEWS COMPANY, 280 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y., and
LONDON: HACHETTE & CIE., 16-17 King William Street, Charing Cross, W.C. 2
PARIS: HACHETTE & CIE., 111 Rue Reaumur

C. T. DIXON, President ARTHUR B. GAUNT, Treasurer RICHARD H. TITHERINGTON, Secretary

Single copies, 10 cents. By the year, $4.00 in United States, its dependencies, Mexico and Cuba; $6.00 to Canada, and $7.00 to Foreign Countries Remittances should be made by check, express money order or postal money order. Currency should not be sent unless registered

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE RED STAR NEWS COMPANY.

Entered as second-class matter September 4, 1924, at the Post-Office at New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879

Classified Advertising

The Purpose of this Department

is to put the reader in touch immediately with the newest needfuls for the home, office, farm, or person; to offer, or seek, an unusual business opportunity, or to suggest a service that may be performed satisfactorily through correspondence. It will pay a housewife or business man equally well to read these advertisements carefully.

Classified Advertising Rate in The Munsey Combination comprising:

Munsey's Magazine -
Argosy-Allstory Weekly
Flynn's Weekly - - -
Minimum space 4 lines.

Combination Line Rate $3.00 Less 2% cash discount

April 9th Flynn's Weekly Forms Close March 12th

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

WOULD $100.00 PER WEEK INTEREST YOU? MILLIONS OF PHOTOS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY JUST CRYING TO BE MADE INTO BEAUTIFUL ARTISTIC MEDALLIONS. WE HAVE NEW PLAN. LOWEST PRICES. SPEEDY SERVICE. EXPERIENCED AGENTS LOSING MONEY EVERY DAY THEY PUT OFF WRITING US. ART MEDALLION CO., DEPARTMENT K, CORNER CAMPBELL AND JACKSON, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

$13.80 DAILY (IN ADVANCE). SPARE TIME WILL DO. Introduce 12 months Guaranteed Hosiery. 57 styles, 39 colors, for Men, Women, Children; including latest "Silk to the Top" Ladies' Hose. No capital or experience needed. We furnish samples. Silk hose for your own use free. NEW PLAN. MACOCHEE CO., Road 2705, Cincinnati, Ohio.

66 MILES ON 1 GALLON—Amazing, New, Wonderful Vapor Humidifier—Gas Saver—and Quick Starter. For all autos. Exclusive Factory Representatives wanted everywhere. 1 Free to introduce. CRITCHLOW, B-427, Wheaton, Ill.

OUR NEW HOUSEHOLD DEVICE WASHES AND DRIES WINDOWS, sweeps, cleans walls, scrubs, mops. Complete outfit costs less than brooms. Over half profit. HARPER BRUSH WORKS, 101 3rd St., Fairfield, Iowa.

AGENTS—SEND FOR FREE SAMPLE "FRETNOT" WASHDAY WONDER. Big profit. Free samples secure business. Exclusive territory. Credit given. EMPIRE SPECIALTIES CO., 1549 N. Wells. Dept. 110, Chicago, Ill.

$20.00 DAILY EASY SELLING AMAZING RAIN-PROOF CAPS. MADE-TO-MEASURE. FINEST FABRICS AND STYLES. BIG ADVANCE PROFITS. FREE OUTFIT AND FREE CAP OFFER. TAYLOR CAP MANUFACTURERS, DEPT. X-63, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

MARVELOUS NEW LINE OFFERS TREMENDOUS PROFIT to any salesman now selling to men. $20.00 outfit free. Address SALESMANAGER, 844 West Adams, Dept. 858, Chicago.

AGENTS ARE CLEANING UP WITH NATIONAL FIBRE HOUSE BROOMS and Auto Mitten Dusters. Send for Free Catalog and Sample Offer. NATIONAL FIBRE BROOM CO., 215 South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

Agents. Men, women $240 month. Take orders for Stuart's guaranteed food flavors, toilet preparations, etc. Over 200 specialties. Best and biggest line offered. Big repeaters. Handsome selling outfit furnished. Write quick. Stuart & Co., Dept. 199, Newark, N. Y.

AGENTS $60 WEEK. NEW TOOL CHEST, 8 TOOLS IN ONE. HANDY. FITS HIP POCKET. FINE LEATHER CASE. NEWEST THING OUT. GOING BIG. WRITE QUICK. NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., CHEST 199, CANTON, OHIO.

LAUDERMILK MADE $25 ON ONE ORDER, STRONG $32 ONE DAY. RICHARDSON $75 A WEEK. REPRESENTATIVES WITH US 5, 10, EVEN 25 YEARS. NEW PLAN OF 400 PREMIUMS FREE WITH QUALITY COFFEE, GROCERIES. WORKS WONDERS. GREAT EASTERN COFFEE & TEA CO., DEPT. C-1200, ST. LOUIS, MO.

AGENTS: 90c AN HOUR TO ADVERTISE AND DISTRIBUTE SAMPLES TO CONSUMERS. WRITE QUICK FOR TERRITORY AND PARTICULARS. AMERICAN PRODUCTS COMPANY, 9004 MONMOUTH, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

AGENTS MAKE $10.00 DAILY SELLING NON-SPLASH WATER FILTERS ON SIGHT. BEST CANVASSER'S ARTICLE ON MARKET. Investigate. Write for particulars DESK 25, SEED FILTER COMPANY, 73 Franklin Street, New York.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. EVERY OWNER BUYS GOLD INITIALS for his auto. You charge $1.50, make $1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. AMERICAN MONOGRAM CO., Dept. 54, East Orange, N. J.

YOU ARE WANTED TO RESILVER MIRRORS AT HOME. IMMENSE PROFITS. PLATING OUTFITS. HEADLIGHTS, TABLEWARE, STOVES, ETC. OUTFITS FURNISHED. Write for information. SPRINKLE PLATER, 19, MARION, INDIANA.

MICHIGAN FARM LANDS FOR SALE

$10 IS ALL I ASK DOWN ON 20 ACRES IN MICH. POTATO BELT. Very easy terms. Near markets, lakes and streams. Write for particulars now. G. W. SWIGART, M-1276 First National Bank Building, Chicago.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR TRUSTWORTHY MEN TO REPRESENT BIG, OLD ESTABLISHED NATIONAL MANUFACTURER, now filling in open territory. Basic product, easily sold, sure repeater. Eubank earned $756 in one month; Fike, part time man, $110 in two weeks. We put you in business, full or spare time, no experience or capital needed. Big sample outfit FREE. Write, 1-L HARVEY, Box 00, Chicago.

TAILORING SALESMEN—ENTIRELY NEW, DISTINCTIVE ADVERTISING SALES PLAN gets the orders for you. Guaranteed fitting made to measure suits $18.50 to $45.50. Big commissions. 200 samples. $20 outfit free. WHOLESALE DIRECT TAILORS, DEPT. 017, Buffalo, N. Y.

AGENTS — NEW PLAN. MAKES IT EASY TO EARN $50.00 TO $100.00 WEEKLY, SELLING SHIRTS DIRECT TO WEARER. NO CAPITAL OR EXPERIENCE NEEDED. REPRESENT A REAL MANUFACTURER. WRITE NOW FOR FREE SAMPLES. MADISON MANUFACTURERS, 564 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

MAKE $75 A WEEK AND UP. SELLING OUR FINE, MADE-TO-MEASURE, ALL-WOOL SUITS DIRECT TO WEARER—ALL ONE PRICE, $31.50. BIGGEST VALUES. COMMISSIONS IN ADVANCE. WE DELIVER AND COLLECT. 6x9 SWATCH SAMPLES FURNISHED. W. Z. GIBSON, INC., DEPT. C-409, CHICAGO.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR. SOAPS, EXTRACTS, PERFUMES, TOILET GOODS. EXPERIENCE UNNECESSARY. CARNATION CO., DEPT. 1040, ST. LOUIS, MO.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, furnishing everything. Men and women, opportunity to earn $35 to $100 weekly operating Bagsdale's original "New System Specialty Candy Factories" anywhere; wholesale or retail. Big commercial candy book free. W. HILLYER BAGSDALE, Drawer 93, East Orange, N. J.

Agents make larger profits selling well known Ho-Ro-Co Soaps, Perfumes, Toilet Articles. Our lower prices give larger profits. Over 50,000 cans La-Em-Strait Hair Dressing sold last year. HO-RO-CO, 2702 Ho-Ro-Co Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

SALESMEN—DURO-FULL LINED SERVICE SUITS $12.50 and $13.50. THOSE BLUES AND BROWNS THAT SELL. DOUBLE SERVICE CLOTHING CO., Dept. F-6, 1327-1335 W. Washington, Chicago.

SALESMEN: WRITE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON A POSTAL and mail to us. We'll show you sure earnings of $20.00 a day. Will you risk one minute and a one cent stamp against $20.00? Mind you, we say we'll **show** you. Address Dept. 119, WILLIAM C. BARTLETT, INC., 850 W. Adams St., Chicago.

THE BIG SEASON IS ON: START NOW. Supreme Shirts give 100% satisfaction. Proposition and Kit FREE. SUPREME SHIRT CO., 278-MA Fifth Ave., New York.

Agents $180 Month. Bonus besides. Introduce Wilknit Hosiery. Finest pure thread silk. All fancy combinations silk and lisle, novelty, sport, full fashioned, wool. Guaranteed 6 months. Write for samples. Wilknit Hosiery Co., Dept. 399, Greenfield, Ohio.

CANADIAN FARM LANDS

CANADIAN LAND SOLD FOR TAXES.

$ 49.50 buys 10 acres Ontario hunting camp.
$ 79.20 buys 9 acres lake front.
$198.20 buys 80 acres, Manitoba farm.
$268.20 buys 150 acres British Columbia.
$301.50 buys 160 acres Alberta.

These prices are not first payments or the price per acre, but the total amount asked. Also beautifully situated hunting and fishing camps for moose, deer, caribou, ducks, partridge, trout, whitefish, bass, etc.; best in North America. Summer cottage sites, farms, heavily wooded tracts, acreages large and small for pleasure and investment, all offered at ten cents on the dollar of their value, and on easy monthly payments of $5 and upwards. Illustrated list describing the above and hundreds of other properties seized and sold for taxes, mailed free on request. Send no money, send for a list to-day so you will have first choice. TAX SALE SERVICE, Room 700, 72 Queen Street, West, Toronto, 2, Ontario, Canada.

Classified Advertising continued on page 6.

$351.00 CLEARED IN ONE DAY

So writes W. H. Adams of Ohio in August 1925. V. A. Marini of California reports **$11275** sales in three months. Jacob Gordon of New Jersey **$4000** profits in two months. Alexander of Pennsylvania "**$3000** profits in four months." Ira Shook **$365** sales in one day. Bram bought one outfit April 5 and 7 more by August 28. Iwata, bought one outfit and 10 more within a year. Mrs. Lane of Pittsburg says "sold **8000** packages in one day." J. R. Bert says "only thing I ever bought that equaled advertisement." John Culp says:

"Everything going lovely. Crispette wrappers scattered all over town. It's good old world after all." Kellog, **$700** ahead end of second week.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS

Furnish secret formulas, raw material, and equipment. Little capital required; no experience needed.

Build a Business of Your Own

No limit to the sale of Crispettes. Everybody likes them. It's a delicious food confection. Write for facts about a business that will make you independent. Start now, in your own town.

Profits $1000 a Month Easily Possible

Send postal for illustrated book of facts. It contains enthusiastic letters from others—shows their places of business, tells how and when to start, and all information needed. Free. Write now!

LONG-EAKINS COMPANY
311 High Street **Springfield, Ohio**

TYPEWRITER PRICES CUT

Your choice of the World's best typewriters—Underwood, Remington, Oliver—full size, late model, completely rebuilt and refinished brand new. Prices smashed down to half. Act quick.

$2 and it's yours

Free Trial

Just send your name and address and we will mail you our complete **FREE CATALOG** prepaid, fully describing and showing actual photographs of each beautiful machine in full colors. Tells every detail of our direct-to-you small-payment plan. Write now for tremendous saving. No obligation whatever. Still time if you act now.

International Typewriter Exchange
186-188 W. Lake Street. Department 311 Chicago, Ill.

GET ON "UNCLE SAM'S" PAY ROLL

MEN—WOMEN 18 UP

$1140 to $3300 A YEAR

Many U. S. Government jobs obtainable. Experience usually unnecessary. Common education sufficient. Write today sure for free 32-page book with full particulars: list of positions and free sample coaching.

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
Dept. G-284 **Rochester, N. Y.**

Can You Fix It?

Repair any auto fault, learn how NOW. You can do it easily in this new simple way.

These FIVE Big Books are up to the minute on automobile engineering subjects; chock full of little known facts about construction, operation and repairs. Electric wiring treated in complete detail—illustrations and diagrams make everything clear and easily understood by anybody. The most interesting and most practical set of books we have ever written on modern automobile engineering.

Whether you want to fit yourself for garage owner, repair expert or merely wish to know more about your own car, you will realize the values of these splendidly bound volumes. This is the new 1926 Edition with 70 new and up-to-date wiring diagrams.

"NO MONEY" OFFER

An amazing new plan of distribution brings these books to you for examination without one cent of payment to us. We don't ask a penny of you, but ship the books to you FREE. Look them over—read them as much as you want to; note the splendid photographs and drawings and then if you decide you want them, send us $2.00, and then only $3.00 a month until only $24.80 is paid. That is all; nothing more to pay us. If you send NOW we will include

Consulting Membership—FREE

Yes, we actually give you a certificate of membership in the AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY which entitles you to free consultation on any subject related to Automobile Engineering. Eighteen specialized experts are at your disposal—ready at any time to help you. With this library and this membership you ought to be able soon to know all there is to be known about autos. Note—In addition to all this, those who send now will be entitled to the services of our **EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT** without charge. We are in daily contact with firms all over the country who need good men and are willing to pay big. This service costs you nothing. Don't miss this special offer. Send now.

American Technical Society,
Automobile Division A-316, Chicago, Illinois.

You may send me your new complete Automobile Engineering library (1926 edition) 5 big volumes bound in flexo covers for ten days Free Examination. If satisfied, I will send you $2.00 then and $3.00 per month until the special low price of only $24.80 is paid, otherwise I will return them and owe you nothing. Include membership certificate and employment offer.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... *State*.....

Reference.....

CAMERA FREE

Your Choice—$100 Professional MOTION PICTURE Camera or Professional View Camera.

Be a Motion Picture Cameraman. Portrait, News or Commercial Photographer. Big money in all branches. Hundreds of positions now open pay $75 to $250 a week. Easy, fascinating work.

Big Money in Photography

In your spare time at home you can quickly qualify for a big paying position and you get your choice of these standard professional cameras absolutely FREE. Instruction also given in our great New York studios.

Write for FREE BOOK

Send name and address for big, new illustrated book on professional photography. Explains amazing opportunities. Write for your copy **tonight!**

New York Institute of Photography
Dept. 80. 10 West 33rd St., N. Y. City

Classified Advertising continued from page 4.

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED—MALE

HELP WANTED—FEMALE

HOW TO ENTERTAIN

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

MISCELLANEOUS

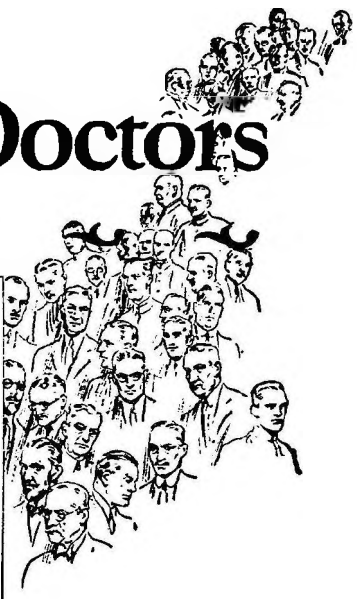
LINIMENTS

TOBACCO

PATENT ATTORNEYS

PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

Thousands of Doctors Recommend it



because . . . . it is quick

because . . . . it is efficient

because . . . . its tremendous tonic power has been amply demonstrated by hundreds of scientific tests at the hands of experts

because . . . doctors know the high value of its organic iron and manganese in this ideal form

because . . . they know it will not disturb the weakest stomach in young or old

Your friends may suggest trying this or that tonic. You do not know the ingredients or whether or not they may upset your entire system.

But your doctor KNOWS. When he prescribes Gude's Pepto-Mangan, you can have every confidence that it is the very best tonic made.

For physicians are the most careful and skeptical persons on this earth. They must know not only ingredients but in what proportions. They insist on numerous scientific tests by experts.

This conscientious care is of vital importance to YOU. When you know that Gude's Pepto-Mangan is ONE tonic that has been prescribed by thousands of the best doctors for over 34 years, there can be no question in your mind of its prompt and undoubted tonic power.

Its quickness and efficiency have been abundantly demonstrated by hundreds of carefully conducted blood tests at the hands of experts. And here are a few examples of what well-known physicians have written us:—

What Doctors Write

"I have used Gude's Pepto-Mangan (liquid) for about 25 years and I have recommended it professionally to scores of people in need of a good tonic, with very gratifying results."

"I have long known of Gude's Pepto-Mangan and have prescribed it for a number of years. An excellent tonic."

"The results obtained with Gude's Pepto-Mangan are very good and I highly recommend it."

So if you need a good tonic, prescribe Gude's Pepto-Mangan for yourself with full confidence that there is no better made. You can get Gude's Pepto-Mangan in either liquid or tablet form at all druggists.

Trial Package FREE

Mail the coupon and we will gladly send you a generous package of Gude's Pepto-Mangan tablets entirely free. Send today to Gude's Pepto-Mangan, Dept. 145, 51 Warren St., N. Y. City.

GUDE'S PEPTO-MANGAN
Dept. 145, 51 Warren St.
New York

Send me, free of all charges, sample package of GUDE'S PEPTO-MANGAN TABLETS.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....*State*.....

Gude's Pepto-Mangan

Prescribed by Physicians for 34 Years

WARNING—THERE IS ONLY ONE PEPTO-MANGAN, THAT IS GUDE'S PEPTO-MANGAN

FLYNN'S WEEKLY

VOLUME XXII SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1927 NUMBER 3

"There's your man," said Parker

THE EMPTY CHAIR

By Charles Somerville

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE HALL-MILLS MYSTERY WAS PERMITTED TO DIE, ALMOST WITHOUT A THOUGHT

A Story of Fact

BACK in May, 1910, I took a balloon trip for the New York *World* in company with Professor Todd, the astronomer of Amherst College, and Leo Stevens, an expert aeronaut.

We went up to make sky-high observations of Halley's comet. When I arrived at North Adams, Massachusetts, the jumping-off place, our balloon, the Cleveland, was already half filled to its capacity of eighty thousand cubic feet of gas.

Thus, half filled, it looked big enough, but when finally it was fully inflated, the thing was enormous, a ball as big as a four-storied house. We dangled on it for twelve hours in a small basket and were steadily

borne along by a fifty-mile an hour gale, landing in Hyacinth, Canada—about thirty-five miles north of Montreal—next morning.

Of course, I was as nervous as a witch all the time, yet managed not to show it to any great extent. But it was when we made our landing that I got the big shock of the trip.

For when Stevens had us down so that the basket was skipping along the surface of a wheat field he gave one hard, muscular tug at the rip-rope, uncorking the balloon, and the next instant the giant ball on which I had been floating thousands of feet in the air all night long was gone!

Just as swift as that!

And Then the Trial!

A flaccid heap of rubber and silk, on the field, had been made of the gigantic balloon in one sweep of the arm, a single, hard tug at a rope!

And now this last comes to my mind as a comparison strikingly applicable to the Hall-Mills trial.

Even as I had watched the inflation of the Cleveland, the public watched in the newspaper columns the swelling and swelling of the case of the prosecution against Mrs. Hall, her two brothers and her cousin, Carpender.

Thrilling forecast on forecast of tremendously damning evidence to come when the case finally rolled up to the jury, was daily made by officials of the prosecution!

Justice insidiously held at bay by social influence and corrupt dollars, was about to break its way through to a tremendous triumph! The truth was coming out at last! "Let the chips fall where they may!"

The quiet, elderly woman who had spent a lifetime in religious devotion and the practice of Christian ethics in all her worldly affairs, was to be exposed as a cold, calculating murderess, a merciless demon of vengeance with blood of ice!

Betrayed, humiliated by a younger husband who had found a younger love, she had called on her kinsmen to aid her in a savage reprisal on the guilty.

The stain on the shield of the House of Stevens must be wiped out in blood! This is what had happened—this is what the woman had done! And this is what genial Henry Stevens, amiable, gentle, simple Willie Stevens, and sane, cool-headed Carpender had joined her in doing!

Full proof of it was to be forthcoming to a jury, and Mrs. Hall and her fellow conspirators, after four years of the successful use of dollars and duplicity, were to be thoroughly unmasked, convicted, punished with death!

And then the actual trial.

Spatterings of innuendo, cunning suggestions of guilt, hazy identifications, the befuddled evidence of Willie Stevens's alleged finger-print on a card found at the feet of the dead clergyman under the crab-apple tree in De Russey's lane.

The evidence of the pig woman, hysterically recited from a stretcher, telling a story of recollections of the night of the murder more vivid and detailed than she had ever told before, even though her story grew more vivid and circumstantial each following time she told it in the four years succeeding the crime.

Then Henry Stevens took the stand.

It was precisely the same as when Leo Stevens used the rip-rope on the Cleveland up in Hyacinth.

Five in a Row

When Henry Stevens finished testifying the prosecution's balloon was gone. All that was left of it was a jumble of evidence on which no jury could be expected to convict any one. And all that had come out of it was a lot of gas.

The alibi Henry Stevens offered—the proof that he could not have been within fifty miles of the scene of the crime on the night of its occurrence—was impeccable, flawless in its credibility.

To be sure, it was friendly testimony, the testimony of his immediate neighbors in the seashore settlement where he made his summer and autumn home. But there were five such witnesses. And each was intelligent, clearly spoken, positive. And each of indubitable probity.

Neighbors or not, these weren't the sort of persons who could be induced to shield an assassin for love or money.

It might be suggested that liking for Henry Stevens may have caused them unconsciously to be persuaded honestly enough that the night of the blue-fishing had been Thursday, when in reality it was Wednesday or Friday night.

In the case of one such witness or even two, this might be regarded as possible. But when they came five in a row, all certain that the night they saw him, was in his company, was also the night of the murder in De Russey's lane scores of miles away, then doubt of the truth of their testimony completely dissolved.

The Opinion of the Herd

Moreover, there was the corroborating fact of first importance. This was the evidence of the two young women and their mother that they fixed the night positively as Thursday because on Friday the girls were scheduled to depart for college and that on Friday morning Henry Stevens came for them and their luggage and drove them to the railway depot.

There was the evidence of the station agent and the train conductor obtainable that the girls had, on this day, taken this journey, and evidence that they had been borne to the station in Henry Steven's wagon. This was iron-bound corroboration fixing the alibi of Stevens as the genuine article.

When Henry Stevens eliminated himself as possibly being present under the crab-apple tree when the Rev. Mr. Hall and Mrs. Eleanor Mills were slain, the State's case fell at the prosecutor's feet.

If not Henry Stevens, who of the other defendants could have performed such amazingly accurate shooting? Not Mrs. Hall possibly. Her declaration that she had never discharged a firearm in her life had to go unchallenged.

Not Willie. The jury once having seen and listened to him, taken the gauge of the childlike, gentle amiability of him, could not be successfully asked to discern beneath this character which he had sustained all his life, a murderous devil.

Nor was there any accusation against Carpender which described him as a pre-eminent target driller. Simpson had gone hot after Henry to prove him the chief in the actual slaying, and suddenly found himself confronted by the complete vanishment of the leading actor from the scene!

The more one thinks of it the more sheerly amazing it becomes that the State's sleuths appear never to have gone to work seriously to check off this alibi of Henry Stevens which from the first—four years ago—they knew he asserted to be in existence.

At any time to have thoroughly investigated this evidence that afforded Henry Stevens so complete an armor against the accusation of murder, must have warned the prosecution of the hopelessness of the task it had set itself and thus the fiasco of the Hall-Mills trial most probably would have been averted.

And what I am writing now is not in the way of taking a smack at "Little Corporal" Simpson, special prosecutor when he is down, when the promised Austerlitz he was to win for justice has turned into a Waterloo.

Four years ago I wrote in two magazine articles an analysis of the crime which eliminated the Stevens family as having any guilty knowledge of it, and protested against the authorities of Middlesex and Somerset Counties giving way completely in the direction of their investigations to the influence of the opinion of the herd.

First As a Suspect

But, egged by the public clamor which arose against the shocked and bereaved woman immediately after the finding of the slain bodies of the faithless husband and the faithless wife, the law's pack would follow only one scent, and that was the trail that led to Mrs. Hall's doorstep.

They grabbed at the obvious and, in my opinion, were led into a subtle trap when they did so, a trap into which they floundered to the immense, though, of course, necessarily hidden satisfaction of the real murderers of Hall and Eleanor Mills.

Mrs. Hall must be guilty! Who else had a motive for the murder of the couple but she and she alone? Who else could have been induced to join issue with the deceived and dishonored woman of wealth and quali-

ty but her immediate relatives? And her eldest brother, Henry, a sharpshooter, too!

All they could see—think of—was that Mrs. Hall had so obvious a motive for the deed. Certainly she had. But it seems never to have occurred to the investigators at any time that had murder come into Mrs. Hall's mind, this was a very fact calculated to stay her hand.

As an intelligent woman contemplating such a grave crime she could not have but realized that the instant it was discovered her name would come uppermost first of all as a suspect.

The Scattered Love Letters

This, indeed, is what the real murderers of Hall and Eleanor Mills realized. It was what they expected to happen. It was under this smoke screen they expected to escape and have escaped.

None who followed fully and closely the trial at Somerville can possibly adjudge the jury's verdict to have been of the Scotch variety—"not proven."

It was offered and given as a complete, hearty exoneration of Mrs. Hall, gentle, amiable Willie, clean-cut and manly, Henry Stevens and their cousin, Carpender.

Every one of the jurymen who was interviewed gave it as his conviction that the murderers of the clergyman and his light o' love still walk free and unsuspected.

And such is mine. And probably yours, if you have made a study of the mystery and the trial which recently ended.

In view of the present aspect of the case and what may come of it, it will be interesting to revert again to the beginning of the mystery. And the blunders of investigation at its very start.

All the opaque-minded sleuths could see, would consider, was the guilt of Mrs. Hall. She was the one who obviously had the most reason to commit the crime.

They would not consider that others might be using that very obviousness of motive to blind them.

Nor could any consideration be gained when absurdities in the case they were seeking to build against Mrs. Hall and her brothers were pointed out.

There was this, for instance: They pictured Mrs. Hall, after long knowledge of her husband's infidelity with Mrs. Mills, after long brooding over it, after coming into possession of the woman's love letters to her husband with which to confront them as gathering her forces for murder, as following the rector and Mrs. Mills to their place of rendezvous in De Russey's lane, and there effecting her terrible revenge.

She knew that in the nature of things she must be suspected, first of all, of the deed and that if by mischance unforeseen evidence was forthcoming that she and her brothers were in De Russey's lane at the time and place of murder, grim, disgraceful death in the electric chair was ahead for all of them.

Yet she left, scattered to the sport of wind and rain for hours, days, blowing about the bodies of the murdered dead, the only evidence which might serve to save her!

I mean the love letters of Mrs. Mills to Hall which the assassins left scattered on the grass!

These certainly would have been Mrs. Hall's most valuable asset in a defense of last resort—that of the "unwritten law."

Mrs. Hall's Protestations

For, however, judges may frown on it, skillful lawyers have a way, many ways, of worming such a plea to the attention of the jury. A defense of insanity at the time of the commission of the crime would have amply provided it. And the emotionalism of juries where gravely wronged women come before them as murder defendants is notorious in the land.

Yet she left these invaluable letters behind when they might so easily have been returned to the rector's desk, there to be found by the investigators of the police and claimed on her behalf by her attorneys! Yet she abandoned them to all probability of obliteration by rain from the skies or rats of the field!

Then the lightning change which had taken place in the character of Mrs. Hall—if you were to believe the detectives. A woman who for more than fifty years had led a flawless Christian life, both in prayer and practice, turns suddenly into a blood-

thirsty ogre over a wrong which most persons are satisfied to settle in the divorce courts.

When Mrs. Hall protested that she had known nothing of the liason between the rector and the choir singer, was unaware of their meetings, their love letters and their plan to elope to Japan, the investigators would give her protest no credence.

Yet there was the indubitable fact that Mrs. Hall had in this while been giving the rector considerable sums of money for his private bank account.

As if, knowing of the intended flight of Hall and Mrs. Mills to distant lands, she would have placed herself in the position of financing the trip!

The Benefit of the Doubt

They said it was impossible that Mrs. Hall, as she testified at her trial, could have been unaware of the illicit romance going on between her husband and giddy Mrs. Mills.

In doing this, they deliberately turned their back on the facts of her reputation and the position of unique dignity and seclusion that her wealth had given her as regards the women of her husband's congregation.

They could have found out that Mrs. Hall had never made herself one with any of the women cliques of the church, detested gossip in all its forms and had never permitted the parlor of the rectory to become a salon of small scandal.

It is a trite observation to point out that the person most seriously concerned in such affairs as the Hall-Mills situation is the last to hear of the matter. Especially would this apply in the case of Mrs. Hall.

Those who knew of it would not have dared go to her without absolute proof of what they charged, and this they did not possess. As rector and intensely active church-worker Hall and Mrs. Mills had been hypocritically able to throw a fine disguise over the reality of their romantic association.

The only person who had seen the man and woman in a compromising position was a servant in the Hall home, who came upon Mrs. Mills sitting on Hall's knee in the rector's study in the church. She swore she had kept her own counsel, had never whispered a word of it to Mrs. Hall.

Again the investigators persisted in seeing something implying guilt in every action of Mrs. Hall on the night of the disappearance of the rector and his light o' love, when in reality every move Mrs. Hall made, every word she spoke were those of a woman who had suddenly come upon a double cause for great mental distraction—the disappearance of her husband firstly, and the fact that this disappearance was in the company of another woman.

Her husband was the rector of a church. And she knew that to report to the police the simultaneous disappearance of her husband and Mrs. Mills must have the effect of immediately bringing a crash of scandal about her ears.

It is a fairly good indication that she was ignorant of the true relations of the pair that she did not hand them over immediately to public censure, that she gave them the benefit of the doubt and waited hopefully through the night for an outcome of the affair that might lift the miasma in which it was beclouded.

When Mob Madness Ruled

The fact that she first made her own private search, with only her brother, Willie, as her confidant, for trace of the couple, and waited until seven o'clock the next morning before making a guarded inquiry to public sources of information, was simply that of a decent, dignified woman fearful for the safety of the man she loved and fearful that in her distraction she would bring upon him a scandal that might prove later to be an injustice.

In other words, Mrs. Hall hoped to the last that the worst wasn't true.

But the herd refused to see that. The mob was after her. The community angel of mercy was suddenly becoming a devil, a fierce, vicious, ugly old woman who had baited a younger man with her money to marry her and had become murderously vindictive when she found him out to be faithless to their altar oaths.

It is curious and further proof of the mob madness which had determined Mrs.

Hall to be guilty, that little or no attention was given at the time to Mills, the husband of the slain woman, as possibly having a hand in the crime. Although his motive was even greater then Mrs. Hall's might have been.

For he had been cognizant of his wife's romantic attachment, soul and intellectual affinity, for the good-looking rector. Mrs. Mills had flouted the facts in the very face of her husband. He had even seen the rector's love letters. Was it possible that a man could be so spineless as to accept all that without reprisal?

One of Parker's Jobs

It was Ellis Parker, county detective of Mount Holly, one of the best detectives in New Jersey, the country, for that matter, who asked the question first.

But in his quick, quiet way he soon satisfied himself that Jimmy Mills had a trustworthy alibi and had been no more concerned in the murders than Mrs. Hall. For Parker from the first declined to believe that Mrs. Hall and her brothers had plotted or executed the crime.

It is a pity that Parker wasn't further retained, for the real murderers of Hall and Mrs. Mills would have then been in danger and might not be going free as they are to-day, smirking inwardly in their satisfaction at having so successfully hoodwinked the law by directing its investigators to the wrong scent, which the obvious, superficial aspect of the case directed toward the wronged Mrs. Hall.

It was Ellis Parker who from deductions drawn from a footprint brought to justice the slayers of old Brunen, the circus man. And it was Parker who solved the Camp Dix murder mystery six months after the United States Army Intelligence men had confessed themselves beaten.

A soldier disappeared from the field at rifle practice. Near-by woods and all surrounding country were searched and he wasn't found. Nearly a year later his skeleton was discovered by boys who were romping in the woods.

Field animals and time had completely destroyed his flesh and clothing. All that was left were the metal insignia of his regimentals. And his leather revolver holster—empty!

There was a bullet hole in his skull, but his pistol was nowhere to be found. It was murder.

But the army sleuths put in weeks and weeks of theorizing and searching and got nowhere. Parker's reputation for remarkable past performances caused him to be called in.

His first request for assistance was regarded as amazing by the commandant.

"I want to interview every man in this young man's particular company," he said. "Please get out the roll and send them to me one by one."

As they came, Parker asked each man of his particular movements on the day of the disappearance of the murdered soldier.

One by one they gave their answers as best they could, till toward the end of the "G's" on the alphabetically arranged roster a private named Gregory stood before him.

He questioned Gregory as he had the others, and when that young soldier left the commandant's office, Parker turned to that gentleman and said:

"There's your man."

"What on earth makes you think so?" demanded the astonished officer. "He answered questions more promptly and fully than any of the others."

The Strange Wound

"That's just it," said Parker. "He remembers too damn much of exactly what he did on a day more than a year and a half ago!"

And on that shrewd observation began an investigation which ended in Gregory's confession that he had murdered the other soldier over a rivalry in love.

I think that if Parker had continued on the investigation he would have concerned himself chiefly with the one, big clew that received at the trial scarcely more than passing notice.

I do not mean the fact that the crime was committed by a marksman, expert with the pistol.

But I mean the weird and ghastly clew offered by the cutting of Mrs. Mills's throat from ear to ear after the woman was dead.

Mind you, here was a wound that wasn't made to stop her outcries. Whatever outcry she may have made was all over then. She was dead. There were four bullets in her brain.

She was silenced forever when some one knelt over her corpse, threw back the helpless head and applied a knife with ghoulish savagery deeply into the flesh.

One slash from ear to windpipe wasn't enough to slake the hatred back of the knife. The blade was sunk deeper and carried entirely across the throat. And her tongue was cut out!

This terrible wounding of the dead marks a sign of a special vengeance. It is maniacal in character. It plainly indicates a mark of reprisal put upon Mrs. Mills for a special reason.

And the New Jersey authorities should, from the first, have given it their own special attention and have pursued the avenue of investigation which it so clearly suggests.

What did that ghoulishly inflicted wound on the dead mean? What was the cause of its making? What is the significance of the special marks of vengeance—the obliterated tongue, the severed throat?

That tongue shall speak no more, deceive no more, beguile no more!

That throat shall sing no more!

There is nothing fantastic in the deduction that is more fantastic than the wound itself.

It was a thoroughly fantastic vengeance —the couple trapped at their rendezvous, slain without mercy, the woman attacked, slashed after death, the proof of their guilty love tossed between their dead bodies in letters written by the woman and doubtless robbed from the rector's church study, for it is inconceivable that Hall went about with a bulk of these incriminating letters in his pockets.

This was not such a vengeance as the Stevens family by all its training and traditions would have taken. For had they decided on murder it would have been with the consent and dictation of their consciences that such a deed was right. It would have been an open affair.

If Mrs. Hall had felt herself justified to kill she would have publicly shot them down. If Henry Stevens had decided that the honor of his family must be avenged in blood it would have been his way also.

But what of the curious religious sects that exist? Sects that make it their business to secretly score against "sinners?"

What of the religious fanatics to be found among them? What of the men and women among them who conceived themselves secretly to be agents of the Almighty?

The existence of such is common, although they are not easy to uncover until their religious insanity takes on the last stage of open, violent dementia.

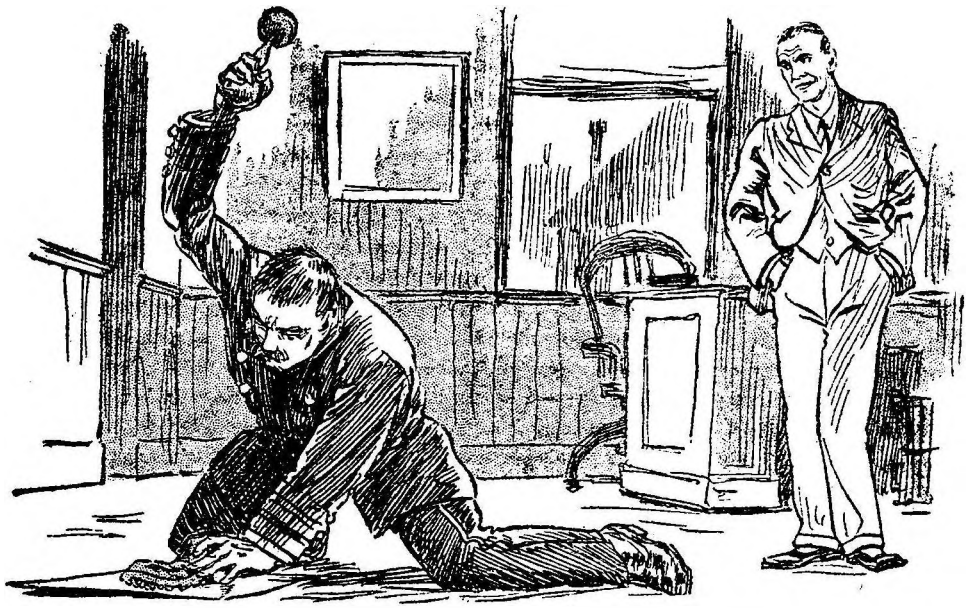
What of the illicit romance of the clergyman and the choir singer having fallen under such fanatical eyes, under an espionage directed by the frequently amazing cunning of the insane?

What of a decision being made by such conspirators that by blood atonement must the false priest and the "painted woman" pay for their transgressions? And the special marks of such atonement on the Lorelei who had lured the priest from his sanctity and trust?

That tongue shall beguile no more! The voice of the sinful must no longer be allowed to sound in the choir of the House of God!

And the knife severed the tongue and slit the throat of the dead woman in sign of it.

Here was a direction of investigation that was never followed, though the wound in the throat of the murdered woman cried out the way.



He hammered the boot methodically with the dumb-bell

THE STAPLES CASE

By Victor Maxwell

HE LONGED TO SEE HIS NAME EMBLAZONED AMONG THE STARS, AND SO HE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL

"THERE'S your eight-point buck," said Detective Sergeant Riordan, dumping a splendid animal on the floor of Captain Brady's office. "You said you wanted one, and I was particular to get it. How's things been since I was away?"

Captain Brady swung round from his desk and gazed in frank admiration at the stag his chief aid had dropped upon the floor. Then his eyes rose, and he surveyed Riordan, clad in high-top boots, corduroy knickers, a gorgeously colored flannel shirt open at the neck, and an old army hat. Getting up, he extended his hand, and his lieutenant gripped it warmly.

"Boy, boy, I'm sure glad to see you back," said Brady. "And I'm sure glad to get that buck. I didn't suppose you'd have any luck when you went away; season being so dry, and one thing or another. Have a good trip?"

"I'll say we did, chief. Got a-plenty, too. Aside from game, I ran off the road coming back and busted a wheel and had to lay over at Springers till I could get a new one shipped out.

"I couldn't wire; out there in the wilderness they don't know what a telegram is, and the forest fire put the telephone out of business. So I just came in as fast as I could. Want me to take that there venison out to your house for you? It won't be far out of my way as I drive home to shave and get into civilized clothes again."

"Never mind that, boy. Never mind changing your clothes or anything. I got a job for you right now."

" But, chief, I can't go out like this. I'd scare all the city people—"

" Who said anything about your going out," interrupted Captain Brady. " You sit down an' let me talk to you. I want to fill you up. Then you can go home and shave, and while you're doing it you can think. What I need right now, boy, is your head, not your clothes."

Riordan dropped into his chair, and taking a pipe from one of the pockets distributed about his hunting clothes, lighted the already well-filled bowl. " Something bust, has it?" he asked.

" Just about that, boy. Yes, I'd say something's bust. You know old man Staples?"

" The nut on orchids?"

" Uh-huh. Nut is right. Well, he's murdered."

" When?"

" Now hold your horses, boy. You've been away on vacation, and I don't suppose you've seen a paper since you've been gone, have you? Well, I'll start at the beginning and tell it to you."

Captain Brady swung to his desk for a moment and picked up a file of reports, then turned to face his aid again, holding them in his lap.

" This thing broke on Tuesday, the eighth. The sergeant on the desk downstairs, about eleven in the morning, sent me up a ' missing person ' report to the effect that old man Staples hadn't been home since the previous Saturday. That would be the fifth.

" The sergeant said he figured maybe I'd be interested, seeing Staples was pretty well known. The report was put in by Staples's secretary—here it is. I'll read it to you:

" ' Vincent Mallory, private secretary to Willard P. Staples, 90 Glenn Avenue, reports that his employer, Willard P. Staples, has been missing from his home, same address as informant, since about noon on Saturday, the fifth. When last seen the missing person was wearing a dark gray suit, light gray overcoat, black derby hat, black shoes and socks, and was carrying a Malacca cane. Missing person is described as about sixty years of age, five feet, eight; weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds, narrow face, high forehead, grayish hair, short gray beard, no mustache, no marks or scars, light blue eyes, wears gold-rimmed spectacles, slightly deaf. Business of missing person, retired capitalist, formerly associate professor of botany at the State university. If located please notify secretary or Keefe, Sanderson & Keefe, his attorneys.'

" Well, I told the sergeant he had a promising head on him, and that he did just right to notify me. Old Staples, you know, boy, must be worth somewhere around a million dollars or so, and that place of his out on Glenn Avenue is one of the show spots of the city.

" After I'd soaked up the report I called up Keefe, Sanderson & Keefe, and got hold of the younger partner, Walter Keefe, and asked him if he had any ideas. He said he was very much alarmed about Staples and that he hoped we'd bend every energy we had, and all that sort of stuff, to find him.

" That was when I began to wish you were here, boy, instead of out shooting deer for me. If I'd thought I could have got a wire to you I'd have sent one, but I knew it was no use. So I got hold of Willis and told him to go out and see what he could see.

" Willis went out to Staples's place and came back in about two hours just as wise as when he went out. All he knew was that the secretary was worried, and that Staples had gone out before lunch the previous Saturday, saying he had an appointment with a man about some orchids, and that he'd probably take him to lunch somewhere down town and wouldn't be back till dinner time.

" The secretary usually takes his weekends by himself, and he told Willis he went out himself along about two o'clock, down to Bayshore, where his sister has a place, and stayed there till Sunday night, when he came back to town, met some fellows he knew, and they all made a night of it. He spent Sunday night at the St. Charles Hotel, and went out to Staples's place Monday morning about nine, only to find out that the old man hadn't been home. He questioned the help out at the house, then

called up Keefe, Sanderson & Keefe, and they advised him to report the matter to the police. Which he did.

"Well, on his way back Willis checked at the St. Charles Hotel, and Mallory had registered there Sunday night about midnight, and was called at half past seven Monday morning, checking out soon after. Otherwise there didn't seem to be anything showing.

"After Willis reported that much I sent him back to drill the secretary about this man the old boy had a date with to discuss orchids, but Mallory said he didn't know who it was; that the first Staples had said to him about it was that he was going out to meet him. Didn't have any idea who it was.

"Said old Staples often did that: some traveler or flower shop would write him they had a new and rare orchid, and the old boy would light out and dicker for it, and wouldn't be happy till he bought it and brought it home to put in his collection. Sometimes some skipper on a ship, or some mate, would have the orchid, and the old man would go down and buy it. Didn't usually say anything about it till he came home with the prize.

"Willis not being able to turn up any more, I put Halloran and Curtis to work. I told Halloran to make the water front and see if he could pick up any news of guys coming in with rare orchids, and I had Curtis drill the florists and greenhouses.

"They both came back with nothing. There hadn't even been a ship come in for a week from the tropics, where orchids grow. That was all we turned up Tuesday, except that I had the report posted, and as they did the same thing downstairs, it meant that every man, in uniform and out, was supposed to have his eyes and ears open.

"Wednesday the boys did just as well. Nobody got anything, not even a smell. Wednesday was a hard day for me, there was more small stuff coming in than usual, and so I let it go at that. Thursday morning, however, I decided I'd go out to Staples's place myself and have a look around. That was when I began to wish you were here, boy.

"You know Staples's place, out on Glenn Avenue? It's more like a park than a private place; beautiful grounds, all kinds of trees and things, and three big greenhouses, just filled with orchids. Private heating plant, private water system, and a great big house with everything in it a man could want, except a wife and children. Staples's wife has been dead a long time, and his two boys have grown up and married and gone to New York.

"Well, I went all over the place, looked in the cisterns, under the plant racks, in the storerooms, all over the house. Nothing out of the way and no sign of Staples. The help didn't know anything. Said the old man hadn't seemed excited or morbid or in any way different. No trace of a woman or a love affair. No enemies that anybody knew about. Nothing. And so at last I got down to Staples's study.

"I'd been over that before, of course, but I went back there with the secretary, and we began to go through his papers. Nothing there. I was sitting at the old man's desk, thinking and trying to dope out some kind of a lead, when my eye fell on his desk calendar.

"It was one of these things with a leaf for each day, on a little metal stand. The leaf on top was Saturday, the fifth. I looked round the room. There was a day calendar on the wall in front of his desk, and that was turned up to Thursday, the tenth.

"Then there was another calendar, with dates for a whole week showing, and that was set for the week of Sunday, the sixth. But the day calendar was still at the fifth. I picked it up and looked at it, and written on the bottom of the sheet was just a line in lead pencil. It said: 'Pier B, Ocean Terminal.'

"I showed it to Mallory, the secretary. He said it was the old man's writing, but he didn't know what it was about. I asked him who looked after the office, and he said he did. I flicked the other sheets of the day calendar over, and there was nothing written on them. 'How come,' I said to him, 'that you've brought these other two calendars up to date, but you left this one set for last Saturday?'

"He said he hadn't noticed it till I called his attention to it, that he'd overlooked it. Laughed and said he had a bit of a head when he came to work Monday, and in his hurry to fix things up for the old man he'd evidently overlooked it, and that later, when he found out Staples hadn't been home, he had other things to worry about.

"'That's all right,' I said. 'But you've changed that wall calendar since. Stop worrying, did you?'

"He saw what I was driving at, and flushed. Then he said the old man was fussy about his desk, and he never bothered with it much, except to straighten it up, pile the papers neatly, and so on. Well, I put him through rough then. But I couldn't get anything out of him except that it was the old man's writing on that desk calendar, and he didn't know what it was. Not a thing else. So I told him to come with me, and we'd go down to the Ocean Terminal and see what we could find out.

II

"WE went down there and Summerfield, the manager, took hold. He knew old Staples, but hadn't seen him for a couple of months. He didn't know anything about any orchids. I told him we were particularly interested in Pier B, and asked him if there was anything about that. He began to look sort of funny, and then he told us to follow him. We went out through the terminals and down to Pier B, way down at the end of the place. It hadn't been used, hardly, since the war, and was dirty and dusty and full of rats. Halfway down the pier he took us up a stairway to the clearstory, in which there'd been built a lot of storage rooms. About two weeks ago, he said, a man who looked like he might be a Spaniard had come to him and wanted to rent a storage room about ten by ten, in a high and dry place that wouldn't likely be disturbed for a year. Said he had a lot of dried onions and wanted to put them away till the market got stronger. He looked over the place and finally leased a loft over Pier B. Paid the charges on it for a year, and said he wanted to cover the inside of it with sheet tin, so as to keep the moisture out.

"That was all right with Summerfield, and the next day or so he came down and nailed tin all over the inside of the place. Summerfield himself didn't recall any dried onions coming in, but he hadn't been particularly interested, seeing he had his money in advance. Well, he took us up to the storeroom

"It was padlocked on the outside. I'd begun to get pretty curious by that time, for the dried onions stuff didn't sound good. I figured it was bootleg. Summerfield looked sheepish, and said he guessed it was, too. So we decided to have a look. We got a bar and pried off the staples that held the lock, and opened the door.

"Boy, you ought to have been there. The room had one window, opening on the water side, the lower side of the pier, away from the rest of the terminal. The window wasn't there, no sash or frame even. And the room was absolutely bare, no dried onions, no tin, nothing. Summerfield said we must have got into the wrong place.

"We both looked around, and then we began to see things. There were marks on the walls where nails had been pulled out, and they ran in lines up and down and across. You could see where the sheets of tin had been tacked on.

"Looking closer we found marks where something like a flat chisel, about an inch and a half wide, had been used to pry the tin loose with.

"Apparently the whole place had been tinned—all over the floor and up on the walls to a height of about four feet. And evidently the tin had been pried off and the window casing along with it, and probably the whole thing thrown out in the river.

"It was so funny it was interesting. I went over the walls again, and on one of them there was a streak of dark red dots, like somebody had taken a brush and given it a shake and the drops of whatever were on it had flown off. I told Summerfield to go down to his office and telephone the river patrol to come down with their launch, that I'd wait. While he was gone I scraped off some of the wood with the red dots on it and put the shavings in an en-

velope. The secretary guy said he guessed he'd better be going, that there wasn't much use of his waiting, and I slapped my cuffs on him and told him to sit down and be a good dog. He didn't put up any holler at all, just squatted down on the floor and watched me.

"While I was waiting I went all over the walls of that room, and three or four places there were red dots or splotches. I marked 'em all with rings with my lead pencil.

"Pretty soon the launch came along, and I told the boys to tie up to the pier below and throw their grappling irons out and see what they could find. It wasn't more than the second or third haul they made before the irons brought up a mess of tin, all crumpled up, and with nails sticking in the edges.

"Summerfield, who'd come back, said it was the tin that this Spaniard party had nailed on the walls. I told the boys in the river patrol to drag around by the terminal till they were sure there wasn't anything else on the bottom of the slip there but water, and then report to me.

"Then I took the cuffs off Mallory, the secretary, and got Summerfield to station one of his men on the pier as a watchman, and drove back to headquarters. The secretary guy I had locked up for investigation. The chips of wood I'd scraped off I sent over to the city health bureau and told 'em to find out what the spots were. Halloran and Curtis I sent down to get a description of the Spaniard party from Summerfield, and to locate him if they could. And, take it from me, boy, I sure wished you were around here.

"Friday the health bureau wiseacres reported that the spots on the wood were blood, and they sent some of the shavings up to the university to see what kind of blood, so as to be sure of it. Nothing turned up on the Spaniard. And there wasn't a word, all this time, on old man Staples either. Saturday the university reported that the shavings had human blood on them.

"Meanwhile the river patrol had fished out the rest of the tin and the window frame, which was still nailed to the tin—or the tin was still nailed to it. The stuff showed that it had been ripped off in a hurry.

"There was one piece had a footprint on it, or, rather, the imprint of a hob-nailed boot. It was good and plain, the whole foot. From the way the tin was bent and the nails still sticking in the edges, this boot mark was made on the inside.

"The tin and stuff was all dumped on the terminal pier, down below the room, and I sent a couple of long-headed men down there from the Bertillon room, and they nailed the stuff up in place again, after straightening it out, in the same positions as it had been. This boot mark, then, was just about in the middle of the room."

"That stuff all down there yet, chief?" interrupted Riordan.

"It's all there, boy, nicely locked up and waiting for you to go look at it. The rent of the place is paid for a year by the Spaniard, so we're not putting anybody out. Well, we didn't seem to be getting anywhere, or turning up anything, so I decided to give it to the papers, in the hopes that somebody would squawk.

"So I slipped it to 'em for Sunday morning and let 'em draw their own conclusions. Which they did. You got to hand it to those reporters, they're wise birds, all right.

"They said what I didn't, but what I was thinking—that old man Staples was lured down to this tinned-up room on the expectation of seeing some rare orchids, and then, when they got him there, the gang, or whoever it was, not only murdered him, but cut him up neat and threw what was left of him and the tin and all the evidence out into the river. The tin, it sank and stayed there, but the rest of it was rolled along by the current, and maybe it will be found and maybe it won't.

"The noise stirred up a lot of excitement, but nary a squawk. A lot of people had seen Spanish looking guys, but when we ran down the tips we didn't get anything. And now you're back, and I've slipped it to you."

"You found a coat, too, with cuts across the front of it, and a new meat ax, too, didn't you?" asked Riordan.

Captain Brady nodded his head. "Yeah,

found them yesterday, down the river. I see you've been reading the papers. The meat ax they fetched up just beyond where they found the tin, and the slashed coat had caught on a snag down at the end of the basin, where it empties into the river. Mallory, the secretary, identified it as one of old Staples's coats."

"But not the one he wore when last seen," said Riordan.

Brady looked up sharply, eyed his aid for some minutes, and then laughed shortly.

"Boy, you gave me a scare for a minute, you did. Made me think of something. But I guess you read that in the papers; some reporter, most likely, wanted to make his story different. How in heck could anybody know if the coat we fished out of the river was the one he wore when last seen? We didn't see him last, it was the gang that killed him who saw him last."

Sergeant Riordan got up from his chair, knocked the ashes, now cold, from his pipe, and restored it to his pocket.

"Want me to take that buck home for you?" he asked. "It won't be far out of my way. I guess I'd better go home and have a hot bath and a shave, then come down to work."

"Don't bother taking that carcass out to my house, boy. I'll get one of the motor cycle men to haul it out in a sidecar, and promise him a side of venison for his trouble. And if a hot bath and shave is all that's bothering you, there's the gymnasium on the top floor. Your dress uniform's hanging in the locker. Change here and it will save time. You'll have enough to do."

Riordan smiled. "How'd you know I don't want to go out and work on this dolled up like a Spaniard or something, chief?"

"'Cause, boy, I'm still in possession of my faculties. If you'd wanted to work covered up, you got the best layout on right now, them hunting clothes and the whiskers you've raised. Go on upstairs and spruce up, and then go out to Staples's place and take a look around. That's what you want to do."

Detective Sergeant Riordan moved to his locker, took down his dress uniform, found a change of underclothing in a parcel he kept for just such emergencies, and walked toward the door.

"You got Mallory in yet?" he asked, pausing.

"No, I haven't got Mallory in yet. I held him for forty-eight hours and couldn't get a darned thing out of him that was any good. So I had to let him go. He's out at the house. I got his promise to stay there till this thing was cleared up; and to discourage his leaving, and also to keep the crowd moving, I got the chief to assign two men on fixed post out there. Big crowd rubbering at the house all the time, and wanting in to look over the grounds."

"Well, I'll go take a look, as you say," said Riordan, as he swung through the door.

III

AFTER he had gone Captain Brady sat for a time glancing critically at the notes and reports he had on the case, and then spent a few minutes in admiration of the buck Riordan had brought him. Smiling, he telephoned the garage and "borrowed" one of the motor cycle men to take the trophy out to his house; and then turned to other detail matters in hand. Twenty minutes later Riordan again entered the office, this time resplendent in gold braid and blue, and with his face utterly devoid of any suggestion of the heavy growth of hair that had covered it when he returned from his vacation trip.

"You did a quick job, boy," said Brady, approvingly. "Want me to go out to Staples's with you, or would you rather go alone?"

"Seeing as you've made such a hit with the secretary chap, chief, maybe I'd better go alone. You might rile him up some."

The doorman interrupted any reply Brady might have had in mind, thrusting in his head to say:

"Mr. Saunderson of the *Chronicle*, cap'n. Wants to see you private on something important."

Brady waved for the newspaper man to be admitted. He came in hurriedly, and

though he tried to conceal his excitement, his eyes showed he had something which he believed vital. He nodded to Riordan, and then pulled up a chair beside Brady's desk.

"This came in by messenger boy, with a dollar, about half an hour ago, captain," he said, putting a piece of typewritten paper on the officer's desk. "Down at the *Chronicle* office—the darned fool girl on the desk didn't notice what it was at first, and didn't get the messenger boy's number, or anything."

Riordan moved over so he could also see the paper, and with Brady read:

> PERSONAL.—W. P. Staples, his body will be surrendered to proper parties on payment of enough money. Put ad like this in paper, saying how much and maybe we will do business.

Sergeant Riordan turned away and sat down at his desk.

"You going to print this thing in your paper?" asked Brady.

"Sure, cap. Twice. Once where it's paid for, and then again on the front page. I'm writing the story. Got it photographed before I brought it down to you. All I ask you to do is not to tip off the other boys till it's printed. I played fair and brought it to you, now you've got to give us a break on it."

"How'd you happen to think to write it?" asked Brady, levelly.

Saunderson laughed. "On the level, cap, it's genuine. Really came into the office. In the old days, maybe, I'd 'a' tried to fake something like that, but not now. Why, we got a man out now trying to trace the messenger."

"I'll bet you have. You newspaper men sure follow all tips fast. Too fast, sometimes. I've seen the day when a flock of reporters have gummed a case all up. Much obliged for bringing this thing in, after you've photographed it."

He turned and pushed a button on his desk, and to the responding doorman barked:

"Willis, or Curtis or Halloran—any one of 'em."

It was Halloran who lumbered in and almost saluted. The big detective never did get his hand much higher than his stomach in his gesture of salute. Captain Brady handed him the typewritten slip.

"Some messenger kid dragged this up to the *Chronicle* half an hour ago. Find the kid. Find out what kind of a guy gave it to him. If it listens like a reporter, find the reporter. I want to know if that thing is on the level or if it's a wise-crack. Slide out on it now, Halloran."

The big sleuth again made a gesture of salute and lurched out of the office.

"You can say in your story," said Brady, turning to Saunderson, "that Captain of Detectives Brady appreciates—"

"Knew you'd say that, cap, an' I've already written it. Told the world how much you appreciate the aid the *Chronicle* is giving the police department."

"I wasn't going to say that at all, me lad. I know you too well to give you permission to blarney us. You do it whenever you feel like it, anyway. What I was going to say was that you can put a piece in your story that Captain of Detectives Brady, appreciating the gravity of this case, has assigned Detective Sergeant Riordan to take complete charge of the investigation. I guess the public knows Riordan well enough so that they'll feel confident that we're working on this thing."

"You give that to the rest of the boys, cap?"

"Not yet; Riordan just got here."

"All right—don't tell the rest of the gang, and I'll put it in a box-lead at the top of the story. That will be two scoops. Much obliged."

The reporter breezed out, and Brady laughed.

"He's a good boy," he said. "Full of pep. What you think of that 'personal,' boy?"

"I think it's real, chief. If this was a common case, some of these reporters might take a chance on faking one, but Staples is too big a man to monkey with. But I don't think you'll get much out of the messenger kid. Well, I'm going out to 90 Glenn Avenue and have a look."

"Hop to it, boy. And remember you're in charge of the investigation, and whatever you want you can have. The chief 'll back you up in anything—he told me so."

Riordan nodded and departed. Down in the garage he avoided his own mud-stained and travel-marked machine, and motioned to one of the drivers of the two reserve touring cars to climb into one and play chauffeur, and so, in state, rolled out to the Staples residence. His dazzling uniform visibly impressed the servant who opened the door, and he could see that it also had its effect on young Mallory, when he met him in the library.

"Mr. Mallory? Detective Sergeant Riordan is my name. I've been specially assigned to this unfortunate affair, and I thought I'd come round and have a little talk with you. I was away on another matter when Mr. Staples disappeared; had I been here, I hope I could have spared you the unpleasant experience you had. Our jail is clean, but that's about all you can say for it."

Mallory smiled. "It was all right," he said. "They treated me very well. I think the captain probably thought he was justified in holding me. One has to suspect everybody in a homicide, I suppose."

Riordan waved his hands apologetically. "Not everybody, Mr. Mallory. In this case, for instance, not you. Anybody can see that you are a man of refinement, and not a butcher. Tell me, you knew Mr. Staples intimately; did you ever notice any peculiarities in his behavior?"

"No, I don't think I did."

"Was he irritable, Mr. Mallory? I mean, sometimes did he seem easily displeased with—with little things you may have done, or may not have done?"

"No, sergeant. He was very even-tempered."

"Just what was your work, Mr. Mallory?"

"Well, I opened all but his personal mail, and sorted it. A great deal of it I was able to answer without referring it to him. Requests for rare bulbs, you know, or letters asking advice on horticulture. He got a great many of those.

"Then, you know, many people wanted to go through the greenhouses, and I looked after that. Then there were routine matters, such as his dues in the various organizations of which he was a member, the cataloguing of his papers, his accounts—all the things that a private secretary must do. The keeping his engagements listed—"

"Of course, Mr. Mallory. Now, more personal than those things, what did you do? Did Mr. Staples ask your advice, for instance, about his addresses, his public appearances? What to wear, whether or not he was pleased at the attention he received? Things like that?"

"I don't get just what you're driving at, sergeant."

"Well, I'll tell you. I want to get from you an intimate character study of Mr. Staples. What kind of a man was he? What kind of men were his real friends—not just his acquaintances?"

"Oh, I see!" Mallory leaned back in his chair and considered. "I should say," he said at length, "that Mr. Staples was rather a lonely man, if you know what I mean. He had very few real friends. I think, perhaps, Bishop Gale was the only real friend he had in the city. The addresses he made he gave rather because of his devotion to botany or horticulture, I think, and not to please any of the individuals to whom he spoke.

"I have never seen him concerned over the way his appearances were greeted. He did not seem to care. But he was very sensitive to what Bishop Gale thought of his actions. He would often ask me: 'What do you think the bishop thought of that?' Or: 'Mallory, do you think I stayed too long at the bishop's? Do you think I tired him?' He had a deep regard for the bishop, sergeant."

"Do you know whether he left a will?"

"I am quite sure he did, sergeant. Keefe, Sanderson and Keefe drew it, and have it."

"Has it been offered for probate?"

"I think not, sergeant. Last time I spoke to Mr. Keefe about it, he said he was waiting until the body was found, or there was some legal indication of his actual death."

"Oh, then you think Mr. Keefe doubts that he was murdered?"

"Not at all, sergeant. We are all of us sure of it. But you know the law. A man must be known to be dead—"

The secretary did not finish the sentence,

and Sergeant Riordan changed the subject abruptly.

"About women, now?" he asked.

"Absolutely not, sergeant," emphatically answered Mallory. "Since Mrs. Staples passed on he has positively avoided women. A little 'balmy' on that subject, I should say. He actually shuns women: he will not speak before women's clubs, and only when it is absolutely necessary will he go to a reception where women are."

"Any women servants?"

"Two, sergeant. A sort of combination housekeeper and maid, Mrs. Adams, and a woman who scrubs and does the simple washing. Mrs. Adams is a widow, and was employed when his wife was living. The charwoman, Margaret, has been with us for six years."

"Do you mind, Mr. Mallory, if we take a look at his study?"

"Not at all, sergeant. Just follow me."

IV

THE secretary led the way into the room Brady had described, and Riordan's first glance was at the day-calendar upon Mr. Staples's desk. Its topmost sheet bore the current date, the fifteenth. Riordan sat down in the big armchair that Staples had used when he was there, and looked slowly about the room. Mallory stood watching him for awhile, and then dropped into a chair on the opposite side of the desk. After a lengthy and slow survey of everything in sight from his seat, Riordan looked at Mallory.

"You spoke some time ago," he said, "of Mr. Staples's great regard for Bishop Gale, and of his questioning you about the impression he made upon the bishop. What was the last inquiry of that nature that you remember, Mr. Mallory?"

"I really can't recall," the secretary answered at once.

"Well, try and recall it." Riordan's voice for the first time had lost its pleasant quality, and bordered upon the harsh. The secretary flushed slightly.

There was silence in the room for several minutes. Suddenly Sergeant Riordan broke it, snapping out:

"This desk calendar, when did you tear the leaves off and bring it up to date? When Captain Brady was here it showed Saturday, the fifth. Now it shows the fifteenth."

"I — I — I don't remember when I changed it."

"What'd you change it for?"

Mallory pulled himself together. "I must have changed it this morning, when I was in here. I always try to keep everything ready, just as if Mr. Staples were here—it helps to pass away the time."

"You didn't change it before, when Brady was here. But you changed the others. What was the idea?"

"Why—why, there was a notation on it. I thought that ought to be left, that everything ought to be left just as it was when he disappeared."

"You told Captain Brady that you didn't know there was anything written on it till he called your attention to it."

Mallory bit his lip. "It was such a trivial detail," he said, almost stammering, "that I can't really remember. I don't see why both of you—"

"What was the last thing about the bishop that he worried about?" cut in Riordan.

"The gar—really, I don't know."

Sergeant Riordan leaned back again and looked about the room once more. Presently he closed his eyes, and sat as if he had dozed off. The minutes passed and he made no move. Mallory, watching him, began to fidget in his chair.

Riordan's eyes popped open and bored into the secretary's.

"Now, Mr. Mallory," he said, his voice gentle again, "I've given you time to think it over and make up your mind. What was the last thing about the bishop that you recall Mr. Staples was worried about? You started to say it."

"The gardener, sergeant. The bishop's gardener had left him very suddenly, and he wrote Mr. Staples asking him to recommend another, and to loan him one of his until the new man arrived. We sent Jonas over. He was there for almost two weeks before Mr. Staples got the man he wanted."

"When did he get the man, the new man?"

"Friday, I think it was, the day before he disappeared. He called the bishop up about it. After that he seemed quite worried, and kept saying he hoped the new gardener would please the bishop. Asked me several times if I thought he would. I answered that I was sure he would. 'How do you know,' he asked me, 'you've never seen him?' I answered that I was sure any man he selected would be satisfactory."

"What was the new gardener's name? Where did he come from?"

"I don't know, sergeant. Mr. Staples never told me. I think the man came from quite a little distance away, it took him nearly two weeks to get here."

"He might have been a local man and given his former employer two weeks' notice, mightn't he?"

"I think he was from quite a way off, sergeant. I got that impression."

"You got the letter the bishop wrote asking him to recommend a gardener? Got it on file?"

"Yes, sergeant. Mr. Staples wanted all the bishop's letters kept."

"Let me see it."

Mallory went to a cabinet at one side of the room, looked through the files for a second, and returned with the letter. Riordan read it and passed it back.

"Thank you. Did Mr. Staples write in reply, and have you a copy of that reply?"

"He telephoned, sergeant. Mr. Staples wrote very few letters. He dictated very few. Mainly he used the telephone in communicating with people in the city. With most of those outside, to whom it was necessary that he write, he told me what he wanted said, and I wrote for him. We had an accepted form: 'Mr. Staples is very busy, and in reply to your kind letter, requests me to inform you—' whatever it might be."

"Oh, I see. And you don't remember when you changed this desk calendar?"

"It must have been this morning, sergeant."

"Did you tear off all the sheets since the one of the fifth, or did you change it yesterday, too?"

"I changed it yesterday and the day before. In fact, I think I have changed it every day since I was—was released from—released by Captain Brady."

Riordan made no comment, and after waiting for a moment Mallory replaced the letter from the bishop in the files. When he turned back Riordan was standing.

"You got any money?" he asked.

"A little, sergeant."

"Who's paying your salary, since Mr. Staples went away?"

"There hasn't been any due. Mr. Staples paid me the first of the month. There won't be any due till next month. Mr. Keefe, however, the attorney, said he would look out for me in that respect."

"That's nice. Well, Mallory, that will be all for to-day. Thank you for answering my questions."

The secretary accompanied Riordan to the door. As he opened the portal he said:

"Have you found out anything yet, sergeant?"

"Who? Me? Lord no, I just came on the case. You're the first man I've seen. Good day."

He entered the police car and was driven to the Ocean Terminal. Summerfield, who knew him well, showed him to the mysterious room over Pier B, and he examined its restored tin wall covering with much interest, especially the plain print of a hobnailed boot almost in its center. Then he looked closely at the dark red spots on the walls, plainly marked by the lead pencil rings Captain Brady had drawn, and by the marks of scrapings where some of the stain had been removed for investigation.

"Horrible, isn't it?" commented Summerfield.

"I'll say it's horrible," was the reply, as Riordan turned and retraced his steps to the waiting police car, and climbed in.

"You know where my house is," he said to the driver. "Well, chase out there, and be prepared to wait awhile, too."

When Sergeant Riordan returned to the detective bureau late in the afternoon he found Captain Brady in conversation with the senior member of the law firm of Keefe, Sanderson & Keefe. His chief introduced him, and told him that Mr. Keefe had called to discuss the wording of an advertisement he intended to place in the papers

in reply to the one just printed in the *Chronicle,* and of which he had been made aware before its publication. They asked the sergeant's views.

"It doesn't make much difference what you say," he replied to the inquiry. "What the person who wrote that first ad wants to find out is whether you'll do business. Any answer will tell him that. Then he or she will begin to boost the price on you."

"How much do you think will be asked for Mr. Staples's body, sergeant?" asked Mr. Keefe.

"How much you got?"

"Oh—you think it will be a case of getting the limit, do you?"

"No, sir. You wanted to know how much they'd ask, not how much they'll get. If you want to know how much they'll get, I'd say nothing."

"Your plan, then, is to dicker with them, and trap them?"

"No, beat whoever it is to it."

"You mean recover the body?"

"Something like that, sir."

"Then you have discovered something? Captain Brady has spoken very highly of your abilities."

Riordan shook his head. "Mr. Keefe, I haven't found out a thing new on this case, not since it was first put in my hands. The only new thing was this advertisement, and one of the *Chronicle* men brought that to us."

"But you speak confidently, sergeant."

Riordan crossed to his desk, opened it, swung his chair around and sat down.

"You in a hurry to get this—this body, Mr. Keefe?" he asked.

"I desire very much to have the matter cleared up, sergeant. As Mr. Staples's attorneys, and probable executors of his estate, there are a great many things that should be settled. Recovering his body would make it unnecessary to have the courts declare him legally dead, as now would be necessary."

Riordan pursed his lips, and, shooting a lightning glance at Captain Brady, said:

"Then all your interest in the matter is to wind up his estate, is it?"

"That is our main interest, if you want to put it bluntly, sergeant. Of course, personally I regret Mr. Staples's untimely end, and all that, and as a citizen I should like to see his slayers captured and punished. But as things now are, we are constantly being embarrassed by matters which we cannot settle."

"Somebody trying to get a share of the estate?"

"No, sergeant, not that. But Mr. Staples has given several institutions to understand that at his death they would benefit, in one way or another. Now that he is dead, they want the benefits. The State Botanical Society, for example, had been promised his greenhouses and residence property—it is so provided in his will—and they want to know when they're going to get it."

"These people ever pay very much attention to Staples where he was alive? Bother him any about it?"

Keefe looked surprised at the question, but he answered promptly enough.

"No, sergeant, they didn't. In fact, Mr. Staples had often remarked to me that it was very plainly evident that his various intended beneficiaries thought more of what they were going to get than they appeared to think of the donor."

"Touchy on it, was he, sir? Wanted to make more of a stir in the world, did he?"

The attorney nodded his head. "Yes, sergeant, I think you have stated the case, in your way. Mr. Staples was a peculiar man. You and I know, and the captain here, of course, that he was really a very wonderful man in many ways, and that his collection of orchids is probably among the finest and most complete in the world. He was an authority upon them. But not very many people are interested in orchids.

"If I may say it, Mr. Staples desired a certain amount of adulation which he never received. Men did not appreciate them. Women might have, but he believed all women shallow, and did not want their praises or attention. In fact I think he took himself rather too seriously. While he was a great man in his own line, his line did not interest the world at large; and, curiously enough, he craved notoriety."

"Well, I'll say he's getting it now."

Keefe smiled wryly. "Is he, sergeant?

Or isn't it that it is chiefly the mystery of the crime that is creating the sensation and keeping the public interested. I have read the headlines very carefully, and I have not seen Mr. Staples's name mentioned very prominently. They have proclaimed: 'Millionaire Butchered,' 'Rich Man's Death Mystery,' 'Police Find Hidden Murder Den,' 'Hunt Man with Hob-Nailed Boots,' things like that. But nothing about Mr. Staples himself. Only incidentally is it mentioned in the various articles that he was a noted authority on and collector of orchids."

Riordan slowly nodded his head. "That's true," he said, "I'm glad you mentioned it, called my attention to it. Well, Mr. Keefe, if I were you, I wouldn't answer that advertisement at all, nor any others that may appear."

"You wouldn't answer them?"

"I wouldn't pay the slightest attention to any of them. Not just yet, anyway. And I'd suggest that you tell the reporters that your firm doesn't intend to pay any attention to them."

"Ah, strategy! I see, sergeant. Well, I will take your advice."

"That's right," spoke up Captain Brady. "You take his advice. He knows what he's doing."

Mr. Keefe rose to go, but paused near the door.

"You're looking for the typewriter on which that was written," he said, pointing to the original of the advertisement. "I've been told that typewriters could be traced by peculiarities—"

"Yes, we're looking for it, sir," interrupted Riordan. "It may take some time to find it, though."

Mr. Keefe departed, and Brady turned to his aid.

V

"WHAT'D you do?" Brady asked.

"Looked over Mallory, then went down and had a look at that room over Pier B. Then I went home and visited mother, and told her all about my hunting trip, and that your wife would probably invite her over to-morrow night to help eat venison."

Captain Brady considered this, but before he made any reply the doorman entered.

"Please, captain," he said, "Halloran's back with a messenger kid, and Sergeant Roberts, of the uniformed force, has a drunk he wants you to look at."

"Shove 'em all in here."

Halloran and a messenger boy entered first. He pushed the lad forward. "Tell the captain here, son, what you told me," he said.

"Well, sir," spoke up the boy, proud of being thus thrust into the glory of a stellar rôle, "a countrylike lookin' feller come up to me on First Street just after noon and asked me would I run an errand for him. I says, 'No, not for you, but for two bits I will.' He don't get me, an' I repeats the crack. Then he laughs, pulls out an envelope and a dollar bill, an' says for to take them to the *Chronicle* office. Then he gives me two bits and hurries away."

The door opened again, and Sergeant Roberts entered with an active case of intoxication.

"Sufferin' cats!" exclaimed the messenger boy. "That's him now. Only he wasn't lit up like that when he give me the message. If he had 'a' been I'd 'a' hit him for a dollar, an' I betcha I'd 'a' got it."

"Take that kid out of here, get his statement and his pedigree, and turn him loose again," said Brady. Then he turned and slowly eyed the drunk, who was twisting from side to side in Sergeant Roberts's grip.

"I got this bird as he reeled out of a blind pig down on lower Center Street, cap'n," the uniformed officer said. "Goin' good, he was. I called the wagon, and as I threw him in I happened to look at his boots. So I come in with him. Take a look at 'em, cap'n."

Brady reached forward and jerked one of the prisoner's feet toward him, and the man promptly flopped on his back, muttering protestations. Brady reached again and got the other foot. Both were incased in practically new hob-nailed boots. The captain reached back to his desk with one

hand and dragged forward a bit of tracing paper, which he slapped against one sole and then against the other. Then he dropped both the feet to the floor, exclaiming:

"The same boot, by gad! Fits the marks."

He turned to Riordan elatedly. "Boy, we got him," he exclaimed. "And just by luck!"

Then the elation vanished from his face, for Riordan's back was turned and he was looking over the papers on his desk. For just a moment Captain Brady looked puzzled, then he dropped to his knees, drew his knife from his pocket, opened its largest blade, and with two swift slashes cut the laces that held the boots on the man's feet and drew them off.

"Sergeant Roberts," he snapped. "Take that man upstairs and have him locked all alone in one of the tanks. Don't search him, don't do anything with him. Then get a squad of men and the wagon and go down and kick in that blind pig he staggered out of, and bring everybody in the place up here. Lively now."

Roberts saluted and dragged his prisoner from the room. Brady went over to Riordan's chair and slapped his aid on the back.

"Tough luck, boy," he said, laughing. "But don't take it that way. I know you'd have got him, give you time enough. I could tell by the way you talked to Keefe you had a red-hot lead. But it don't make any difference who got him, the harnessed bulls or us. We're all police. It's our job to catch crooks. This guy's boots—the nails in one of 'em—exactly fits that mark on the tin down in that room at the pier. I got a tracing of it here, and tried it. Look, come over here and see for yourself."

Riordan got up, his face glum, and it remained that way while Captain Brady plastered the tracing upon one of the soles of the boots, and pointed out to him how the nails fitted the marks exactly.

"You got a piece of tin, like that in the room down at the pier, chief?" he asked, when the demonstration had been completed.

"Yeah, boy, I happen to have," Brady answered. "I got some sheet tin the other day, before this thing broke, to take home. I was going to put it on the wall behind the kitchen sink, and put enamel paint on it. I've been so busy on this case I haven't taken it home yet. It's under my desk here!"

He reached beneath the desk and drew out a flat heavy package, and, tearing the wrapping, drew out a square of rolled tin. Riordan took it and put it on the floor.

"Now, chief, you make a footprint with that boot on it," he said, "like that footprint down there in the loft over the pier. I'll pay for the tin if you spoil it."

Captain Brady frowned a moment, then picked up the boot with the telltale arrangement of hobnails on the bottom of it, and, placing it on the sheet of tin, leaned on it with both hands. Picking it up, he looked at the tin. Its surface was barely scratched. He shot a look at Riordan, then put the boot back on the tin again, and stood on the sole, lifting his other foot, so his whole weight rested upon it. Then he picked up the boot again. There were just the tiniest traces of indentations where the hobnails had rested.

Brady sat down and looked at his aid. Then he picked up the tin again, and examined it.

"This floor," he said, "is—"

"Old and punky," cut in Riordan. "The floor down at the pier is a lot newer, and it's hardwood. You ought to be able to make a better footprint here than you could there. And you, with all your weight, are about twice as heavy as that stew you sent upstairs. How'd he make a footprint like that, do you suppose?"

Captain Brady ran his fingers through his hair and scratched the back of his head. Then he walked over to his locker and took a heavy iron dumb-bell from it, came back, and, placing the hob-nailed boot on the tin, began to hammer it methodically, holding it in place with his left hand. After he had pounded it all over he tossed the boot aside and picked up the sheet of tin. This time he had a nicely and deeply marked impression of the hobnails.

"Chief, I always said you had a good head," commented Riordan, laughing. "You got that the very first time, after you'd tried it twice other ways. I suppose

by now you got the fact, too, that there was only one footprint in that there murder room, too, haven't you?"

Brady rolled the dumb-bell across the floor savagely, and stood the sheet of tin on top of his desk.

"You won't have to pay for this tin, boy," he said. "It's worth twice the thirty-eight cents it cost me to find that out. But still, you got to admit, this guy had the boots on."

"And I'll bet he can prove he got 'em honestly, too."

"But the party that gave 'em to him?"

"Probably was a minister, and got 'em through the mail to give to some poor and deserving party. Remember, there was only one boot used to make that print down there on the pier."

"But the advertisement? The messenger kid said this was the same bird?"

"Let's have him down and ask him."

"But he's crazy drunk."

"Have him down."

Captain Brady pushed a button and told the doorman to get such assistance as might be necessary and bring the drunk down from the tank. The doorman, Halloran and Curtis carried him into the office. He was oblivious, utterly.

"Frisk him," snapped Brady.

The burly Halloran did that unpleasant work. The man's pockets yielded three dollars and ten cents in coin, one common variety of doorkey, one broken knife, stained with vari-colored paint, a piece of pink newsprint with a risque joke upon it, and two street car tickets.

Riordan took off his dress uniform coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and picked the inert drunk up and slammed him upright against the wall.

"Hold him there," he said.

Halloran and the doorman acted as pegs to keep the figure standing. Riordan, stepping in front of him, slapped him, open-handed, first on one cheek and then on the other, then gathered a handful of the victim's hair and began to pull upward. The effect was startling. The man's eyes opened and he let out a shrill scream.

"Where'd you get them boots?" shouted Riordan.

"F-f-f-ather Callaghan, damn, leggo me hair."

"Who gave you that money, and the envelope?"

"Leggo me hair, you're murderin' me."

"Who give you the money, and the envelope?"

"Father Callaghan, wid de boots, oh, ouch!"

Riordan let go the handful of hair, motioned to Halloran and the doorman, and they let go at the same time. The drunk flopped to the floor, and lay there, pawing at his scalp and moaning.

"See if you can carry him up to the tank again, boys," said Riordan. "And better have the emergency hospital doc look him over. Maybe I tore something. Tell the doc to pump him out, anyway."

The two detectives and the doorman took up their burden, and Riordan, returning to his desk, reached for his telephone and called a number.

VI

"FATHER CALLAGHAN, please," he said. "Yes, I'll wait—hello, Father Callaghan? This is Riordan, detective sergeant, speaking. Got a man down here, father, who says you gave him a pair of hobnail boots and some money and a letter to the *Chronicle*. What do you know about it, please?"

He listened a long time, then said: "Thank you, father. No, there won't be anything said. Thank you, and good-by."

"Well?" demanded Brady.

"He said, chief, that this morning a man came to the parish house to see him, gave him the boots and asked him to give them to some deserving poor person. Father Callaghan mentioned the case of this man Reilly—I guess that's our friend upstairs—a painter out of work and badly in need of shoes. His caller seemed interested, Father Callaghan said, and offered to help Reilly a little. He said he was going away, but he wanted a message delivered down town. He suggested that Father Callaghan give the message to Reilly and have him deliver it. There was a small charge to be paid with the message, the man didn't

know how much. He left a dollar to cover the charges, and he gave Father Callaghan five dollars to give Reilly. He said he'd be back in a week or so, and might then have some work for Reilly.

" Father Callaghan took the boots and the message, which was in an unsealed envelope, and the money. Reilly was working about the church. Father Callaghan says he opened the envelope, and saw the advertisement inside. He was badly frightened. He'd read about this case, and didn't want to get mixed up in it. He didn't know what to do. On second thought, he decided that the message probably was genuine and might do some good if it was printed. So he went over to the church, gave Reilly the boots and the five dollars, and then the envelope and the dollar, and told him to go down town, find a messenger boy, give him the dollar and the message, which was addressed to the *Chronicle*, and get the boy to deliver it. He told him to keep his own counsel.

" He said the man who called on him was somewhere between fifty and sixty years of age, medium height and weight, smooth shaven, and looked as if he'd seen better days. He spoke very good English, he says, and didn't seem a bit nervous. The man didn't give any name, nor any account of himself, and, of course, while he was talking Father Callaghan had no idea what was in the message, and just thought he was somebody who wanted to do a little good, and who was embarrassed about it. Now, in view of what he knows, and what he's read in the afternoon papers, he says he thinks the man was suffering from remorse. But he doesn't believe that the man was a murderer, though, he says, it looks as if the man knew about this thing. He didn't notice which direction he came from, or which way he went."

" Humph," said Brady, " and that's that. He's a priest and is telling the truth, and if we've got to have him, we can use him, but otherwise we've got to leave him out. Well, as you said, boy, that clears Reilly. What you going to do now?"

A stamping of feet in the outer room, and the opening of the door cut off Riordan's reply, as Sergeant Roberts and his squad entered, shepherding a miserable-looking bunch of wreckage.

" Got 'em in the blind pig, captain," he announced.

" Take 'em upstairs and have Halloran go through 'em," said Brady. " He knows what we're after. Tell him about the first fellow, what you saw and why you brought him in. I'm busy."

Sergeant Roberts piloted his charges out again, and Brady reverted to his unanswered inquiry.

" What you going to do now, boy?"

Riordan stretched and yawned.

" Well, chief, the way things are shaping up now, I guess I'd better go out and get that body the ad mentions. I was going to wait a few days, and get some more of those ads, but I guess I'd better—"

" What?" demanded Captain Brady, leaping from his chair. " Say, this isn't anything to kid about."

" Who's kidding?"

" Looks like you were, boy. Here the whole force has been workin' on this thing for over a week, and hasn't turned up a blamed line that's any good; and you yourself said you'd only been out to Staples's house and down to the pier—"

Captain Brady stopped abruptly, and sat down.

" Go on, chief, finish it."

Brady shook his head slowly. " No, boy. Guess I'd better not. I just remembered about the footprint and the tin. I guess I've said too much already."

" Tell you what I'll do, chief. I'll let you in on it. I'll just use the telephone here a minute, and then you and I'll go out to dinner. When we come back we'll have a man here who'll produce that body. How's that?"

Captain Brady scowled. " Boy, I'm in no mood for kidding," he said.

Riordan reached for his telephone again, called the same number he had before, and Brady heard him say:

" Father Callaghan? This is Riordan again. Say, father, I think maybe you can do something for us that will clear this thing all up and let you out at the same time. Yes, I mean avoid any possibility of unpleasant publicity. You'll do

it, fine! Well, I tell you, father, you call a taxicab and drive over to Bishop Gale's residence. He's not in the city, went away the first of the week. But he's got a new gardener, nice old man he is, the gardener. I think maybe you'll find you know him, yes. Well, you use your powers of persuasion with him, father, and get him to take a ride with you, and bring him down here to Captain Brady's office. The captain and I will be here when you arrive, and we'll be glad to take care of the taxi bill for you. Thanks, father, you're doing all of us a great favor. Good-by."

He hung up and turned to Captain Brady.

"Come on, chief, let's go," he said. "I know you're not hungry, but you can make yourself eat. We'll just have time before Father Callaghan gets here."

Riordan did all the talking as they ate. He told of his hunting trip and other recent adventures. Captain Brady listened, but that was all. He made no replies, no comments. He ate stolidly. His face was a study most of the time, and he kept shooting sharp glances at his aid. He was silent all the way back to headquarters from the restaurant, and only when he was again seated in his chair did he say anything.

"Boy, you got me beat. I've been going all over this case while you were talking away there, and I don't see a thing. Except that hobnail shoe print. I can see that was a plant. But why?"

The doorman announced Father Callaghan, and ushered in the priest and a quiet, elderly, thin man, whose face seemed rather haggard. Riordan pushed forward chairs, introduced the churchman to Captain Brady, and then turned the latch on the office door and resumed his own seat at his desk. He paid not the slightest attention to the man Father Callaghan had brought with him, but Captain Brady's eyes were as gimlets and kept boring into the fourth member of the group constantly.

"Father," said Riordan, "you've had a good deal of experience with different people. I want to ask you if you've ever seen a man really happy because everybody flattered him?"

The priest straightened in his chair, and his eyes opened widely. The suggestion of a smile banished the lines of worry that had been apparent when he first entered the room.

"No, my son," he said. "I have not."

"Did you ever see a man who'd sought flattery, and who had failed to get it, find happiness in something else?"

"Yes—in service. Why?"

"Well, father, I've got a case in mind that I want you to help me in. There's a man, he's fairly well-to-do, who has done a great deal, one way or another, in this world. I don't know whether what he's done has amounted to so very much, as you and I figure real worth, but he's done the best he could. In his own way he's a great man, but most people don't understand his way. Nobody has ever praised him. Nobody has patted him on the back and told him he was great stuff. Some people, who understand what he's been doing, have told him his work was very fine, but the world at large never figured he amounted to much. He was lonely, and he craved attention; he craved flattery. He didn't get it, and he got sore at everybody in general.

"But he wasn't absolutely soured. He planned to give away what he had when he died, so that people could enjoy the things he'd enjoyed. He'd planned to give his garden, for instance, for a public park. That showed that his heart was still right. But when he planned that, nobody patted him on the back and told him how fine his plans were.

"And so with the rest of his life. People didn't understand him, and he didn't understand people. And his craving for flattery—for that is really what he wanted—finally preyed upon him so it made him ill. It made him sick in the head, father. He said to himself that if he couldn't get flattery, at least he'd get notoriety. He 'framed' a murder, father; an atrocious murder. He thought, in his misguided way with his sick mind, that he'd get notoriety, at least.

"But he failed again, father. The *murder* got the notoriety, but the man who planned it got—nothing. His name wasn't mentioned in the headlines, nobody, as far as he knew, sought him. He made efforts

to attract attention, and these were ignored, as far as he knew. What would you advise for a case like that, father?"

The priest looked at the companion he had brought with him, then at Captain Brady, then at Sergeant Riordan.

"You mean, my son," he said, at length, "that the man who murdered Willard Staples did it for notoriety?"

Riordan nodded his head.

"He is insane," said the priest. "There is nothing that can be done for him, save to lock him up for his own protection."

Riordan smiled grimly.

"I see your viewpoint, father," he declared, "but I don't think you see mine. I was speaking about the man who planned the murder of Willard P. Staples—"

"He was insane, my son."

"Possibly, father, in a way. But he didn't carry out the plan; at least he didn't commit the murder."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Staples isn't dead at all. He's sitting in that chair there beside you. He faked the whole thing, to get notoriety first, and then flattery when he returned. First he juiced his face to look like a Spaniard, then he shaved to look like somebody else."

"You're wrong, officer," spoke up the fourth man in the room. "You're partly wrong, at least. You are partly right; I did crave attention, flattery, as you call it. But I didn't simulate murder to get notoriety; I did it as a test, to see how much my fellow citizens really thought of me."

"You found out, didn't you?"

"As you say, officer, the apparent crime rather drew more attention than the victim."

"I'll say it did. And you'll find out how much more when you come alive again. You'll get neither flattery nor notoriety—people will laugh you out of the city."

Staples laughed silently. "I think not, officer. You see, there is something besides myself to be considered. There is the police department. If I just 'come alive' again, as you say, the people will laugh at you. But if you assist me in 'coming alive,' we will both escape laughter. I had thought that all out."

"Yeah? Like you thought out the meat ax you threw in the river and the old coat cut with shears, and not chopped up? Like the one footprint you hammered into the tin? Like the blood stains you made, by flicking your finger after you'd cut it? Flicked your finger, and the little drops of blood all flew out in a straight line, just like spatters from the end of a pen when a schoolboy flicks it. Thought your comeback out like that, did you?"

Mr. Staples's demeanor was less confident.

"I had thought," he said, "that you could announce you had discovered I wasn't dead, but that I was held for ransom; that I'd promised the men who were going to kill me a ransom. That advertisement, you know, would look—would make that seem plausible. The advertisement didn't say 'dead body,' it just said 'body.' You could announce you had discovered the gang's hiding place, and had rescued me. That would stop the laughter."

"Would it? How'd we explain that we didn't capture your abductors? Admit we let 'em get away, that we were so dumb we couldn't get them after we got you? You got great ideas."

Staples smiled dryly.

"Well, officer, if you don't like that plan, I'll just 'come alive' without any assistance. I guess I can stand the laughter as well as you can—probably better."

Captain Brady leaned forward, frowning.

"Boy," he said, "I guess he's got us on the hook. You've done some fine work, boy; but I guess we got to be the goats. Staples, you'd better get out of here before I lose my self-control and beat you up for the ten days' work you've given my men. I got a mind to take one good swing at you, anyway, just for luck."

Staples, smiling satirically, rose from his chair. "You'd hardly dare hit me before witnesses," he said.

"Sit down," roared Riordan. "I told you you were sick in the head. I'm not half through with you yet. Maybe you'll wish you were dead before you get out of the mess you've got yourself into."

Staples, his face blanching, dropped back into his chair, and cast an appealing look at Father Callaghan.

"You're a prisoner," said Riordan. "Now, try and get this through your head, so you can tell your attorneys—if they care to handle your case.

"You're under arrest first, for malicious mischief, in that you deliberately pried loose and threw into the river one window and window frame of a loft in Pier B, Ocean Terminal.

"Charge number two is violating the State law that prohibits the dumping of refuse into navigable streams, in that you dumped a lot of tin, nails, one meat ax and one old coat into the basin at the terminal. Those are both misdemeanors, and we'll lock you up on them and book you on 'em for to-night.

"To-morrow we'll start on you right. We'll take your case before the district attorney and have him ask the grand jury to indict you and your man Mallory for a felony, to wit, conspiracy to defeat justice and conspiracy to manufacture false evidence.

"You told Mallory to leave that notation about 'Pier B. Ocean Terminal' on that sheet of Saturday the fifth undisturbed on your desk calendar until the police arrived and noted it.

"Furthermore I'm inclined to believe, and I think I can prove it when I have to, that you told Mallory you were going to try this gardener business out at the bishop's place, and that in case of emergency you could be reached there, or at least that you could be communicated with through the bishop's gardener.

"I'm satisfied Mallory was in on this with you, and when I get through I'm pretty sure I can prove it. How I'm going to do that isn't for you to hear, however; I'll tell the district attorney and the grand jury that. So that will take care of you being indicted for a felony.

"Furthermore, you have assumed another identity, and you have given the impression that you were murdered, and maybe the insurance people will find that interesting enough to take a crack at you on the grounds of attempting to deceive and collect insurance wrongfully.

"If they don't want to do that, I'll bet anyway they'll cancel all your policies. That's all I think of just now, but maybe after I see the district attorney, he'll be able to think up some more—they say he's a good lawyer. Now how do you like coming back to life? It's a little different from what you figured, isn't it?"

Staples looked down at the floor. Captain Brady walked over to the door, unlatched it, and stuck his head out, beckoning to Halloran, who was in the outer office. The big detective lurched into the room, and Brady indicated Staples with his thumb.

"You take that fellow upstairs, and lock him up," he said. "Take him up the back way, through the drill hall. Never mind booking him just yet; I'll attend to that later. And in about half an hour you slip down to the pressroom and tip them reporters off that Riordan has a story for 'em."

The prisoner gone, in charge of Halloran, Father Callaghan rose and held out his hand to Sergeant Riordan.

"My son, I wish to thank you for taking a great load off my mind."

"That's all right, father. The best way I could see to do it was to have you bring the man in yourself, and listen to us. When you go home, tell the taxi driver that his trip is to be charged to the department. We are very much obliged to you, father, both the captain and I."

"Boy," said Captain Brady, after the priest had departed, "I want—"

"Now listen, chief," interrupted Riordan, "don't you go pulling any of that stuff at all. You saw everything I saw, and you noted that desk calendar the first thing. The only thing you missed was how that footprint in the tin was made, and you tumbled to that here yourself to-night.

"You'd have made the whole case before the night was over if Sergeant Roberts hadn't gone and found that drunk with the boots on—you were just tumbling to it when he bust in. So don't you try to hand me any credit for it. And I don't want you to bother me any for the next twenty minutes, either—I got to dope out how's the best way to put this up to the reporters, so they'll be sure and see what a fine piece of work the police department has done."

He raced into the street, shouting

LQ585

By J. Jefferson Farjeon

"YOU GOT THE NUMBER, DID YOU? GOOD!" REPLIED BRACEBRIDGE. "WHAT WAS IT?" "LQ585," REPLIED THE OFFICER CONFIDENTLY

"HELLO — something up!" exclaimed Inspector Bracebridge.

Crook raised his eyes and directed them toward a doorway a little distance along the street. Some one, a shopman, had dashed out excitedly, and two or three passers-by were pausing to stare at him, while from the corner beyond a policeman approached with guarded briskness.

"Policemen are more sinned against than sinning," commented Crook, "but I wish some one would teach them to run first and ask questions afterward. What's our excited man pointing at?".

"A car, I think," barked the inspector. "Well, I can run, if policemen can't!"

He dashed forward, and Crook, following, gazed along the road. A car, dark red, was just disappearing, and the policeman was pausing in response to the shopman's cries and gesticulations.

"Go after it, go after it!" shouted the shopman. "Stop that car, somebody!" Then he saw the approaching inspector, and turned to him wildly. "He's a thief! He came into my shop, and when my back was turned—God knows what he's taken!"

Crook glanced at the shop. It was a jeweler's. Above was written the name, "T. Wheeler, Goldsmith and Silversmith," and, judged by his display of emotion, the excited man outside was probably T. Wheeler himself.

The policeman, by this time, had banished his vagueness, and catching sight of the inspector, he bustled through the gathering knot of people and saluted.

"We'll get that car, sir," he said confidently. "I know the number."

"You do? Good! What was it?" replied Bracebridge.

"L Q 585. I saw it draw up. As a matter of fact, the driver spoke to me—"

"Then you can identify him?"

"Yes, sir. Common-lookin' man, dirty black suit—"

"That's the one!" cried the jeweler. "He came in my shop, and while my back was turned—"

"Well, we won't catch him if we stand here talking," interrupted Bracebridge sharply. He blew a shrill blast on his whistle, and as he did so a young man stepped up to him quietly from the side of the road.

"Can I be of any use?" he asked. "I've got a car here. I saw the way the fellow went."

"Splendid, sir! Just what we want!" He beckoned to the policeman. "Tumble in. We'll want you to identify the man and the car. Quick, now! We'll see he doesn't get far!" Then he swung round to Crook and raised his eyebrows. "Want to come with us, eh?"

"I think I could be more useful at this end," replied Crook. "I can tell any further policemen or officers what's happened, if they come along, and I can get the rest of the story."

"Right, right!" nodded the inspector approvingly, as he sprang into the waiting car. "That's the idea. Carry on. You've my authority for whatever you think wise to do."

The next moment the car glided swiftly away in the direction of the vanished dark red car, and Crook turned to the jeweler.

"Shall we go inside?" he asked. "Then you can tell me the whole story."

"Yes, yes! But—"

"Don't worry about the chase. That's already in progress, and, as you can see, there are plenty on the job." Other policemen had arrived, and, directed by one particularly energetic young constable, were getting busy.

"It's a dark red car, and we know the number—L Q 585," the energetic young constable was saying. "Got that? Right. Common man, about my 'eight. Dark brown 'air, and a big nose. Wearin' a black suit, very dirty one, and black boots. Got that? Right. Bowler 'at, a bit the worse for wear. Now, then, get busy. Spread around, boys. Right!"

Crook approached him, and touched him on the shoulder.

"I'm going into the shop, constable," he said. "Will you join me in a minute? I'm getting the full story for Inspector Bracebridge."

"Very good, sir," answered the constable. "Jest want to get these chaps started—with you in a jiffy."

As Crook entered the shop he reflected, "There's a man working for promotion—and I should say he'll get it." Then he turned his attention to the jeweler.

"He came in here," the jeweler was spluttering, "and while my back was turned—"

"Yes, but let me hear the whole thing, from the beginning," interposed Crook. "Did he enter as an ordinary customer, or what?"

"That's right," replied the jeweler, wiping his damp forehead. "The rascal! I don't know even yet all he's taken. Look—there's a couple of rings gone from that case!

"By God, I hope they catch him. Eh? Oh, yes! I was saying—he came in, and asked for a cheap watch. What he would ask for. Looked cheap himself. I showed him two or three, but he didn't like them, so I went to fetch another. And that was when he did it. While my back was turned.

"Used to this sort of game, I should say, he was so quick and noiseless. When I turned round again, he wasn't here. Out in a flash. And then I saw some things missing—ah, here comes some one. Another policeman. What's the good of his coming here? Why in the world doesn't he use his head and go after—"

Crook held up his hand to interrupt the jeweler's excited flow, as the smart young constable entered.

"Done all I can for the moment outside, sir," he reported. "One of my mates is carrying on out there. Sometimes they

come back to the spot they started from. Old dodge. Straightforward case, I should say."

"It seems so," answered the detective, and repeated, briefly, what the jeweler had told him. "And now I'd like to ask you a question or two, constable, if I may. You had the description of the thief pretty pat. How did you get such a close sight of him?"

"Well, I was standing by when he drove up and spoke to my mate," said the constable.

"Oh—the first constable," nodded Crook. "You mean the one to whom he spoke?"

"That's right, sir."

"Did you hear what he said?"

"Yes, sir. It was at the corner. Up he drives, and stops sudden. 'Nice little car,' I thinks—"

"You had some reason for thinking that?"

"Yes, sir. The man looked a bit shabby to be driving it."

"He might have been a chauffeur."

"Wasn't dressed like one."

"In mufti?"

The constable shook his head. "You can spot a chauffeur on 'ollerday, just as you can a coachman," he observed. "This wasn't no chauffeur."

"I agree," said Crook, smiling. "You're quite smart." The constable tried unsuccessfully not to look pleased. "Well, go on. 'Nice little car,' you thought. And then?"

"Then the feller speaks. 'Can you tell me the time?' he asks. My mate points to a big clock across the road. 'Oh, I didn't see it,' says this feller. 'Thanks.' And off he goes again—"

"To pull up almost at once outside this shop?"

"You've got it, sir. That's what the feller does. And I say to my mate, 'Funny thing to stop and ask the time like that.' And my mate says, 'Very funny thing.' We both think it funny."

"What about his voice? Anything special? You could recognize that, too?"

"Spoke a bit low, that's all I can say about his voice. 'Allo—what's this now?"

The constable on duty outside had suddenly opened the door and was calling.

"You're wanted out 'ere," he announced.

II

THEY hurried out, and found themselves facing an elderly man, who was gesticulating angrily.

"Yes, of course it was my car!" he exclaimed. "I left it up that by-street over there—Dixon Street—while I was making a business call. When I came out, it was gone."

"The car the thief went off in evidently belongs to this gentleman, sir," said the policeman on duty outside to Crook.

"No doubt about it," cried the owner, in agitation. "By Jove, the audacity of these rascals! And now, I understand, he's stolen some jewelry as well!"

"He has," responded Detective Crook. "But let me try and get this clear. When did you leave your car up that by-street?"

"Half an hour ago."

"Was it outside the place where you made your business call?"

"No. That wasn't in Dixon Street. That was at a bank in Belfort Avenue, where one can't park one's car."

"And you returned—after how long?"

"I returned three minutes ago. So I was away about twenty-five minutes."

"During which time," said Crook thoughtfully, "our thief saw your car, got into it, drove it away, returned, spoke to a policeman at the corner, pulled up outside this jeweler's shop, committed his theft, and departed."

"Sounds like that, sir," remarked the smart constable.

"It all fits exactly. By the way, I suppose you've identified your car by the number?" Crook asked, looking inquiringly at the elderly man.

"Oh, yes. L Q 585. That's the number right enough. Armstrong-Siddeley. Dark red body."

"That's the one, sir," nodded the smart constable. "No doubt about it."

Detective Crook considered the position. The facts seemed simple enough. Yet there were one or two points that puzzled him.

All at once he smiled and turned to the smart constable.

"Are you free to come along with me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered the constable promptly. "Everything's done that can be done here, I think, and my mates can carry on."

"Yes, but what about my car?" cried the elderly man.

"Quite twelve people are already looking for it," answered Crook. "I feel quite sure it will be found. But, meanwhile, if you want to report the loss further, you can do so at the police station."

"Ah, I will," said the owner. "A nice thing, in a country that's supposed to be properly protected, you can't leave your car for half an hour without having it stolen!"

"There have certainly been a number of car thefts lately," responded Crook. "You're not the only victim, sir. Come, constable."

As Crook and the constable walked along the street the latter restrained his curiosity admirably. He gathered that the detective had some plan, and, being anxious to impress one for whom he had a profound respect, he maintained a calm and imperturbable attitude.

It was the detective himself who broke the silence.

"Anything odd occur to you about this case?" he inquired.

The constable tried hard to think of something odd, and reiterated his surprise that so common a man should have been driving so smart a car.

"I don't think there's much in that," observed Detective Crook. "But wasn't there something else that struck you?"

"Yes, sir, there was—as I said," answered the policeman. "His stopping in the middle of the road to ask the time. When there was a clock, too. Yes, we thought that funny. That's right, we did."

"Only funny?"

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"Not, perhaps, significant?"

The constable scratched his head.

"He asked you the time," proceeded Crook, "and, two or three minutes afterward, committed a daring theft."

"Maybe he needed to know the time, to keep some appointment with an accomplice," suggested the constable, after a pause.

"In that case," responded Crook, "why choose a policeman to ask?"

"Ah, there you have me," admitted the constable, ruefully. "That's got me beat."

He wondered to himself whether it had got the detective beat too, and came to the conclusion that it had not. But what the detective had deduced, the humble policeman had not the slightest knowledge.

For about ten minutes they wandered around the streets, following some scheme of the detective's. They never went through any street twice, and appeared to be making some sort of a pattern. All at once the detective stopped, and laid his hand on his companion's sleeve.

"Well—what about that?" he said.

The constable stared. There, some way ahead of them, blinked the rear of a car. The car was stationary, and a ray of sunlight slanted glaringly on the number plate. The number was L Q 585.

"Got him!" muttered the constable, looking at the detective with something akin to awe.

"Are you certain?" replied Crook. "Look at him—and then tell me whether you still think we've got him."

As the detective spoke he laid his hand on the constable's arm, and drew him quickly into the shadow of a porch. From this vantage point, the constable regarded the man in the car.

This was no common man wearing an old black suit and a bowler hat. He was smart and dapper, with a little waxed mustache. Moreover, he did not seem to have a care in the world as, taking a brown bag from the seat, he alighted on the pavement, walked briskly up three steps to a front door and rang.

A few seconds later the door opened and he was admitted.

"Well, I'm blowed!" murmured the constable frankly.

"*That* wasn't your man, was it?" asked Crook.

"Nothing like 'im, sir."

"Are you sure it's the *car?*"

"Yes, it's the car, right enough. Dark red. Of course," he added suddenly, "they might have tinkered with the number plate—"

"No—steady!" whispered Crook, as the constable made a forward movement. "Stay still!"

The constable opened his eyes wide.

"But 'adn't we better—"

III

THE constable paused abruptly, as he saw the detective looking in another direction. Some one was approaching, swiftly and quietly, round a corner of the street.

"Is *that* your man?" asked Crook in a low voice.

"By George—yes!" muttered the constable. "That's the feller. Know 'is coat anywhere—"

"Sh!"

The newcomer was close to them now, but he did not see them. He was too intent upon the car, and was moving toward it swiftly and silently. Evidently he believed he had the road to himself. It was a quiet road, and only the unseen watchers shared it with him.

The constable fidgeted, despite himself. He could not understand his companion's impassivity.

"When shall we take 'im, sir?" the policeman whispered.

"Not yet," Crook whispered back.

"But 'e'll get away again."

"I don't think so. Sh!"

The man had reached the car now. Hurriedly he darted a glance at the house into which the dapper man had disappeared. Then he jumped into the car and started the engine.

"Quick!" exclaimed the constable.

But Crook still held back.

"We'll lose 'im!" gasped the constable.

"Lose a distinctive car like that?" replied the detective. "Its description and number known? And the hue and cry already out?"

The situation was too much for the policeman, however. He raced out into the road, and shouted. The car was already in second gear. Now it glided into third, and was almost out of sight round a bend.

The constable roared with chagrin. For a moment he lost all his love for Detective Crook, and wrote him down an ass. Yes, they would probably catch the car, but would he, Constable T. Biggs, with aspirations, be in at the death? He groaned as he ran forward—and the next instant something hooted behind him.

"What's happened?" cried a familiar voice.

It was Inspector Bracebridge, who had just driven up with his party. Constable Biggs turned, and waved wildly.

"Just gone on there!" he panted. "Give me the slip. But you'll get him—"

The inspector's car leaped forward. As it disappeared in pursuit, Constable Biggs turned and saw Detective Crook emerge from the shadows. The detective was smiling grimly.

The chase, in which neither Crook nor Constable Biggs took part, was not as short as it might have been, for the man who was driving the dark red car showed the dexterity both of experience and desperation.

He turned and twisted, dashed madly along straight roads, and dodged round corners at startling speed in his efforts to give his pursuers the slip.

But the young man who was driving the pursuing car was also an expert driver, and others soon joined in the chase. Shouts were raised, police whistles sounded, and the hunted man realized at last that his capture was unavoidable. Abruptly, he slowed down, and made no further effort to escape.

"Got you!" cried Bracebridge, as they reached him, and a crowd gathered round. "Do you want to say anything here, or will you come along?"

The captured man looked at the inspector, and at the crowd, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I'll come along," he muttered. "Game's up."

"Yes, I'm afraid it is," answered Bracebridge acidly, and suddenly looked at the prisoner more closely. "Hello! So it's you, Alf!"

"It's me," admitted that gentleman.

"Not the first time you've been interested in taking cars that aren't yours," proceeded the inspector. "But I didn't know jewelry was in your line."

"Go on!" grunted Alf. "Who's got any jewelry?"

He was caught, but the capture did not turn out to be as complete or as satisfactory as they had hoped. They could find no jewelry on him, nor could they discover it concealed in the car.

Alf solemnly denied that he had taken any, and watched their searching with cynical leers. Even when he was conveyed to the police station, and official pressure was brought to bear upon him, he maintained his jeering, unproductive attitude.

"Jewelry!" he scoffed. "There's a silly idea. Oh, I've got a lot of jewels on me, I 'ave!"

"We'll find them!" retorted Bracebridge, trying not to give way to exasperation. "Meanwhile, you don't deny, I suppose, that you've tried to take a car that wasn't yours?"

"Oh, I don't deny that," said Alf. "It looked so nice and 'andy. 'Course, if I'd seen any jewelry lyin' about, I might 'ave taken that, too—but I didn't 'appen to."

"Not in Wheeler's shop?"

"Where's that?"

"We'll have the jeweler himself along in a few minutes to identify you," exclaimed the inspector crossly. "Meanwhile, here's one constable who can do it. Is this the man who asked you the time, Brown?"

Constable Brown stepped forward.

"Same feller," he announced. "And I told 'im to look at the clock."

Alf gazed at the constable, and laughed.

"You think you're clever, don't you?" he observed. "What's the funny idea? I never asked you the time."

"Yes, you did," asserted the constable. "Just before you went into the shop to steal the jewels."

"*Did* I?" jeered Alf. "Then I *must* 'ave been a mug. You're off your nut, cocky."

"Do you deny that you entered the jeweler's shop at all?" demanded the inspector.

"Course, I do!"

"Really? Well, here comes some one who may have something to say on that subject," said the inspector, as Mr. Wheeler, goldsmith and silversmith, was announced.

There was a short pause between the announcing and the actual appearance of Mr. Wheeler. When the jeweler entered the room, he found twelve people rowed up in front of him. The inspector asked whether he recognized any of them.

"Of course, I do!" exclaimed the jeweler warmly. "I recognize the rascal who walked off with my jewelry! Thank God you've got him!" and he pointed accusingly to Alf.

"Quite sure of your man?" queried the inspector. "No doubt about him?"

"Quite sure. Absolutely!"

"It's a mistake to be quite sure, absolutely," observed a quiet voice, "unless you really *are* quite sure, absolutely."

Detective Crook had entered, followed by Constable Biggs. The inspector wheeled round sharply, and the jeweler frowned indignantly.

"But I tell you I *am* sure!" he cried.

"Yes, there's no doubt about it," the inspector corroborated. "We've caught our man."

"Well, that's rather odd," responded the detective, while Constable Biggs quietly smiled, "because I've caught him, too. And I've caught something else, as well."

The inspector tugged his ample mustache, and looked puzzled. Constable Biggs's smile grew. He was being in at the death, after all.

"May I put a few questions to the prisoner?" asked Crook, breaking a short silence.

"Carry on," nodded the inspector. "I think I'd like you to, if it's going to clear things up."

"Thank you," said Crook, and turned toward Alf. "I suppose you've told them a story they don't believe?" Alf growled affirmatively. "What was the story?"

"Why, that I took the car, and nothing else," replied Alf. "But they've got some lunatic idea that I went into a jeweler's shop and carted off a bagful of diamonds."

"And you deny that?"

"Course I do!"

"Why did you take the car?"

Alf considered for a moment.

"We all want a car these days, don't we? This looked a nice one, and I thought it'd be cheap!"

"Car-stealing is a little habit of yours, isn't it?"

"That's my business."

"Well, if it's true, you needn't deny it. You see, you've really got quite a reputation—among your friends as well as your enemies—and—" He paused. "I'm still waiting to hear how you came to take that car."

"What do you mean?" demanded Alf. He now looked puzzled also.

"Was it entirely your own idea? Or did some one, who knew your little propensity, suggest it to you?"

Light began to dawn on Alf's face.

"Well—one needn't mention names, but some one did give me the tip," he responded slowly. "He told me yesterday of a toff he knew, and gave me the time and place. He'd got wind of an appointment the toff was going to keep in a nice, quiet road—"

"And he acted the part of the toff himself," interposed Crook. "It was he who drove up to the house outside which you found that car."

"What?" roared Alf.

"Yes. And he carried a bag in which were some valuable jewels he had just acquired by rather doubtful methods In that bag, also, were some clothes very similar to yours. He'd worn them when committing the theft, in the hope that you would be suspected—as you were."

"This beats me," muttered Alf venomously, while the others stared. "Are you tellin' me that Tod's done the double cross on me?"

"I am afraid Tod tried to, but it didn't quite come off," replied Detective Crook. "Dressed and disguised as you, he stole the car from Dixon Street, a by-street near the jeweler's shop, made himself and the car prominent, committed the theft, and then, cleverly eluding the police, transformed himself into the toff who eventually drew up at a house in your 'nice, quiet street.'

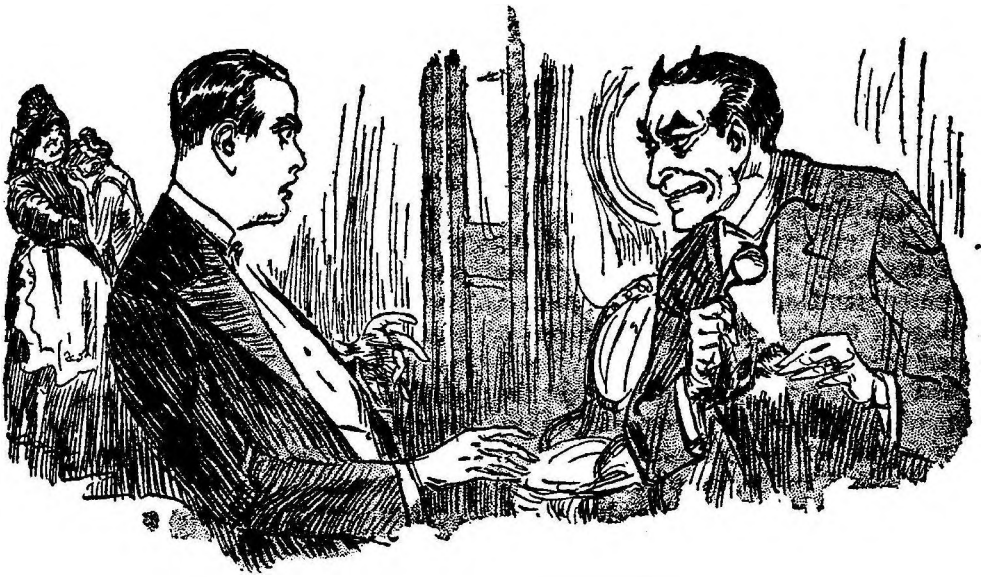
"This house was sufficiently near the jeweler's shop to make it reasonably certain you would be caught after you had taken the car—for the chase would already be in progress, you see—and your doubtful record was to complete the evidence against you. Meanwhile, he meant to slip away with his precious brown bag, and make his escape."

"But, unluckily for Tod," interposed Constable Biggs, "*we* slips after 'im. We caught 'im as he was leaving the house after a bogus call. We've got 'im 'andcuffed outside—and 'ere's the evidence against 'im, in this bag."

"Is my jewelry there?" exclaimed the jeweler excitedly.

"It is," the detective assured him. "So you see, Mr. Wheeler, one can never be quite sure and positive, can one?"

"Blimy, one can't," cried Alf vehemently. "If Tod comes out after me, 'e'll find me waitin' for 'im!"



With a swift movement, he tore the disguise from his face

THE HAND OF HORROR

By Owen Fox Jerome

"WE DIDN'T JUST STUMBLE ONTO THIS GHASTLY AFFAIR," REMARKED MARTIN. "WE WERE SENT HERE FOR A STRANGE REASON"

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

THE star reporter of the Washington *Times-Journal,* Fred Martin, is sent to interview the South American celebrity, Professor Debara at his apartment in Kensington Mansions. Accompanied by a *Times-Journal* photographer, Tracy by name, Martin calls at Kensington Mansions, but instead of finding the professor, to his horror, he discovers a young woman who has been murdered by the breaking of her neck. She is the wife of the diplomat, Palmer Hollisworth. Martin had stumbled upon this tragedy through a misunderstanding of Professor Debara's address, which was Kingsley Mansions instead of Kensington Mansions. But apparently some one had a hand in the misunderstanding.

Continued at bottom of following page

CHAPTER XLIII *(Continued)*

THE ARCH FIEND

MARTIN snatched open the door, gathered the unconscious woman up in his arms, and staggered blindly through the opening. He found himself in the dead rose garden of the Palace Nocturne.

Panic-stricken with the fear that the awful being was at his heels, he ran like a deer toward the front of the house, crashing through bushes and shrubbery, dodging trees and stone benches.

Behind him he could hear confused sounds in the house which told that his shots had aroused people on the first floor.

But he did not stop. Scarcely conscious of the weight of his burden, he continued to flee across the muddy and snow-spotted garden. He despaired of escape if the attendants of the casino joined forces with the hypnotist, but he ran on.

His breath was coming in gasps now, and sharp pains gripped his chest. He stumbled

This story began in FLYNN'S WEEKLY for February 5

and staggered, but continued to run without loosening his hold on girl or gun.

Finally he stumbled onto the curving, graveled walk which led to the front veranda. Here the going was easier. He heard a shout from the rear of the garden, and a light flashed.

Reason told him that this was not Dr. Dax, but it was a pursuer. Perhaps it was an outer guard of the place to prevent a holdup of the house. Whoever it was it meant trouble.

And then his desperate eyes caught the glint of starlight on the body and fenders of a motor. It was a limousine waiting for the egress of its owner, and, blessed luck, a chauffeur slumbered at the wheel, wrapped up in a greatcoat. Rather, the man had been dozing. He was now rousing himself at the unusual sounds from the garden.

With the agility of a hunted man Martin twisted open the nearest door and stumbled into the interior of the car, burden and all. Like a flash, he was on his knees with his gun jammed against the neck of the startled driver.

"Get going!" he snarled. "Open her up—wide!"

The chauffeur was a prudent man. He could tell when a man's voice was desperate. Besides, the nose of the still warm automatic was a mighty inducement. With the ease of one perfectly familiar with his car, he flipped a switch or two and stepped on his starter.

The motor roared into life, the powerful headlights stabbed through the night, and the big car lurched violently forward with spinning, whining tires as he threw the clutch in mesh with the flywheel.

Careening wildly, the machine sped down the driveway, while Martin jerked the door shut and peered through the rear window for signs of pursuit.

But there was none. It was almost a perfect get-away, thanks to the splendid promptness of the chauffeur. The sedan skidded through the gate and onto the concrete road before the amazed gatekeeper was out of his lodge.

"Where to, boss?" the driver shot back over his shoulder.

"Washington," said Martin. "Police headquarters!"

Then he turned his attention to his companion. Tenderly he lifted the girl to the seat of the swaying car. They had made their escape without wraps of any kind. He knew she must be cold. He held her close in his arms and proceeded to wrap the lap-robe about her figure.

She stirred in his clasp and seemed to snuggle closer. He was reminded of that other time—it seemed months ago—when he had held her thus and she had murmured in a never to be forgotten voice, "Only here, *señor.*"

If it had not been Cavassier, whom had it been in her thoughts? He shook off this intensely irritating question to which he could not know the answer, and remembered how he had fallen into the car with her, half crushing her beneath his own body.

"Did I hurt you, Celia?" he murmured in her ear anxiously. "Oh, my darling, are you injured? Answer me, for God's sake!"

Philip MacCray, well known Chicago detective, who has been summoned by Mrs. Hollisworth, learns that his client has been murdered. He assumes the responsibility of investigation and enlists the aid of Reporter Martin. They learn that the finger-prints about the room in which Mrs. Hollisworth was killed are those of her missing husband. But it is apparent that the chair with which the deed was done was wielded by a left-handed man, and Hollisworth is not left-handed.

Martin and Detective MacCray continue the hunt for Hollisworth, but a week drags by and still they have found no trace of him. In a traffic accident Martin meets Professor Debara's daughter, Celia, and the two become good friends. Then when Martin boards a Florida-bound steamer with a reporter friend he suddenly comes upon the missing Hollisworth, who apparently has been suffering from some strange mental lapse.

Hollisworth dies, but not before he reveals a Dr. Dax as the man under whose hypnotic influence he murdered his wife. The doctor, it is learned by Martin, frequents the Palace Nocturne, a "high-class" gambling joint. Martin visits the place and is surprised to come upon Celia Debara there. The two wander about until they find themselves in a secret chamber. They imagine it is the lair of the fiendish Dax. But before they can leave the latch clicks and they are forced to await the caller concealed behind the room's heavy draperies. Dr. Dax enters, finds them, and attempts to hypnotize the two. In the midst of a great mental struggle, Martin shoots twice, and the light goes out.

There was a change in her breathing. In the gloom of the limousine's interior he could feel her eyes upon him. A shudder ran through her frame.

"That awful being!" she whispered. "Where is he? Did we escape?"

"We didn't do anything else," he answered with a nervous little laugh, clasping her bundled form closer.

She nodded. "It was so silly of me to scream. I am sorry, but it frightened me."

"I was scared to death myself," he admitted. "I wonder if I hit him."

"Did you fire your gun, *señor?*"

"I did, but I fear I didn't do him any damage. I didn't see his face clearly at all. Did you?"

"No," she answered slowly. "And yet, there was something familiar about him, awful though he was. I—I wonder if I've seen him before."

"That was the man who had Cavassier make that telephone call. His name is Dr. Dax—and he is from Brazil. Think! Have you ever heard of him?"

She knit her brows in concentration.

"I have heard that name," she said. "Dax—Dax—it sounds strangely familiar. But I do not recall—perhaps my father would know. Oh, let us speak of something else, *señor.*"

She shuddered again, and he tightened his embrace reassuringly. He did not think to release her now that she was again herself. Neither did she suggest it. She seemed content to lie in his arms. But for once her delicious proximity, her charm, failed to usurp all of his faculties.

Martin could not forget the tragic expression on the face of Jonathan Rookes. He remembered the case of Palmer Hollisworth, and wondered.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE MAN AT THE WHEEL

THE aristocratic confines of Chevy Chase had long since been left behind. It was suicide to speed along the wet and slippery streets at this mad pace they were traveling.

Since pursuit was not pressing, the more moderate pace of forty miles per hour would be advisable. He so instructed the driver.

"Where are we going, *señor?*" she asked him.

Martin considered this question. He had told the chauffeur to drive to the police station, but that did not seem so logical a procedure now that they had escaped in safety.

In the first place, there would be neither MacCray nor Clausen there to consult with. A raid on the Palace Nocturne now would hardly find Dr. Dax there. It would only cause Carlyle a great deal of trouble and gain nothing.

What a fool he had been to undertake his investigation alone! He had bungled the job, and Dr. Dax, warned and on guard, had escaped. Martin cherished no illusion that he may have shot the monster; he knew that he had not.

What could he tell MacCray if he found him? Nothing save that he had frightened Dr. Dax away from the Palace Nocturne. A fine report to make! He had to learn something now in order to tell the detective.

And there was one man who might be able to give him some information. It was after twelve o'clock, but who cared for conventionalities at a time like this?

"Where are we going?" he repeated slowly. "We are going to your home, where I am going to await the return of your father. If he doesn't show up within an hour I shall—I shall go back to the Palace Nocturne and hunt for him.

"Driver, take us to Kingsley Mansions out on Sixteenth, and then you may do what you please. However, I wouldn't advise you to report this matter to the police."

"I am not liable to," retorted the other dryly. "Since this happens to be the car of the owner of the joint."

"What? You are Carl Monte's chauffeur? This is his car?"

"Precisely, sir. He hadn't been in the house thirty minutes before you came running through the garden."

"Well, of all the Turpin luck!"

"I beg pardon, sir."

"Cock-eyed luck, man. Say—"

A sudden thought struck Martin. Could

Carl Monte and Dr. Dax be by any chance the same man?

"So you are Dax's chauffeur," he said with the air of one who understands much. "To think that I took the car and driver of the man who was after me."

"Not Dax," corrected the driver calmly. "Carl Monte."

"They are the same man," accused Martin.

"I beg to differ with you, Mr. Martin," said the chauffeur gravely. "Even Mr. MacCray knew that."

"You know me? You know MacCray?" The reporter gasped in amazement.

"I recognized you after we left the casino. I don't imagine anybody would have stopped to inquire into identity at such a moment."

"Who are you?"

"The driver of Carl Monte's car."

"Then, who is Carl Monte?"

"Sir, I am not at liberty to answer. Suppose you ask Mr. MacCray."

"This beats me," Martin murmured to the girl in his arms. To the driver he said:

"Where is this MacCray you speak of?"

"On the trail of Dr. Dax, just as you seem to be."

"On second thought," Martin ordered grimly, "we *will* go down to police headquarters, where I can have a little talk with you."

"I strongly advise you against such a course," warned the driver quickly. "You will likely interfere with Mr. MacCray's plans."

"What is your name?"

"Charles Glepen, sir."

"Well, I don't know you by name, Charles," commented Martin grimly. "But I'm going to have a good look at you when we get to Kingsley Mansions."

"You won't know me, sir."

"Then, how the devil do you pretend to know me?"

"Who, in Washington, doesn't know Fred Martin these days? It is not impossible to have him pointed out. Besides, you have access to the Palace Nocturne which belongs to Mr. Monte."

"You either know something I need to know, or you simply talk too much. Speed it up. You're going into Kingsley Mansions with us for a little heart to heart talk."

"Very well, sir."

Kingsley Mansions was dark except for the light in the lower hall. With the lap-robe still wrapped about her slim figure in the approved style of the American squaw, Celia Debara got out of Martin's arms demurely and led them into the building.

Uncomplainingly Glepen followed her, Martin bringing up the rear with his gun muzzle resting against the fellow's spine.

The Señora Inez was up and anxiously awaiting the return of the Debaras. She admitted the oddly assorted trio in astonishment.

Martin motioned his captive to a chair as the old woman burst forth in a torrent of voluble Spanish. Celia stemmed the flood quickly.

"Does she understand English?" Martin asked the girl. He was beginning to grow suspicious of every one.

"Only a few words, *señor*."

"Too many," he decided. "Send her straight to bed. Where is the professor's secretary?"

Celia questioned the duenna, and the latter replied that he was still out on some business for his master. Martin nodded in understanding to eliminate an unnecessary translation.

As the old woman, grumbling to herself, withdrew from the room he turned to the chauffeur:

"Now, then, Charles Glepen, we'll take up our conversation where we left off. You'll either tell me what you know, or we'll take a trip down to headquarters. And I haven't much time to coax you along, either."

"As you will, Mr. Martin," the man answered coolly.

"Well," snapped the reporter. "Begin."

Glepen shrugged. "What do you wish me to say, sir?"

"You started this trouble by volunteering the information that you were Monte's chauffeur. Why did you do that?"

"Because, having learned who you were by listening to your conversation with this lady, I knew you had not robbed the casino. After you mentioned the name of

Dr. Dax, I knew positively that I would not take you to the police station.

"Fortunately, you directed me to drive here. I did so. Knowing what I know, and not knowing how much about this case that you knew, I dropped the remark that I would not go to the police as a preparatory remark to argue you out of pursuing such a course later.

"I did not know at that moment whether you were working on this case as a merely energetic newspaper reporter or as a collaborator with Mr. MacCray. Thus, I let drop the remark about that gentleman. You snapped it up in a fashion that I knew you had heard of him.

"You refused to let me ask any questions of you by firing them at me. If you will now be so good as to tell me exactly who and what MacCray is, I will tell you all I know.

"If, on the other hand, you cannot satisfy me that you know all about him—and I heard him say nothing about you—I must refuse to talk."

CHAPTER XLV

A "FIXER"

MARTIN considered this amazing proposition. He thought it over carefully. Then, deciding that he was safe in speaking of MacCray, as this man had already done so first, he nodded shortly.

"Agreed. Philip MacCray is an eminent detective from Chicago who started in on the Hollisworth case and is now on the Dax mystery. Does that satisfy you?"

"You wrote in to-day's paper that Palmer Hollisworth died without making a statement," accused Glepen. "Do you or don't you know better than that?"

"It was his statement that took me to the Palace Nocturne. And if you've merely tricked me into giving you information that you did not know you are going to leave this house on an undertaker's stretcher."

"I believe you," nodded Glepen as he encountered the other's fierce gaze. "However, I know much that you have not learned. I must pledge you to secrecy until you compare notes with Mr. MacCray. Will you do this?"

"Certainly."

"And how about the lady here?"

"I pledge Miss Debara to secrecy, also."

"Very well. This is what I know, sir."

Glepen proceeded to relate the details of MacCray's visit to Andrew Peterman and the amazing exchange of information which took place.

"Hence, you understand that we are now working with Mr. MacCray," he concluded. "Perhaps I have been indiscreet in telling you the secret of my employer, but I think not. In exchange I am asking you for the details of your experience to-night. Will you tell me, Mr. Martin, just what happened?"

The young man thought rapidly. The mystery was rapidly becoming too complicated for him to consider clearly. There was no doubt that Glepen had told the truth. He remembered now the details of the arrest of Andrew Peterman, which had taken place after that telephone conversation with Dr. Dax.

Of course, Peterman had been the first person MacCray had thought of when the Hollisworth mystery merged into that of the debonair broker and the unknown Dr. Dax.

While Martin had gone off on a hazardous expedition to the Palace Nocturne, MacCray had gone directly to Peterman and, without creating the havoc the reporter had done, had got the same information as Martin, and then a great deal more.

Martin began to feel decidedly like a blundering amateur. He had rushed in blindly, perhaps spoiling MacCray's careful plans. If, through his impetuosity, the sinister Brazilian escaped he could never forgive himself.

MacCray had certainly known whereof he spoke when he had said that a good detective was not made in a day. This moment was uncomfortably like the zero hour to the abashed and remorseful reporter.

"Certainly, I'll tell you about it, Glepen," he made answer somewhat humbly. And he related the rather hectic events of

the evening. "Tell me," he finished anxiously, "was MacCray there to-night with Peterman?"

Glepen shook his head. "Mr. Peterman, as Carl Monte, went for the express purpose of seeing what he might learn of Dax. Mr. MacCray is trying to find the central base of the man. I have no idea where he went when he left early this evening.

"If you will now excuse me, I must hurry back to the Palace Nocturne for Mr. Peterman. We must not be suspected by Dr. Dax. It will never do for him to think that I willingly aided in your escape."

"What will you say if you should be questioned by him—providing he is still there?"

"So far I have been ignored by the man. However, it is not unlikely that such a cross-examination may follow. I am glad you mentioned the possibility. Did Dr. Dax see you clearly? Does he know you, do you think?"

"I would say no to both questions," answered Martin slowly.

"In that case, I was forced, at the point of your gun, to drive you and the lady down into Rock Creek Park where you got out and bade me drive on.

"While I did not recognize you, I think you were a certain jewelry thief who must have stumbled into that private chamber in search of loot. Distinctly not a man who would carry his strange tale to the police about that interview—even if he attached any significance to it."

"I suppose that will work, Glepen."

"It will have to, sir. Of course, it is unfortunate that you chose my car in which to make a get-away. However, it may turn out for the best, after all. Good night, sir—and madam."

After he had gone Celia Debara turned to Martin. She held out her hands in an appealing gesture.

"It is most unfortunate that I cried out," she murmured sorrowfully as he took her hands. "Had I not done so there would have been no chance of this Dr. Dax suspecting anything. None of this would have happened."

"It might have," he consoled her. "Remember, we had not yet got out of the room without him being aware that he was spied on. He was on the verge of discovering us while you were slipping those bolts, before Mr. Rookes entered the room. As it is, perhaps no damage has been done."

"I—I am afraid," she answered soberly. "You might have learned something about his plans. And I—I spoiled it all."

"I had no business taking you in there with me. It is all my fault. You are the gamest little lady in the world—you're simply splendid," he defended stoutly. "I only wish I had met you before that other fel—I mean, before—before—" He ended lamely.

"Before what, *señor?*" she inquired, looking up into his eyes in honest perplexity.

"I don't know," he admitted helplessly.

And he did not. It was impossible to name that unknown lover she had taken him to be for a precious moment. In fact, he could never reveal to her that glimpse he had had into her heart and about which she knew nothing. It was an unsurmountable *contretemps*.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE ZERO HOUR

THE minute hand of the clock circled its weary path from twelve to twelve. At one o'clock there was no sign of the absent Professor Debara. Señora Inez had returned to the room and now sat quietly in one corner.

Twice Martin had suggested that both women go to bed, but Celia would not listen to the suggestion. She could not sleep, she declared, and she did not wish to be left alone with no other company than that of her dour duenna. Hence. Martin remained, becoming more nervous with each passing moment.

Then, just as he was on the verge of announcing his intention of returning to the Palace Nocturne to search for the professor, there were footsteps in the corridor. A key rattled in the lock, and a visibly agitated Debara burst into the room.

His mustache was aquiver with excitement and the black eyes behind the heavy

lenses were almost glittering. He left the door ajar in his anxiety.

"Celia!" he cried out emotionally. "My dear child, are you quite all right? I hurried as fast as I could."

There was a strangeness in his manner that was unusual and which had its effect on every one of them. What could he know of late events?

"Certainly she is all right, professor," said Martin, studying the man keenly. "Why do you ask that question, sir?"

The Brazilian pierced the speaker with a quick glance.

"Cavassier told me that you had interfered in affairs which do not concern you, *señor,*" he answered chillingly. "I must ask you for an explanation."

"And I must ask you for the same thing," retorted Martin grimly. "Will you kindly sit down and compose yourself?"

The man bristled up at once. Celia started to her feet to calm him. He waved her back to her chair. Then he slowly advanced from his position near the door. He eyed the American coldly. He had a queer, dampening effect—more so than his usual aloof manner.

"Professor Debara," Martin said sharply, "it is after one o'clock. Why are you so long getting home?"

"I fail to see that it is any of your business, *señor.*"

"On the contrary, it is very much my business. You will answer my questions—or face a police investigation for your actions to-night. What were you doing at the Palace Nocturne?"

The Brazilian seemed to wilt at this threat.

"I went there in my attempt to trace the man who had Cavassier call your paper that afternoon. I was anxious to learn why I had been implicated in the affair."

"Why were you so late getting home after your daughter left?"

"I—there seemed to be some sort of excitement after you departed. There were revolver shots. It was rumored that there had been a robbery or a shooting affair of some kind.

"The doors were locked and no one was allowed to leave until they had been passed by the manager of the place and a quiet little man I took to be a detective. As soon as possible, frantic about my daughter's safety, I hurried here."

"You don't know who this quiet little man was?"

"I do not, *señor.*"

"He was the owner of the casino. Did you see any one else there who impressed you in any way? Did you find out anything about the man you are looking for?"

"I did not. Do you know anything about him?"

"I do, professor," responded Martin grimly. "Suppose we sit down instead of standing and glaring at each other like a pair of fighting cocks? I shall tell you who he is, and then I want you to tell me who he is. A game of ping-pong, in a way."

Debara, still muffled in his outer garments, hands still gloved, hat still pulled down over his forehead, merely stared a long moment at the reporter.

"You know something," he said. "Let us lay our cards on the table, *señor,* as you suggest. You tell me all you know, and I will tell you what you wish to know."

"Agreed," said Martin, seeing a chance to retrieve himself in the eyes of MacCray providing Debara knew anything about his fellow countryman.

The professor turned his back and removed his outdoor garments. He placed a chair somewhat apart from the others and seated himself.

"Pray, proceed with your story, *señor,*" he said.

"The man you are seeking is called Dr. Dax. He is from Brazil, like yourself. He was a fairly well-known physician in your country. Here he is unknown. But I know him to be a super-hypnotist and the murderer of Lillian Hollisworth."

"Then Hollisworth did make a statement before he died," said Debara sharply. "You did not write the truth in your paper."

"I did not. Why should I send Dr. Dax a public message that I was after him? Hollisworth told me that I would likely find the man at the Palace Nocturne. That was why I was there to-night. Through Cavassier you learned the same thing.

"Now I can safely tell you that your enemy is Dr. Dax. He is the man we are both after. Celia—Señorita Debara, thought the name familiar and that you might be able to shed some light on the matter now that I can name the man.

"You told me since that first brief interview between us that you had known Hollisworth in Brazil. Now tell me if you knew Dax in Brazil."

"Quite well, indeed."

"Well?" demanded the reporter eagerly as the other paused. "What do you know about him?"

"More, I should say, than any other person. I know, also, that you are a very meddlesome young man whose activities, unless terminated now, would be ruinous to me."

A deadly something had leaped from obscurity into the atmosphere. The identical feeling of malignancy which had all but overpowered him in the actual presence of Dr. Dax at the Palace Nocturne smote Martin. It alarmed him. But such an emotion was impossible here.

"Just what do you mean, sir?" he gritted harshly. "Is this a threat?"

"In a way you can consider it so," nodded the other pleasantly. "For I, you see, am Dr. Dax."

With a swift motion he raised his hands to his face and tore the mustache and heavy spectacles from his countenance. The features of Xanthus Agosto Debara had become the features of a Satanically smiling, clean-shaven stranger.

It needed not the man's assertion to establish his declared identity. For the first time in his life Martin was face to face with this sinister being without a mask.

But the lean, dark features, the compelling glitter of those black eyes, the long, slender hands, the no longer concealed and unrepressed magnetism of the man shrieked aloud that this indeed was Dr. Dax.

Celia Debara started up with a wild scream. She cried out only once in horror; and then crumpled to the floor in a swoon. Señora Inez rushed from her corner and knelt beside the body of her mistress.

She raised her head and released a torrent of Portuguese at the metamorphosed professor and father. He replied harshly in the same language, and she cowered fearfully at his words.

Martin was stunned at this appalling turn of events. Who on earth could have foreseen this? Belatedly he leaped to his feet and snatched furiously at his automatic.

His fingers had just gripped it firmly when there was an explosion of light at the back of his head, and everything went black before him. His last conscious thought was of a black and gold chair that leaped into the air and struck down victims of its own accord.

CHAPTER XLVII

"COME WITH ME!"

BELLS—brazen-toned bells, soft-chimed bells, temple bells. Lights -- softly flickering lamps in a medieval palace, swinging hurricane lamps on a ship at sea, sharply piercing beams from the shaft of a lighthouse, the ghastly fluttering of a mercury arc.

Voices—whisperings of meaningless phrases, mocking voices, weeping voices, shouting voices, leering voices. And then silence and dark.

A dim glow succeeded the blackness of eternal night, a phosphorescent light that came from nowhere and filled all space. Twilight in purgatory! Alone in illimitable space, surrounded and besieged by legions of unborn phantasms! Lost in the depth of the universe without a guiding spirit!

At thought of a celestial *cicerone* there loomed out of the distance ahead a vast shape of nebulous matter which grew in size until it appeared like a great mountain which dwarfed the tiny figure on the plain before it.

Glowing with an internal light, this photism assumed the form and features of Dr. Dax. Then spoke this Gargantua of delirium:

"Fred Martin, let me guide you safely out of this chaos. See! All the confusion, the pain, the mocking space is gone at my command."

It was so. Martin was alone with the mountain.

"You are lost. Come with me. Put yourself in my care and I will make you whole and strong, master of the forces about you. Come with me. You need my aid now, and I can do much for you. Come with me."

"Come with me!" The very spaces rocked in unison with that compelling, soothing phrase. Unseen trees whispered the three little words, the winds of the world took up the lulling refrain, babbling brooks and sweet-voiced birds sang the impelling command. "Come with me!"

It was the logical thing to do. To fight against the suggestion was pain and agony. Surrender was delicious and restful. It was folly to think otherwise.

It was folly to try to think about anything at all. What mattered it where he was or why he was or who he was? "Come with me!" was the solution of his difficulty.

The little figure on the vast plain before that huge mountain that was the embodiment of Dr. Dax raised its hands in surrender. Even as it did so it was conscious of another influence that interposed.

"No, no, do not surrender!" a new voice fell upon his ear. Rather, it pierced his consciousness in some manner. It was not received in the same way as the voice of the vast photism.

"*Señor,* you are lost if you go. Do not believe him! Do not heed him! Do not *hear* him!"

From whence had come this silvery message in a mental voice tha he would have recognized anywhere? The little figure on the plain slowly lowered its arms and gazed anxiously about.

"Fred Martin," broke in the voice of the mountain so insidiously that it was exquisite joy to listen, "the time is at hand. Tarry no longer. Come with me!"

Against the fabric of his mind beat another message.

"*Señor,* you must not heed him! I beseech you—if only for my sake."

"Celia! Celia!" he lifted his puny voice in despairing appeal. "Where are you? Do not leave me here alone."

"'Whither thou goest, I will go.' Turn your back upon the tempter, *señor.* I am here with you."

The tiny figure before the mountain slowly turned about. And there, fluttering in robes of sheerest white, floating lightly above him like an angel, was that beloved form.

"Fred Martin, if you love life, heed me before it is too late. *Come with me!*"

This time the voice was compelling, overbearing, well-nigh insupportable. No longer was it a soothing, pleading, coaxing influence. It was a command from which the silken sheath had been stripped, baring the threatening chains beneath.

All the angry space of the empty depths writhed and swept in unison down upon him, beating down the barriers of resistance he would have raised to fight that inexorable command. "Come with me!" reverberated from horizon to horizon like mad thunder.

But the figure, the compassionate face of Celia remained constant throughout the turmoil. It was agony, it was torture to struggle against the invisible bonds that the forces of that mighty *cicerone* threw about him.

It was like fighting through tremendous waves of power which would have dashed him against the mountain, no less malignant because they were invisible. Yet, he struggled onward, his mind fixed on his guiding angel.

He was making headway. His resistance became stronger. He was throwing off the insidious force that had been irresistible.

He was receding from the reach of that vast influence—he was without the pale of that overwhelming attraction—he had fought clear of that deadly danger which Celia seemed to understand better than he. He was free! And the sky became streaked with pain!

CHAPTER XLVIII

CAPTOR AND CAPTIVE

WHAT a horrible nightmare! What a dream for a perfectly normal young man to have! Fred Martin groaned and returned to consciousness. He was still shivering from the experience, shivering as though he continued to feel a

draft from that cosmic cold. He opened his eyes.

He was in a strange bedroom, the morning sunlight shining through two barred windows. One window was open, and the chill, damp February wind was sweeping across his bed. He was uncovered, and his body was drenched with perspiration.

No wonder he had been cold. Teeth chattering, he pulled the bedclothes up about his quivering form. In doing this he made a discovery.

He was dazed, his head was throbbing with a mighty headache, and he was not alone in the room. Seated in a chair beyond the foot of the bed was the elegant figure of Dr. Dax.

Martin raised his head and stared in astonishment.

"You regain consciousness, Señor Martin," said the doctor in his soothing voice. "I had begun to believe that you had drifted on toward the land of shadows."

"Wha—what happened to me?" the reporter asked thickly.

"I fear my assistant last night used more strength than judgment."

"Where am I? And what do you mean?"

"You are now a guest of mine. You ask what I mean? After you had once attempted to take my life, you do not think I would seek you unprepared, surely. When I entered Kingsley Mansions I was well accompanied.

"While your attention was centered on other things one of my assistants entered the room from behind you. It was necessary to subdue you with that crude but effective tool known to the footpad as a blackjack. But let us speak of pleasanter things."

"Water," mumbled the man on the bed.

"At your elbow," replied Dax, waving one reptilian hand. "Also liquor and headache tablets. Show no hesitancy. Nothing is poisoned; nothing is drugged. However, if whisky and aspirin do not ease your pain at once I can do so by mental suggestion."

"God forbid!" shuddered Martin as he raised himself up and examined the articles on the bedstand.

Dr. Dax laughed softly, but he made no response. While Martin swallowed tablets and liquor, he placed a cigarette in a long holder and proceeded to smoke.

In the light of morning, clad in tailored garments that fitted his slender figure to perfection, he did not present so terrible an appearance. He was dark, he was sinister, yes. But there was little of the horrible about him.

Martin noticed this at once. Heretofore, this individual had seemed to be surrounded by an air of such intensity that to come into his presence was like receiving an electric shock.

While his personality was magnetic, the almost tangible atmosphere of malignant influence he could cast over one was missing. He was more like the figure of the vanished Professor Debara.

Whether Martin had reached the apex of emotional reaction toward this strange being and now close contact blunted the sharpness of the man's emanations, or whether Dax could control the intensity of his influence on others at will the reporter did not know.

Whatever it was, something had changed in their relationship. At least, it was not a psychical fear of the Brazilian that Martin now experienced.

"I presume you are anxious for an explanation," Dr. Dax resumed, smiling his Satanic smile as Martin eased himself back to a reclining position.

The reporter stared at his captor.

"I am surprised that you even intimate you would give me one," he answered.

"You wrong me, Señor Martin. You are entitled to a concise account of the matter. There is much that I have to discuss with you."

Martin glowered at him.

"You are wasting your time," he declared shortly through set teeth. "You had just as well murder me now and get it over with. I'm not going to tell you a damned thing."

"Tut, tut! Such forceful language. I am not asking you for any information, young man. Instead, I shall vouchsafe some. As for murdering you, I have no intention of a such a thing—at present. You are too valuable a man to be wasted in that fashion.

"When I said last night that I must terminate your former activities lest they become detrimental to my purposes I was not contemplating killing you.

"You will note that I speak of your duties, real and fancied, in the past tense. There is a significant reason for this. You are too good a man to be wasting your time on a mere newspaper."

The other made no reply to this. He was not going to be tricked into giving away what he might know, as he had been last night. He had been the perfect dupe of the pretended Brazilian professor. Fool, not to have guessed at the truth before!

CHAPTER XLIX

INVISIBLE BONDAGE

DR. DAX went on after a brief pause:

"Naturally I am the man who had Cavassier telephone your paper that Saturday afternoon. But how was I to know that you would be the man sent out to cover the interview? I was not aware of your existence at that time. It still is not clear to me how you trailed Palmer Hollisworth to the Sustanis.

"No, I do not ask for an explanation just now. I merely comment on your uncanny astuteness. For the entire week of his disappearance he was confined in this house and under constant hypnotic control. If you will glance about your room you will observe that such a chamber was constructed to retain prisoners. The entire house is constructed in the same fashion.

"This was a private sanatorium before I purchased it. I have made few changes in this particular. Thus, even if Hollisworth had not been in a cataleptic state, it would have been impossible for him to communicate with any one not a member of my *ménage*.

"However, we will pass that point.

"You came forcibly to my attention when you made that capture of Hollisworth. From a mere annoyance you leaped into a dangerous entity.

"By the way, you have this headache as a sort of retribution. Believe me, you richly deserve it. You gave me a terrific one when you banged Palmer Hollisworth's head against the wall of his stateroom."

Martin started erect as though he had been jabbed with a needle. He forgot his pain as he stared at the features of the Brazilian. As he stared a growing conviction formed in his mind, a conviction in which there was a touch of the horrible.

"That is who Palmer Hollisworth looked like before he changed back to himself!" he ejaculated. "It was you! It was your very expression he wore!"

"Certainly," nodded Dax calmly. "Why not? His mind and personality was sleeping. I was animating that body by the power of my will."

"God! That—that's impossible!"

"Not to me, my friend. You have a great deal to learn about me. However, returning to Hollisworth, in sending him aboard the Sustanis in that condition I was getting him out of the country in a perfect disguise.

"You wonder why I should take so much interest in a man wanted for murder? He was no longer of use in the diplomatic service. Ah, but he was the sole inheritor of his wife's estate. I needed that money.

"I was going to work out a plan after I had spirited him away. But I needed him alive—not dead, free—not a prisoner of the law. And you, Fred Martin, were the instrument that interfered with my plans.

"In your struggle with the man you knocked him unconscious—rather it was I whom you knocked unconscious. When I recovered myself I had lost control over my subject.

"As I had not made him susceptible to a state of hynosis by mental suggestion I could not recover the lost ground. All I could do was to suggest to his conscious mind that he drown himself. Thus, by a little oversight in my hypnosis, I am the poorer by a great many millions.

"However, a single mistake is likely to occur; it is the second mistake of the same nature which is inexcusable. You may have noticed last night at the Palace Nocturne that I am correcting this fault with my other subjects."

At this callous discussion of the deaths of the Hollisworth couple, and that calm reference to the tragic case of Jonathan Rookes, Martin shuddered in loathing and revulsion. This man was a fiend.

"Why do you shudder?" inquired Dax. "Hypnosis is painless. There is an interesting technical side to the case of Palmer Hollisworth which might interest you. A number of my medical contemporaries would give much to study the eccentricities of the case.

"You noted how slow of speech and action Hollisworth was? In fact, it was due to this that you succeeded in capturing him. Otherwise, he would have pistoled two thieves in his cabin.

"The reason is that I have not yet succeeded in seeing with the eyes of my subject or hearing with their ears. This is rather odd, because it is easy to make a subject see with my eyes, hear with my ears, *et cetera.*

"However, that perfection will come. The rule will yet work both ways.

"As yet I can but command, knowing I shall be obeyed. But I sit in the dark, learning what is going on about my subject only by reading the thoughts in his mind and then directing his actions.

"I must learn what is taking place before I can direct him intelligently.

"But enough of this. I will attain perfect control—I will master the art in every phase at no distant day in the future.

"You will realize that you had attracted my attention. It is true that your newspaper account anent Hollisworth's death fooled me for a time. I believed it. However, while you were laying your plans to find me, I was making arrangements to dispose of you.

"You had become inimical to my interests. You will, of course, understand that I do not control hypnotically all the people who work for me. That would be impossible because of their number and their diversified activities if for no other reason.

"Hence, you were just twelve hours ahead of a premature death when we met again in my chamber at the Palace Nocturne.

"It was a great shock to me to find that you were able to resist my power to cause physical attraction. And it was a greater wonder that you were able to fire at me. That, my dear boy, won my admiration.

"You came perilously close to doing for me what I had already directed should be done to you. I decided that I could use you instead of destroying you.

"Whether it was the presence of Celia that gave you the power to resist—"

"Don't mention her name!" cried Martin in mighty revulsion.

"You ask me not to speak of my own kin? Come, you are childish."

"Celia is an angel," declared Martin fiercely.

"And I—am a devil? Tut, tut! These are no longer the dark ages, my boy. You must think of a more modern and apt style of comparison. But we were speaking of you. You have successfully resisted hypnosis.

"This, while unusual with me, is not impossible. Next, you have proven yourself a remarkably clever man. I have need of such as you."

"What, in God's name, is your purpose?" gasped out Martin, sick with horror and the calm revelations of the sinister Brazilian. "Why are you doing all this?"

"All this?" Dax raised his eyebrows mockingly. He rose to his feet with the grace of a jungle cat. "You say 'all this'? Young man, you know nothing as yet. You art not in a physical condition for protracted conversation at the present time. Let me sum the matter up in a nutshell.

"You are inimical to my interests. I do not want to kill you because I can use you. Hence, it becomes a simple problem. You cannot go free. You must cast your lot with me—or you must die! I will give you a little time in which to make this momentous decision.

"I will, of course, furnish you with good reasons for entering my service. In the meantime, let me recommend that you rest and recuperate your strength."

"Celia? What have you done to her?" cried out the young man in anguish. "And Jonathan Rookes? What are you doing to him? Why did you—"

"You will learn many things if you adhere to me," cut in Dax coolly. "I will send for you when I wish to see you about this choice. You have taken into—"

"I'll see you in hell before I'll even entertain the idea," Martin cried out violently. "You—"

Dr. Dax held up one hand and fastened his glittering eyes on his prisoner. A terrible gleam shot from his orbs, and Martin felt gripped in an invisible vise that froze his vocal cords into silence.

He found himself unable to move. He was held by the cords of invisible bondage.

"I will call your attention to the fact that you are not immune to certain powers I possess," Dax said in his vibrant voice.

"Now you calm down and rest. Your breakfast will be served at once. Don't make the mistake of trying to leave this room until you have received permission. The windows are barred and your door is guarded."

The speaker clapped his hands sharply. The door opened at once. There stood a hulking giant of a man who bobbed his head respectfully.

"This is your Cerberus," Dax explained to the speechless man in the bed. "In the course of a day or so, if you prove amiable, you will be allowed the run of the building.

"Calles, you will ring for Mr. Martin's breakfast now. See that he remains quiet for the rest of the day. Doubtless he will sleep part of the time, but you are to see that his wants and wishes are cared for."

The man bowed and withdrew from the doorway. At once Martin heard the deep-toned voice of a gong.

Dr. Dax stepped to the door and smiled.

"Until later, *señor*," he said.

And the prisoner was alone.

CHAPTER L

MACCRAY GOES TO WORK

THE *ante mortem* statement of F. Palmer Hollisworth had far-reaching effects which had not been foreseen. It had sent Fred Martin to the Palace Nocturne and then delivered him into the hands of the master criminal.

It had sent Philip MacCray directly to Andrew Peterman and then plunged him into feverish activity. While it cannot be said that he displayed more zeal than Martin, it was certainly with more care that the detective went about the business of hunting down the man known as Dr. Dax.

Upon leaving Andrew Peterman's apartment late Sunday afternoon he proceeded directly to police headquarters, where Sergeant Clausen awaited him in quite some anxiety.

Here, after a long consultation which greatly relieved Clausen's mind, Detective Perry was placed on the trail of the bond broker with emphatic instructions to shadow Peterman day and night. Under no circumstances was he to arrest the man until given the word.

Two good men were sent out to investigate the addresses given MacCray by Peterman as the places where he had met Dr. Dax. A special crew was sent out to tap all of the bond broker's telephones, with instructions to listen constantly for a message from Dr. Dax and to trace the call.

A special detail of detectives waited at the central office to speed out to the place from whence the call originated.

"And what are you going to do?" Clausen asked MacCray after all these matters had been arranged. "Go out and look over the Palace Nocturne?"

"I am going to my hotel and go to bed," yawned the little detective evasively. "I've been going for a night and two days. Even a detective must sleep some time."

"Then, hadn't I better throw a cordon around the casino and investigate it for you?"

MacCray's jaws closed with a snap.

"Don't you do one thing more than I have just outlined," he said crisply. "Forget the gambling house and the identity of Carl Monte. I don't want our bird flushed or alarmed the least bit. I'll report to you some time to-morrow. If you get a line on Dax, merely hold the house under observation until I see you. S'long."

Thus matters settled down to the monotony of tiresome routine work. Everything seemed to progress smoothly enough until Monday evening at the supper hour.

Sergeant Clausen was just making ready to go home to a nice, hot supper when he was called to the telephone. It was Wilson, city editor of the *Times-Journal.*

"Say, Clausen," he said in no uncertain terms, "where in hell is Fred Martin? I'm paying him to spend a little time on this newspaper, you know. I don't ask much—just that he come in and tell me good morning before he reports to you for the day's assignment on the police force. Do you think I am unreasonable in my demands?

"Of course, I wouldn't think of inconveniencing you—" this was biting irony—"but, dammit, he's left us up in the air now on even the Hollisworth case. I detailed him to that, I let you commandeer all of Tracy's negatives, I've stood for suppression of news so that you could work on the case secretly, I—God knows I've the patience of Job, but there is a limit—"

"What do you mean you're in the air?" countered Clausen. "You've had more dope on this case than all the other papers together. I've made mortal enemies out of ten thousand newspaper men over this affair—they've had to copy the *Times-Journal.* You had more stuff in to-night's paper than anybody else. You're just lucky and don't know it."

"Is that so?" growled Wilson sourly. "Clifton had to rehash yesterday's story for to-night's paper. What I want to know is where Martin is. I haven't seen or heard a thing of him since yesterday morning. What's he doing? Who's this guy MacCray he talks about?"

"What? Since yesterday morning?" Clausen was startled.

"That's what I said. Now what I want to know is whether he is working on this paper any more or not. Is he now on the city pay roll?"

"Wilson, I'm sorry, but I can't tell you a thing about Martin just now. He—he's out on the case. I'll have him call you the moment he comes in."

"This is one helluva note," rumbled Wilson, faintly mollified. "He hasn't been near this office since yesterday morning, and he hasn't been home since yesterday afternoon."

"I'll get in touch with him right away," promised the sergeant, in a queer voice. "Take it easy until you have something worth fussing about. I'll call you later."

The detective sergeant hung up the receiver and turned sharply to an assistant.

"Send a man out to Belmont Inn to pick up Martin's trail," he snapped out. "Tell him to freeze to it until he finds him." He turned to the desk sergeant. "Has MacCray called in yet?"

The officer shook his head.

"Call his hotel," directed Clausen. "I want to see him badly. Tell him that Fred Martin has disappeared."

The desk sergeant whistled in significant dismay as he made a notation on his blotter.

"You think—" he inquired, pausing wordlessly as he lifted his telephone.

"I don't know what to think," clipped out Clausen.

There was a considerable wait. Finally the officer hung up his receiver.

"I can't get him," he said at length. "He hasn't been seen at his hotel since Sunday morning."

"What!" ejaculated the startled Clausen. "Why, he was here last night just before going to his hotel. I wonder if he and Martin—no they weren't together. Send a man over to the hotel to investigate. Something has gone wrong. Try to find MacCray.

"Get in touch with Perry and the others and see if they've heard from him. He was to call me to-day. I'll run out to a restaurant for a bite to eat. Call my wife and tell her I won't be home until late to-night. I'll be right back."

It was true enough that something had gone wrong. But it had gone wrong with Fred Martin, not with Philip MacCray. The amazing story of Andrew Peterman had impressed the detective greatly.

He realized that if he had ever crossed blades with a foeman worthy of his steel Dr. Dax was that man. And if Dax was so careful in covering his own trail it naturally followed that he was greatly interested in police activities.

This was a sobering thought. MacCray never made the mistake of underestimating an opponent. While it seemed positive

that his name and identity and purpose in Washington remained unknown to all except a chosen few, it was not impossible for him to be under the observation of the unknown Dr. Dax without being aware of it.

If he wanted to be certain that his movements were not followed, the proper thing to do was to disappear.

Hence, after placing all of his painfully gathered information in the hands of Sergeant Clausen so the latter could proceed in case of accident to him, and mapping out the moves of the police on the Hollisworth-Dax case for the ensuing forty-eight hours, he left the Municipal Building without giving Clausen an inkling of his intention. Ostensibly he was on his way to bed.

In fact, he was on his way to bed, but not in the manner the sergeant supposed. He walked in through a side entrance of the hotel and stalked on into the kitchen without stopping for an interrogation.

Ducking past amazed waiters and an annoyed chef, he slipped out through the back entrance, filching a coat and hat as he did so. No sooner had he reached the darkness of the alley than he removed his own stylish derby and topcoat and tucked them in a convenient ashcan.

He could not repress a shudder as he thought of the havoc he had wrought to the wearing apparel, but his fastidiousness did not prevent him from slipping into the disfiguring garments he had appropriated and hastening out on the street.

A convenient taxi—a walk—another taxi—a second-hand store where the proprietor slept upstairs and was not averse to doing a little business Sunday night—a third taxi whose driver was willing to find a more reputable clothier—a room engaged in a cheap lodging house out on Thirteenth Street—midnight and a doped taxi driver who, after an exchange of coat and hat, was deposited in the rented room to sleep it off—and Mr. Philip MacCray had been obliterated.

In his stead was a nondescript taxi driver, nameless, and with a tonneau of such unusual articles as a bicycle, a pair of binoculars, a change of garments, and so forth.

Mr. MacCray did sleep that night. And, considering the discomfort of his bed and surroundings, he slept very soundly. His taxi pulled toward the fence of a side road a scant quarter of a mile from the main thoroughfare and the same distance from the Palace Nocturne, curled up on the floor of his purloined cab, he snored peacefully under his laprobe until the sky became streaked with the pink and gray fingers of dawn.

CHAPTER LI

A MISSION OF MYSTERY

AT once MacCray was astir. He munched a cold sandwich and changed his clothes for a suit of rough tweeds and a baggy cap. Slinging the binoculars over his shoulder, he mounted his wheel and pedaled on down the side road.

At length, finding no cross trail in the gray dawn, he reluctantly turned off the road and lifted his machine over the fence. Trundling it beside him, he plowed his way through the mud and unmelted snow to a point behind the gambling casino.

From here he made his way forward until he encountered the wall which surrounded the place. He followed it until he reached a point close to the main road.

Here he hid his bicycle in the underbrush and climbed a young pine tree which he had selected as offering him the greatest protection and at the same time permitting an unobstructed view of the grounds of the Palace Nocturne.

Settling himself for a long wait, he adjusted his binoculars and trained them on the darkened house.

As the morning light grew stronger traffic increased along the main road, but the great colonial structure remained dark and inhospitable. However, MacCray waited patiently.

At length the front door was opened and a group of people came out of the place, entered a car which had been waiting all night, and were whisked away home to their beds.

The wet and bedraggled man in the tree studied this occurrence through his lenses, but he made no attempt to follow the car.

At last a little touring car of popular make and ancient vintage rattled along the highway and turned into the drive. It shivered to a halt within plain view of the detective, and its driver got out. Through his glasses MacCray studied the man.

He saw him open the tonneau door of his little car and shoulder a case, apparently of eggs, which he carried to a back entrance.

There was an interval of waiting, and then the same fellow reappeared with another crate on his back. This time he walked heavily and with obvious effort.

The detective noticed this.

"Hmmm—he went in with an empty case and comes out with a full one," he deduced. "I guess I'll take a chance on this fellow this morning."

He quickly put away his plasses and descended to the ground. Trundling his wheel out onto the main road, he mounted and pedaled back toward the crossroad down which stood his stolen taxi.

When the driver of the little touring car rattled past the side road he observed nothing more interesting than a morning cyclist pumping up one of his tires with a hand pump.

He drove by with but a casual glance, whistling merrily as he opened his throttle so his little machine could snort easily up the slight incline ahead.

Had the man stopped on the brow of the hill and looked back he would have frowned at the peculiar actions of the cyclist. Under the cover of his arm MacCray had made sure that this was the man of the egg crates.

To his surprise, he observed that the man's features bore a passing resemblance to his own. He had already noted the similarity of size and build through the binoculars.

"Redding!" he decided swiftly, exultantly. "It can be no other. Now I know I'm on the trail of the right man."

He stared quickly at the license plate and the general battered appearance of the car as the thing passed. No sooner had the vehicle disappeared over the little hill than he mounted his wheel and pedaled furiously down the side road.

Reaching the taxicab, he bundled his bicycle into the tonneau and hastily changed his cap and coat for the garments of the drugged taxi driver.

Starting the machine, pulling out the choke and racing the motor to warm it quickly, he set out in pursuit of the other car.

He drove at a reckless speed in order not to lose his man. He overtook the car with the egg crate on Connecticut Avenue as it was passing Zoological Park.

Slowing down, weaving carefully through the increasing traffic, he followed along through Dupont Circle, onto New Hampshire Avenue, and then west on Pennsylvania.

On straight through Georgetown the chase led, out on the road toward Glen Echo and Cabin John. Here traffic thinned again and MacCray was forced to fall farther behind.

The smaller car was perhaps half a mile ahead when it turned to the right and chugged up a steep hill. When MacCray reached the turn-off he found it to be a private road.

Glancing up the incline, he observed the roof of a large building which was set somewhat back among trees and shrubbery. He drove on without turning and without the slightest hesitation.

However, a few hundred yards on he stopped the cab and got out. Leaving the machine, and armed with his binoculars once more, he set out on foot. Climbing the rising ground to the right of the road, he plunged into the woods and made his way toward the building on the hill.

"If this is not the place Redding was going," he reason to himself as he panted along, "at least I have trailed him this far. In the morning I can lie in wait here and trail him the rest of the way. Beastly thaw! This mud is terrible!"

He finally drew near the grounds of the house on the hill. He could not enter without climbing a sturdy wire fence. However, he had no wish to get so close to the building. From a safe distance he studied the place, making a complete circuit of it.

It was a large, rather imposing structure of dark sandstone finish. There were several out-buildings which he understood

after due consideration. From various vantage points he examined the place with his binoculars.

But he spent the rest of the morning without observing any signs of life. The place lay placid and quiescent.

However, unless the little flivver of Redding's had spread wings and flown it had certainly stopped at this place. Beyond the building the road became nothing but a muddy trail. Upon crossing this the detective had examined the ground carefully. No automobile had passed along here this morning.

As two of those outer buildings were garages it was plausible to presume that Redding had put his car in one of them. At least there was no sign of the little car about the grounds.

In the early afternoon, having exhausted his scrutiny of the place on the hill overlooking Georgetown, he made his way back to his taxi.

Calmly appropriating it from under the inquisitive gaze of a motor cycle officer who had found it there, he backed it around. The policeman scratched his chin reflectively at this cool insouciance.

"Excuse me," he said, holding up his hand, "but before you drive off, buddy, suppose you tell me what you did with the lady friend? Did she run off through the woods?

"Wouldn't even ride the bicycle you brought along to keep her from walkin' home, eh? Had to hunt for her with field glasses, huh?"

MacCray bristled.

"I never did like smart cops!" he snapped shortly. "Ask your questions like a policeman—not like a comedian."

"An' I don't like fresh guys," retorted the motor officer promptly. "This cab has been standin' here for hours—I've had my eye on it. An' a bicycle an' a change of clothes makes a funny combination inside.

"Let's you an' me ride on down to th' station an' hold a confab with th' desk serg. Get goin', buddy. You got a mean eye." And the speaker's hand dropped to the butt of his pistol.

"Let's see you go on about your business," rejoined MacCray tersely, reaching into his pocket and bringing forth his shield. "Take a good squint at this and be on your way. And keep your mouth shut!"

The officer stared at the badge of the detective incredulously. Then he scratched his head uncertainly as he took in the details of the taxi and the stuff in the back seat. However, the light in the detective's eye convinced him.

"You're a queer fish," he finally conceded. "What were you doing up in the woods? What are you doing with this taxi?"

"All that is none of your business. But you can answer a question for me. What building is that up on the hill?"

"That is the Standing Sanatorium."

"Public or private?"

"Private."

"Is it in operation?"

"I think not, sir. How does it happen that you do not know this yourself?"

"For the same reason that your coat is partly unbuttoned," answered MacCray curtly. "I simply was not aware of it."

The officer glanced down in some confusion, and the detective slammed his car into gear and shot away toward the city. The motor cycle policeman did not pursue.

He drove back to Washington and to the rooming house on Thirteenth Street just in time to find the taxi driver recovering from his drugged condition. Replacing the man's coat and hat, giving him a dose of medicine to restore him quickly, he thrust a twenty dollar bill into the fellow's hand and led him out to his car.

Then he trundled his bicycle up to the house and entered, leaving the taxi driver to stare after him dazedly.

As he bathed and donned fresh garments MacCray was in a deep study. Having consulted a city directory and a map of Washington he had found the motor officer's information about the Georgetown house to be accurate.

The place was the private sanatorium of Dr. Trelor Standing, an eminent nerve specialist. After dressing himself he ascertained the fact that Dr. Standing had offices on Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was now time to interview Dr. Standing.

But Dr. Standing was not to be interrogated. He had sold his practice to Dr. LaClede and his sanatorium to some one else and had taken himself off to Europe. He had left no forwarding address, although Dr. LaClede was under the impression that he had gone to Vienna.

Further investigation showed that the sanatorium was still listed as the property of Dr. Standing; the new owner had not yet recorded his deed. Examination of passport records proved beyond a doubt that a passport had been issued to Trelor Standing several months previous.

From the description and photograph it was obvious that there was no connection between Dr. Dax and Dr. Standing, save the possible one of a business transaction—or complicity. They were certainly two distinct and separate men.

It became more and more obvious that the Brazilian was a very wily customer.

MacCray considered his next step as he ate supper. The obvious thing to do was to get inside that sanatorium and examine it. If Dr. Dax had made the place his headquarters it was going to be a difficult task unless the police made a raid. And a raid was the last thing MacCray wanted to have take place.

He turned the matter of Mr. Redding over and over in his mind. He considered the man from a great many interesting angles. An idea was forming in his head that became more and more pleasing as the details fell into place.

The question was, could Redding be apprehended and pumped for information? If so, would he be likely to have any news of worthwhile importance? If it were only known whether or not the fellow had a police record! Personally, MacCray had never run across the man before.

There was one man who might be able to give him a clew about Redding. This was Peterman. After having gone through all the maneuvers of the night before to lose contact with all who knew him it seemed like a shame to place himself voluntarily in touch with the bond broker or the police.

But subsequent plans altered cases. He made arrangements to visit Andrew Peterman.

CHAPTER LII

TIME TO ACT

RIGHT under the nose of Detective Perry he entered the broker's apartment house without being recognized. But Perry was not to be censured because he failed to recognize the immaculate MacCray in the gawky messenger boy with the rather large head who rode his bicycle along the street through the twilight in such lethargic fashion that it seemed as though each effort must be his last.

Even Glepen, who answered the door, failed at first to recognize the detective. He attempted to bar the way before the impudent youth who insisted on shoving his truculent person into the reception room before he would deliver his message.

"The master is not to be disturbed, lad," said Glepen in annoyance. "I will deliver your message. Hand it here at once."

"No, you won't deliver my message, Glepen," declared MacCray calmly, closing the hall door tightly behind him. "You're an admirable Hermes, but you won't do in the present case. Take me to Mr. Peterman at once."

"MacCray!" exclaimed the valet in consternation. "You will pardon me for not recognizing you, sir. Certainly, sir. Right this way at once, sir."

And thus it was, nearly twenty-four hours later, that MacCray learned of the amazing events which had taken place Sunday night at the casino and what Glepen knew of Martin's subsequent actions.

For the time being he forgot all about Redding and his own activities of the day.

"So you were talking with Carlyle in the office at the Casino," said MacCray to Peterman, "when you heard the shots? What did you do then? Tell me exactly what took place."

"He had just told me that Dr. Dax was in the room with Jonathan Rookes. At the sound of firing Hawkins and several other servants rushed into the office. A number

of the patrons came down from above. Every one seemed to think it was a police raid.

"I did not dare let any one go into that private chamber. So we herded them all out of the office and back upstairs. Some of them were nervous and wanted to go. Carlyle and I went back to the front door and passed them out quietly.

"Among the most frantic were Cavassier of the Brazilian Embassy and Professor Debara, who was the father of the girl Martin took away with him.

"When we had restored order and had time to look into the room where those shots had been fired we found it empty. Dax and Rookes had gone.

"I was in an awful state of excitement until Glepen returned and told me that Martin had been responsible for the shots and that no one had been hurt.

"Mr. Rookes appeared at the Capitol this morning quite as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened to him."

The detective turned sharply on Glepen again.

"You say that Martin told you he saw Dax hypnotize the vice president?"

"Precisely, sir," nodded Glepen.

"I'll have to question Martin right away about that," decided MacCray.

He grasped the telephone and called police headquarters. It was Sergeant Clausen who answered the instrument.

"Clausen? I'm looking for Martin," he said to the sergeant. "I want to see him in a hurry. You know where he is right now?"

"MacCray? Is this MacCray? Great God, man! Where have you been all day? I've been looking for you. Fred Martin has disappeared. I haven't got a thing on him since he left the Belmont Inn yesterday afternoon."

"So? What are the reports of the various men?"

"Absolutely nothing," informed the sergeant. "Flourney and Jackson are still trying to trace matters from those two addresses. So far—nothing. No telephone calls to trace.

"Perry just called in and told me that his man is evidently communicating with his chief by telegram. A messenger boy just went up with a message. He wanted to know whether or not to intercept the boy on his way out."

"He'd better not try it," chuckled MacCray. "I'm the messenger boy. And I am talking over the apartment phone right now.

"If our men are not asleep at their listening post you'll get a call in in a very few minutes reporting this very conversation. S'long."

"Hey! Wait! What do you want me to do? When can I see you?"

"Stay where you are," directed MacCray. "I'll be down to see you before midnight. Don't make a single move until then. If I fail to show up by that time, act according to your own judgment.

"G'by—say! While you are waiting for me send a couple of men over to the Brazilian Embassy and pick up Cavassier. Have him there at headquarters when I get there. S'long."

He hung up the receiver and turned crisply to Peterman and Glepen.

"I want to talk to both of you before morning," he said sharply. "I must go now. Wait for a ring from me."

As he was mounting his wheel down in the street a hand reached out of the shadows and fell on his shoulder.

"Step around the corner of the building, my lad," said Perry's voice. "And don't make a sound if you expect your mamma to tuck you in bed to-night."

Willingly MacCray followed. He did not wait for the other to question him. As soon as they reached the denser shadow of the wall he whispered sharply:

"Have you got a car near here, Perry?"

The other started at the sound of his voice.

"Who the devil?"

"MacCray. Have you an automobile hereabouts?"

"Er—yes," stammered Perry uncertainly. "It's—er—the roadster around the block."

"I must borrow it for a time. Give me the key. I'll leave you my bicycle."

"Well, I'll be damned!" exclaimed Mr. Perry in hearty disgust. "If I'd known this I'd have hidden from you."

"Never mind. I'll be back by here for you. I'm in a hurry just now."

Having successfully traded a bicycle for a motor car, MacCray drove quickly out to the Debara apartment at Kingsley Mansions. He found the place locked and deserted. He did not seem greatly surprised.

However, he wasted no time in forcing an entrance. Kingsley Mansions not being quite the elaborate establishment Kensington Mansions was, there was no night man to offer information—or to hinder him.

At once he noticed the signs of a hasty departure. A moment later he discovered the little pool of dried blood on the rug where Martin had been struck down.

At this he frowned and proceeded to make a careful study of the apartment. An hour later he picked up the telephone and called police headquarters.

"MacCray speaking," he said cripsly to Sergeant Clausen. "Have you got Cavassier?"

"No," was the worried answer, an answer that MacCray now expected. "Cavassier left early Sunday evening and he hasn't been back to the Embassy since. Shall I list him as missing along with Martin?"

"Right," snapped MacCray. "And add to your list the names of Professor Debara and his daughter Celia. Also, a serving woman of middle age and a male secretary to the professor—all four of them South Americans."

"How's that?" gasped Clausen in amazement. "What does all this mean?"

"It means," answered MacCray, grimly ferocious, "that it is time for me to go to work."

CHAPTER LIII

THE MAD COLOSSUS

ON the second day of his imprisonment his hulking guard was removed and Fred Martin was permitted the liberty of the upper floors of the establishment where he was held captive.

As the days passed, interminable days they were, he gradually learned all there was to know about his prison.

There were three floors to the sanatorium. Of the upper two—his domain—every exterior opening window was barred. Immediately he set about planning to escape.

In the meantime, since he was confined here, he did his best to learn everything about his captor.

He had gone over the details of the amazing case of Dr. Dax carefully many times and had, as yet, reached no sane or logical conclusion. The matter of Jonathan Rookes was most perplexing. The brief explanation vouchsafed by the Brazilian had not included a reason for his actions.

That there was a far deeper motive than the acquisition of wealth was obvious in the fact that Dax continued his activities after having gained the Hollisworth millions. And no effort was made to prevent Martin from understanding that a great deal went on downstairs.

Of Dr. Dax himself the reporter saw nothing after that one first visit Monday morning. The stolid Mr. Calles supplied the prisoner with a change of linens and lounged against the bathroom door casing for ten minutes each morning while Martin shaved himself with a safety razor.

Then he locked even this poor tool away from his prisoner and took his departure, leaving Martin to a monotonous day which was broken only by the serving of his meals.

He could not complain of his food. It was evident that, whatever his fate was to be, he was not to be starved to death. But none of the servants he came to know would enter into conversation with him.

The hulking guards at the two staircases leading down to the first floor refused to give him any information.

There was nothing to do except roam through the lengthy corridors and explore the two upper floors. Each room had a bed, a chair, a heavy bureau, and a steam radiator. This was all.

There were no books, no tables, no rugs, not even a picture on the walls. The place was still the barren and meagerly furnished hospital that Dax had bought. He had spoken truly when he said that he had made few changes in this particular.

There were three bathrooms on each floor, but all the fixtures and fittings had

been securely bolted and fastened in place. Nowhere did he find anything which could be converted into a weapon or a tool. Escape seemed impossible.

There were some fifteen or twenty rooms on the third floor which were sleeping quarters for various servants. One by one he investigated these, but found nothing suitable to his purpose, and no information.

On the second floor, his floor, several rooms were devoted to the use of Calles and others whose activities kept them busy downstairs. These rooms were kept locked by their occupants.

There was one other door which was kept closed and locked. This was the door to the east wing where, Martin at length deduced, had once been the operating rooms of the hospital. On the third floor the east wing was open to his inspection.

It was such a ridiculous situation to be in. All this freedom of movement, and no opportunities for escape. There was nothing to do except stare out through the barred windows and think.

He spent many tedious hours in this manner, standing first at one window and then another on both second and third floors. He gazed out over the grounds and the rooftops of Georgetown, watching the sparrows and the early robins, envying the most insignificant creature that was free, and all the time scheming, planning, thinking—thinking—

Cars and people came and went at all hours of the day and night. From his aerie he was unable to recognize any of them, if, indeed, he knew any of the doctor's visitors.

There was much bustle and some little confusion in these arrivals and departures. However, he quickly came to recognize what little order there was in these activities. There was the egg man, for instance.

Every morning about nine o'clock—he had learned to estimate the time by the sun and by his meals; his watch lay on his dresser at the Belmont Inn, where he had left it Sunday after its bath in the Potomac River—a little touring car chugged into the grounds. A man would get out and carry into the building a crate of eggs, then put the little car in one of the garages.

One morning, Thursday it must have been, he was two or three hours late, but thereafter he was as regular as clockwork. This man turned out to be a chap by the name of Redding.

He did not have a room upstairs, although he seemed to live on the place. He would start out after eggs at six in the morning. Allowing him thirty minutes to purchase them, which was ample time, it meant a trip of at least an hour and a quarter each way.

Martin sighed as he imagined the different places he could get to in that length of time.

From the movements of Redding he turned to spend a great deal of time figuring how many persons had to be on the place in order to consume thirty dozen eggs daily. This got him nowhere, but it helped to pass the time. He was beginning to show the strain of his confinement.

And all this while he heard nothing. Where was Celia? What had happened to her since that Sunday night she had been overcome with horror at the discovery that her father was the infamous Dr. Dax?

Was she also a prisoner somewhere in this great building? Or had she known about her father all the time? Had she screamed out merely in fear because he had revealed himself to Martin?

Never! Martin would not admit this possibility. Celia had not been aware of the awful identity of her parent. But was she now reconciled to the matter and concerned only about her father's safety? Or did she ever think of Martin? Was she as anxious to get word of him as he was to hear about her?

He felt that he would go mad unless he was given some sort of news. It was like being in a living tomb. That Dr. Dax was purposely keeping him in this suspense to wear down his resistance he did not pause to consider. Had he done so it would not have alleviated his anxiety.

He was slowly reaching a frantic state, trembling on the edge of senseless and futile violence. He had already passed through the preceding stages of the various emotions. Mad and unreasoning physical revolt was the inevitable next step..

He was on the verge of running amuck when there came a change.

He was striding up and down the floor of his room one night—he had long since lost count of the days—working himself up to a desperate fury, when he heard a wild scream from some point in the lower part of the building.

There was the slamming of a massive door, and then one sharp pistol report stabbed through the night. In the silence that followed he found he was trembling like an aspen leaf.

Ignorance of what was taking place made his imagination run riot. He did not sleep that night. Morning found him haggard and half mad. Another week, and he would have been in a condition to bargain in any fashion with his captor.

Calles came in to lead him to the bathroom for his morning shave. The symptoms of approaching violence, if he saw them, he ignored.

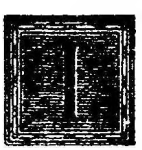
"Hurry, *señor*, you are to be taken to Dr. Dax."

This was all the information he would impart. Unable to pump anything further out of him, Martin hastened with his toilet and was eagerly ready to be taken before his captor.

Calles led him down past the guard at the front stairway and into a room that made the captive blink. Without a further word, his guard pointed across the chamber and then withdrew.

CHAPTER LIV

TWO KINDS OF FEAR



It was an oblong chamber of exceeding richness. Whatever the condition of the rooms above, Dr. Dax had spared no expense on the furnishings of his own quarters.

Rich velvets of crimson formed the window draperies. A beautiful Persian rug covered the floor. The shades were drawn, and soft lights glowed from pedestal lamps which were draped with throws of sheerest silk gauze of delicate hues.

Chairs and divans, buried under a multitude of languorous satin pillows, abounded. It was the lounge of a Sybarite. And in an armchair at the far end sat the immaculate figure of Dr. Dax.

The Brazilian was clad in garments of rich black. This was relieved by a white silk scarf about his neck. The contrast between the two men was all the more sharp because of the fact that Martin had worn his present garb for the entire period of his imprisonment.

His clothes looked more like the garments of a laborer than the semiformal costume of a gentleman. He was a far cry from the alert young man who had visited the Palace Nocturne many nights ago.

"Be seated, Señor Martin," waved his captor, indicating a chair.

"Why have you held me and refused to see me?" burst out Martin angrily. "What is the idea of all this suspense?"

"Wait! Wait!" said Dax crisply. "Don't be impetuous. Consider the sad case of Señor Cavassier."

"What about Cavassier?"

"Poor fellow! He tired of my company and tried to escape last night."

It was the way Dax said this that made Martin shudder. His imagination filled in the details.

"As I intimated to you some mornings ago," went on the Brazilian calmly, "I have something to offer to you. I would regret to see you join Cavassier. But, first, I have something to show you. Come."

He arose and stepped toward a curtained doorway.

"Come," he repeated. "No harm shall befall you. But do not attempt violence of any sort, as the house is well guarded. Step here, if you please."

Slowly Martin arose and drew near. Dr. Dax parted the draperies with a graceful hand and motioned for his captive to pass through. After a glance into his face Martin did so.

His conductor pressed a wall switch, and the room in which he found himself sprang out of the shadows.

It was a small chamber which was draped after the fashion of the black room at the Palace Nocturne. In the center of the floor was a raised couch, which was also draped in black. And on this couch lay

the figure of Celia Debara, clad in a robe of purest white.

Her arms were folded across her breast. Her face was pale under the light, and there was not the least sign of respiration.

Martin recoiled at the sight, and then flung himself forward on his knees.

"Celia! Celia!" he cried in anguish. "Oh, God, she is dead!"

He placed his hands on her face and found it cold and firm as marble. Her lips were faintly blue, and her form was perfectly rigid. He sought to arouse her.

He attempted to move her arms, to no avail. He chafed her cold hands. He caressed her raven hair. And then he bowed his head, burying his face in her fragrant tresses, and sobbed unrestrainedly.

Dr. Dax stood near the doorway with folded arms and gazed on the scene with expressionless face. He made no attempt to interfere with the young man's actions. He waited a long time with the patience of a sphinx.

At last Martin's emotion subsided. Then the other spoke.

"Calm yourself," he said. "Tell me, do you love her very much?"

Martin could not repress the groan which rose to his lips.

"I'd die for her," he uttered huskily.

"Romeo and Juliet," murmured Dax.

Martin turned on him savagely. At once he held up a warning hand.

"Control your emotions," he commanded. "She is not dead, nor is she likely to die. She is merely in a state of suspended animation. The ultimate result rests entirely with you."

"What do you mean?"

"I first want you to understand how utterly in the hollow of my hand do I hold all that is most dear to you. Is there any doubt in your mind on this score?"

"You—you fiend!" choked Martin. "I could kill you!"

"You could not," contradicted Dax. "Never mind the vindictive desire. Do you comprehend your, and Celia's, predicament?"

"You—you would not think of harming Celia to play upon me. No matter what you may think of doing to me!"

"Your remark lacks conviction. Furthermore, you do not know me, my friend. Did not Napoleon put away his wife? Did not—but this is beside the question. Do you understand the extent of the power I wield over your happiness?"

Martin bowed his head without speaking.

"Come," said Dr. Dax. "Come back into the other room. She does not know you are here. Sit down, Mr. Martin. Are you ready now to listen to my little proposition?"

Martin dropped heavily into an easy chair in the outer chamber.

"What is it?" he demanded lifelessly.

"Ah, that is a more amiable frame of mind. Gaze about you. Surely you have noted the difference between this room and the barren quarters upstairs. It is very great.

"But this difference is negligible compared to your own present state and that which I shall offer you. In brief, while you must choose between serving me or death, I have much to offer you.

"It is not merely the power I hold over Celia that I use to win you; that is the most insignificant phase of the matter. In reward for allying yourself with my cause I offer you the position of a lieutenant in my organization—with the opportunity of advancement if your ability continues at the pace you have already shown.

"With the coming of my full control you will find yourself a veritable potentate, a man with the power of an ancient king. Think of it! An ancient king's power in a modern world! You will offer allegiance to but one master—myself. And that will be voluntary allegiance.

"Glory and power! Riches and fame! But such promises can only be fulfilled in the future. To attain them you must work for me now.

"You have proven yourself a capable young man. To some extent you have successfully resisted my hypnotic power. Understand, I can get along comfortably without you, but I can also use you.

"It is never my method to destroy wantonly a useful man. Only upon your utter refusal to accept the gifts I offer shall you be put out of the way."

"What—what is it you are offering me?" stammered Martin in perplexity.

"A position as head of one of the ten great divisions of the earth. There will be but ten nations as soon as I control the world. Can you conceive of a project so vast as a world empire?

"There is nothing original in such a thought. There was Hannibal, Alexander, Charlemagne, Napoleon—and others. But I am the first man who can, and shall, found such a dynasty."

"You? A murderer talking of world empires?" gurgled Martin.

The face of Dr. Dax became dark with fury.

"The term 'murderer' means nothing to me as a mere term," he stated succinctly. "But when you use the word as an epithet I must correct you.

"Do you call the American revolutionists murderers? No! Do you call war between nations a crime punishable by the electric chair or the gallows? No!

"And yet these epochal events were a great deal bloodier than my type of revolution. Because I do not kill on a wholesale scale you would call me a murderer? Fool! It is all in the point of view, my young friend. And remember this, the man who wins is always right."

"But—but you did kill Palmer Hollisworth," accused Martin.

"I suppose you may lay his death to me. Add that of his wife also, if you wish. And that of Cavassier. But what are three deaths, what are a thousand deaths in the balance against the mighty empire I am creating.

"How many *million* beings were slaughtered in the recent World War, and to what purpose? When I control the world there will be no more wars. When I control the earth man will be unified in one compact species without waste, without loss, without confusion. When I control the earth- -"

"When you control the earth?" Martin was able to grasp just a little of the Brazilian's conversation at a time. "Are you mad?"

Dr. Dax smiled. Martin shuddered all over. It was such a confident smile. As wild as the madman's words may have been there was something of ghastly conviction in that Satanic grin.

"Perhaps I *am* mad," he said calmly. "What of it? So were Balboa, Columbus, the Greek philosophers, the inventors of all the ages—every dreamer who accomplished anything was considered wholly mad by the stolid and unimaginative masses and was a trifle mad in reality.

"You wonder why I tell you all this? Because you have shown that you have imagination. You have courage. You are not easily frightened at magnitude. You will make an ideal assistant for me. And so far I have found but two others—the two who are the only real masters of the Continental nations."

"Are you trying to tell me that they are—are creatures of yours? I don't believe you've ever seen them."

"You fool! I have thousands of people scattered about the world who work for me—who are directly in my pay—and who have never seen me. It takes fortunes to finance their activities.

"That is why I must have money, why I must stoop and waste time with such people as Palmer Hollisworth. The day, however, is rapidly approaching when I will not have to work in secret and snatch at money clandestinely.

"No, I do not say that these two leaders are hypnotic subjects of mine. Neither do I say they are hired puppets. But they are men of vision whom I shall lead to greater heights.

"One man alone, Fred Martin, cannot control each working part of a great whole. I must have an organization, and that I am building. I cannot stop to hypnotize every person who meets my need. The process would take too long. It would be too exhausting upon my strength.

"When the time comes I shall dominate these two men and lead them to higher places than they now aspire to win. There must, of necessity, be others. You are young, but your ability is great. Do you want to be one of these others? Perhaps one of these two? For if I cannot use them I shall have to destroy them."

"Either of these men would laugh at you if you were to approach them with

your extremely mad schemes," pointed out Martin.

"They would laugh at Dr. Dax, late of Brazil, yes. But they will not laugh at the dictator of the Americas!"

Martin started. Here, indeed, was the veriest of lunatics with whom he had ever had to deal. He was in the hands of a maniac.

His fear of the man, while it changed from one form to another, became no less acute. The fiendish Brazilian read his thoughts with ease. He laughed faintly with amusement.

CHAPTER LV

AN INVISIBLE WALL

"UNQUESTIONABLY I am mad," he smiled coolly. "I have already conceded this point. But my schemes are hardly those of a vacillating idiot. Have you forgotten Jonathan Rookes?"

A thrill of horror pierced Martin as he remembered what he had seen that night—it seemed ages ago—at the Palace Nocturne.

Mad though this man undoubtedly was, he was a sinister figure who actually possessed a malignant power that he was applying to his awful ends. There were tangible results of his capable madness.

"What—what has Rookes to do with your plans?" He hardly recognized his own voice.

"Mr. Rookes is next in line for the presidency of your country," smiled Dax. "I had to content myself with gaining the ascendancy over the vice-president as it was impossible to reach the person of your president and still maintain the necessary secrecy.

"Mr. Rookes is completely under my control. And he is no longer aware of this fact. He has forgotten my existence."

The inevitable next thought stunned Martin. He went numb with horror. Assassination of the president! But was this possible to even the redoubtable Dr. Dax? The demon smiled again.

"I wonder if I have underrated your mental capacity," he mused thoughtfully. "You seem sluggish this morning. But no matter. If you are weak you shall die. For the present you need more proof, do you?"

"Have you forgotten that to-morrow the president is to make a special airplane trip over the city? Or did you know this?"

The reporter nodded dumbly.

"The name of the pilot of the plane, if you recall?" pursued Dax.

"Major Rodchell—of the air service," almost whispered Martin.

"Right," agreed Dax, tapping a triangle which was suspended from a stand at his side.

Before the musical sound died away a dark-skinned man entered the room.

"Bring in Major Rodchell," directed the master briefly.

Martin sat spellbound in his chair while he waited for the next development.

Then he started up with horror and disbelief as he recognized the nationally known aviation expert who was led into the room between two attendants.

"Rodchell!" he cried out incredulously. "Rodchell! Major Rodchell!"

"Silence!" cried Dr. Dax in a terrible voice, flinging out his ghastly white fingers until they pointed at the horrified reporter.

Instantly Martin was enveloped in that old familiar wave of malignancy which chilled him into immobility. He dropped back into his seat, powerless to move or to cry out.

It was as though he had been turned into marble. It was worse than the loss of movement so often experienced in a nightmare. Physically he was paralyzed, although his brain functioned with almost abnormal rapidity.

"Speak to the gentleman, Major Rodchell," commanded Dax to the uniformed officer who had not even turned at Martin's cry.

The aviator turned and bowed stiffly to the wide-eyed reporter. And Martin could have screamed in terror had he possessed the power. *Rodchell was in a hypnotic trance.*

"Major Rodchell," continued Dax in his vibrant voice, "come to attention!"

The aviation officer did so, facing the hypnotist.

"To-morrow," went on Dr. Dax impressively, "you are to carry the president for a flight over Washington. You will ascend to the altitude of five thousand feet. Do you understand?"

"I understand," repeated Rodchell in that hollow tone which Martin had come to associate with disaster.

"While at that altitude you will receive a mental command from me to pass into a state of hypnosis such as your present one. I will send you a mental command to-morrow while you are in the air and you will quickly and resistlessly pass into a hypnotic trance. You will be under my control. Understand this!"

"I understand."

"That is all. You will now be taken back to your quarters. You will awake there with no recollection of this visit to me. Go!"

The two attendants conducted the sleeping aviator out of the room. Martin could have reached out and touched the flying insignia on the pilot's blouse had he had the ability to move.

But he was held by the chains of a mad hypnotist's will. The tears of anguish coursed down his cheeks.

He heard voices in the distance as others took charge of the unconscious man—the outer doors opened and closed—the sound of a motor—the purring of great tires as a heavy automobile rolled out of the grounds—and the power of speech and motion came back to him.

"This makes the third and last trip of the major to see me," remarked Dax significantly through the silence. "To-morrow Jonathan Rookes will automatically become the President of the United States. And you have the effrontery to call me mad. Do you want more proof?"

"Oh, my God!" gasped Martin. "You—you—"

Without attempting further speech he suddenly gathered his muscles and launched himself straight at the calmly sitting Brazilian. There was murder in his eye.

It was just the merest sort of a move that Dr. Dax made with his magnetic left hand, but Martin found himself brought up short by an invisible yet impenetrable wall.

He was gasping aloud as he tried to force his way to the seated man's side. He flamed with insensate fury.

All the pent-up violence burst forth in a rage and a lust to destroy that he did not attempt to control. But he was as harmless as a fly buzzing against a screen.

"It is useless," Dr. Dax remarked quietly after a period during which he left the other wear himself out. "You would throw away the gifts I offer you in this mistaken sense of loyalty? Very well.

"But, my friend, you have forgotten—" he paused and pointed toward the curtained doorway which led to the little room of the couch—"Celia."

Martin ceased his futile struggling. He groaned bitterly and gazed at the smiling Brazilian out of haggard eyes.

"That is true," he muttered hopelessly. "What do you want me to do?"

CHAPTER LVI

WHISPERING WIRES

IMMEDIATELY upon his surrender Fred Martin was accorded all the privileges of the establishment. He was installed in a suite of two rooms with private bath on the first floor which, after existence in the barren hospital above, was like an apartment in a palace.

Apparently all watch over his movements ceased; the various attendants and servants he now encountered were at his command instead of being hostile-eyed jailers. Dr. Dax went out of his way to impress the young man with the delight it was to bask in his favor.

Martin was conducted to his new quarters by a quiet servant who at once served him the most sumptuous breakfast he had eaten in weeks. He found in his bedroom an extensive wardrobe of splendid garments which fitted him perfectly.

There was no question that Dax was most thorough in his arrangements. He must have had all the necessary measurements for these clothes taken the first night Martin had been his prisoner.

That he had gone to considerable expense and no little trouble, apparently confident of the outcome before he had tried to subdue the reporter, made Martin smile bitterly. It was not gratifying to realize that his surrender had been anticipated with such certainty.

However, aside from that bitter little smile, Martin gave no sign of his thoughts. He accepted everything with a stoical calm which elicited the Brazilian's admiration.

"I assure you, *señor*," Dax said graciously upon seeing the reporter after breakfast, "that you are as free as air—as long as you do not attempt to leave the building. Make yourself at home. Consider everything at your disposal.

"Under the circumstances I cannot give you much of my time for the ensuing day or so. I will be busy in the office—and with other matters.

"For the present you are to do nothing. After to-morrow we shall discuss our plans for the future empire, you and I. I shall have no secrets from you; you must learn my plans before you can serve me intelligently.

"In the meantime, you are an honored guest. I do not like to remind you of any unpleasantness, and I will not speak of the matter again, but do not attempt to betray what you have thus far learned.

"I think you are a very wise man, one who will prove most valuable in the future. However, should you experience a temporary madness during the next thirty-six hours, remember Cavassier—and Celia.

"I cannot afford to take any chances on permitting you greater liberty at the present. That is all. I trust you like this apartment. It is fully as comfortable as mine. Good morning."

Indeed, he was in the clutches of a madman. He stared at the door through which Dax had gone. It was a most capable and dangerous madman who held him helpless. The cataleptic state of Celia was sufficient to chain him to Dr. Dax with shackles of toughest steel.

Whatever he did, he must allow no harm to come to the woman he loved. Yes, he loved her. He knew it for a surety now and frankly admitted it. Hence, escape, if it were possible, was now impossible. To flee meant to sacrifice the life of Celia Debara.

He cherished no illusions on this point. Dax had proven himself too ruthless, his plans too vast, to hesitate at this summary step.

To flee and take Celia with him was even more impossible. How could he get away with a lifeless form in his arms? And should he succeed, what would he have gained?

That precious but lifeless form would still be under the control of the demonic Brazilian no matter how far away he managed to carry her. It was all like the unreal fantasy of a hellish nightmare.

He wondered whether this might not be a dream, an hallucination, a delirium from which he must shortly awaken. And then came the terrible remembrance of Palmer Hollisworth and Jonathan Rookes.

The matter of Major Thompson Rodchell was but a passing incident, a mere ripple in a sea of horror. And yet this unsuspecting gallant soldier had been given his own death warrant by the diabolical hypnotist.

Martin understood perfectly that he must plan and move without seeming to do so. He must pretend resignation; he had to remain here at the sanatorium while he conceived a plan to outwit his captor. For circumvent Dax he would.

While circumstances had forced him to capitulate, he had not unconditionally surrendered. Unless Dr. Dax was a clairvoyant as well as a super-hypnotist the Brazilian was unaware of the intense antagonism which lay behind the placid exterior of his newest lieutenant.

Willingly to sacrifice the lives of Celia and himself by pointblank refusal to accede to Dax's plans, to throw himself away by blind ferocity, would have been sheerest folly.

But to spar for time by apparent surrender and then be willing to risk life, love, and possible happiness in one great effort to defeat the madman was another phase of the matter entirely.

Despite all propaganda to fire the common citizens with loyalty while capitalists waxed fat and selfish in their callous ways,

despite the greed and graft and corruption which festered in a great nation, there still was such a thing as true patriotism.

All the sophistry in the world, all the cynicism, everything fell away before the crucial test of a young American. Like every other real man, when it came to a matter of extremes, Fred Martin was ready to die for his country—even if Celia, too, must die.

But he must not die in vain. He dared not jeopardize his slim chances by attempting anything rash. The thought of escape he renounced utterly.

The proper thing to do was to get a message through to MacCray. This seemed a hopeless idea, but it must be done. The fate of a hundred and twenty million unsuspecting people hung in the balance.

He forced himself to be calm. He bathed and selected suitable garments with the fastidiousness of a man of leisure who had not a care on his mind. Then he examined his suite of rooms with the permissible curiosity of a guest.

The building had been erected in the form of a cross. He found his quarters to be just at the intersection and therefore close to the heart of the structure.

His windows looked out over the back yard where numerous servants passed to and from the auxiliary buildings. There were no doors opening into his suite except the one leading out into the corridor. His windows were barred.

Leaving the apartment, he roamed about the first floor as carelessly as a restless young man might be supposed to do. At each outside entrance he found an armed guard on duty. It was true that Dr. Dax was taking no chances.

It was impossible to draw these cold-faced men into conversation. He turned to the newspapers to which he now had free access.

Although the news was old there was still some space given to the amazing disappearance of Professor Xanthus Debara and his household from Kingsley Mansions. Government officials were surprised and alarmed.

It was hinted that he had been bought off or kidnaped by foreign rubber interests. Martin laughed ironically. He knew exactly what had become of the vanished Debara, and he could not give away his news.

In the *Times-Journal* he found a column of stuff signed with his name. So good old Wilson was carrying on for him.

Thrice Martin strayed into the little chamber where Celia lay cold and rigid. All the time his brain was working in feverish activity.

One by one he had scrutinized the various servants and discarded them as possible aids until he gave up the idea of finding a possible messenger in the *ménage* of Dr. Dax. This brought him back to the telephone.

This he had considered at the outset, but he had been loathe to attempt such a childish and obvious means of reaching police headquarters. He knew that he would no more than get a connection—if that—before he would be interrupted. And then, what?

Now, having come at length to the telephone, Martin went about the matter methodically. First, he located all the instruments in the building.

There were three phones—one in the office of the hospital which was still used as an office by Dr. Dax, one in the main corridor near the kitchen, and one in a little alcove in the west wing.

He set himself to watch the latter two instruments It did not take long, by listening to the bells, to learn that the office and corridor phones were on separate lines. Once he heard both phones in use at the same time.

The phone in the alcove was never used. He found the opportunity to slip in there and examine it. It was dead. No wonder it was left unguarded.

He survived this disappointment and improved the moment by removing the instrument from the wall. Choosing a suitable moment, he carried it quickly to his apartment and hid it in the wardrobe under a mass of garments.

The long winter afternoon passed while he made frequent trips upstairs and robbed one room after another of its electric light cord. This done, he spent weary hours

splicing the wires together with the aid of a paper knife and tracing the wiring of the phone in the kitchen corridor.

By the time evening had come, leaving out all account of the many interruptions he had because of passing servants, the need for himself to spend time elsewhere save in the dimly lighted corridor, and other things, he had laid a pair of wires from his room down the corridor under the edge of the carpet.

Just before the dinner hour he managed to tap the kitchen phone wires at the baseboard. At last he was ready to connect the purloined instrument with a live circuit and, in the privacy of his apartment, call the police station.

The last thing he did before leaving the instrument in the hall was to disconnect it so that no one could lift the receiver during his conversation and listen in. This was a great risk he had to take.

If any one should attempt to use the instrument now and found it dead they might report the matter to Dr. Dax. A simple investigation would reveal the cause and would lead directly to Martin's quarters. But he chanced this because the telephone was little used.

CHAPTER LVII

A NIGHT OF SURPRISES

DINNER was served him in his own rooms. He was glad of this because he had no relish to join Dax at table. He could hardly tolerate the sight of the sinister Brazilian any longer.

The man was inhuman. If forced to be too much in his company Martin feared that he would not be able to control himself and successfully carry on his new rôle. Thus far it had not been necessary. Dax had had no time for him.

After dinner Martin waited until the servant cleared away the tray of dishes before he followed the man out of the room. He would not have thought of leaving the fellow alone in his apartment with that stolen telephone.

He was extremely nervous whenever the servant stepped near the door, fearing that he might step too close to the edge of the room and feel the electric light cord beneath the carpeting.

Why had he not merely waited until midnight and then risked using the telephone in the corridor instead of going to all the trouble he had and leaving a wide trail of missing telephone and missing drop cords which led straight to him?

And then he thanked his lucky star that he had gone to such an elaborate method. Dr. Dax came into his rooms as the waiter left. The Brazilian was dressed to go out.

"I am very sorry to inconvenience you, Señor Martin," he smiled regretfully, "but business that is very urgent takes me away for the evening. Under the circumstances I must deprive you of the liberty of roaming about over the place during my absence. You will be locked in your quarters to-night.

"This, I trust, will be for the last time. If there is anything you wish before you retire you have but to ring your bell. While the servants will all have retired, and the gentlemen at the entrances being unable to answer, Calles will remain on duty to serve you. He will be at your beck and call."

"But, that is, I thought I was to have the freedom of the house," protested Martin quickly. "If the entrances are guarded why can't I be allowed to come and go as I please? I had that much liberty upstairs."

"Ah, but matters have changed," smiled Dax. "I do not mistrust you, but I must take no chances in this crisis. After to-morrow, *señor,* I shall begin to trust you implicitly, I think. Is it not so?"

"Celia!" exclaimed Martin pleadingly. "She will be all alone with Calles loose about the building. Please do not lock me away from her. You—"

"She needs no company," interrupted Dax. "As for Calles, he will not venture into that part of the house. Set your mind at rest, my friend. However, if you insist, I can easily lock you in the lounge for the night."

This would never do. He was all set to use the telephone in his own apartment. Since Dax refused to allow him the privilege of being in either place at will he must sub-

mit to being locked in his own quarters. This was a bitter disappointment.

He had hoped to gaze on that dear face once more before making his call for the police. If things went wrong he might never see her again. The anguish in his face was very real as he bowed in submission.

Fortunately the Brazilian read it wrong as he bade him good night and motioned for the hulking Calles to lock the door.

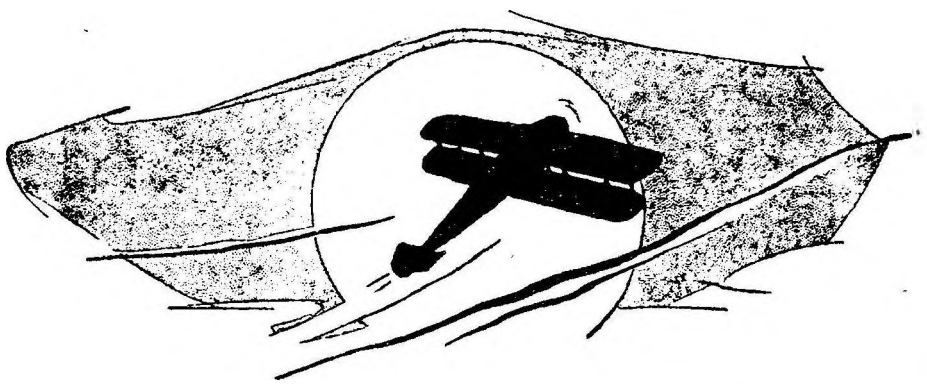
Martin sat in dejection for a long while. Faintly he heard the sounds of Dax's departure. Silence settled over the great building.

At last he arose and drew the shades tightly over his windows. He hung a cap over the doorknob to cover the keyhole and locked the door by sliding a straight-backed chair under the handle.

Then he got busy with his telephone. He brought it forth from hiding, fished out the ends of the wires near the door, and connected the instrument.

Making sure that all of his connections were right, he got into bed with the phone and covered himself with the bedclothes to muffle the sound of his voice. He was trembling all over as he placed the receiver to his ear.

TO BE CONCLUDED



YOU have already been told of "The House Across the Way," which features next week's issue. Here are a few more of the stories and articles to appear then.

Operative D-1 has collected from war memories of United States Intelligence work a portrait of an amazing man, William Carse, international detective.

R. Austin Freeman presents another John Thorndyke story, "Left by the Flames."

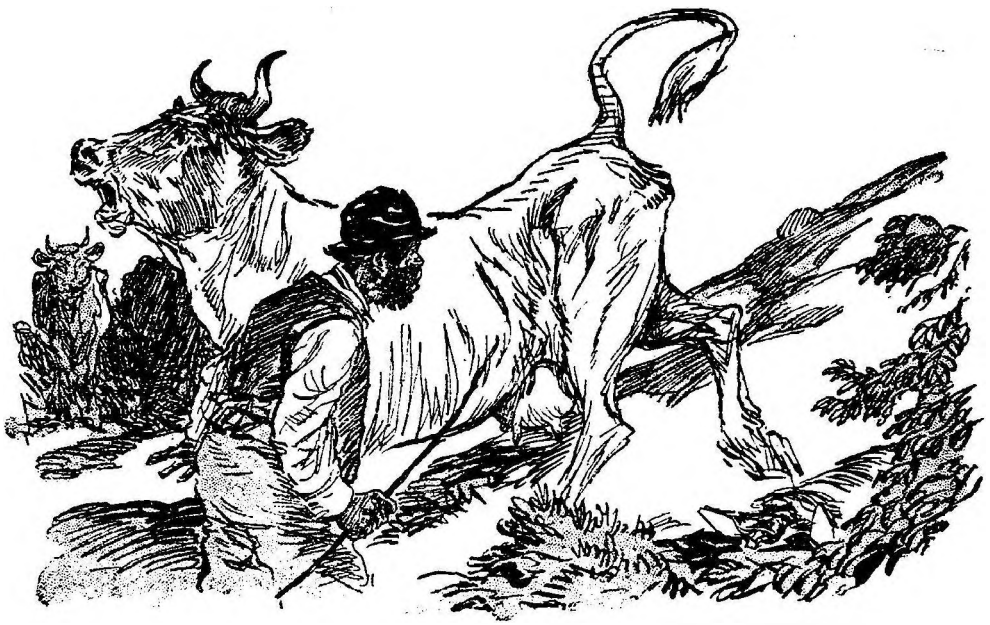
There will be a Brady and Riordan novelette by Victor Maxwell, "The Bomb."

Joseph Gollomb offers "A Pathetic Pirate," the story of Captain Avery. Walter Archer Frost adds another to his The Benevolent Sins of Mr. Ruggles with "The Van Holberg Tragedy."

Louise Rice contributes "The Passional Crime"; Ben Conlon has written a short story, "A Slip of the Pen."

Other contributors will be Joseph Harrington, Eric Howard, Richard R. Blythe, and M. E. Ohaver.

William J. Flynn



She swerved with a snort of fear, and all but stepped on the figure in the grass

A FIGURE OF MYSTERY

By Louise Rice

NORMAN AMBLER LONG HAD FELT THE PREMONITION THAT HIS LIFE AND ROSE'S, SINCE THEIR EARLY CHILDHOOD, HAD BEEN "TOO HAPPY TO LAST"

A Story of Fact

POE undoubtedly founded one of his most consistent crime stories on a real crime, the murder of a beautiful girl, and it is as true now as at any time in the history of the world that this kind of a murder has provided us with our most baffling problems.

From the time when the lovely Gulielma Sands was found in the old well of the Lispenard Meadows, in the days when the meadows were still near the town of New York—even as near as what is now Ninth Street, to more recent cases, the youth and beauty of a woman who suffers a dreadful death have drawn attention to the story.

Such a crime is usually the most baffling of the various crime stories with which historians and officers of the law have to deal.

Rose Clark Ambler, whose death, manner of death, and story behind the death has remained to puzzle all who consider it, was an especially beautiful woman of twenty-six when she passed from the land of the living, to remain ever a figure of mystery.

At daybreak on Monday, September 8, 1883, Tod Osborne, a colored man, was driving Farmer Bird's cows to pasture, along the Oronoque Road.

The mists of early fall lay over the fields and over the small town of Stratford, which was about half a mile away, in the rolling Connecticut hills.

Osborne was also the station hackman and handy man about the town and the farming community which lay outside of it, so that he knew everybody and a little about everybody.

He was a good-tempered, honest negro, whose kindly disposition had endeared him to all.

On the field at the right of Osborne the fog had lifted a little, the wind blowing from that direction. One of the cows took it into her head to turn toward the wind. Osborne pursued her.

The Marks on Her Throat

She swerved sharply with a snort of fear, and the man saw that she had all but stepped on a woman who was lying in the grass. The woman had put her hat beneath her head, and her hands were folded easily. Beside her lay her handkerchief, gloves and parasol.

Osborne was utterly amazed to see that it was Mrs. Ambler, whom he knew by sight very well. She did not stir, and for a long moment he continued to contemplate her, as he himself stated, wondering whether this beautiful woman whom he, as well as many others, had admired for her handsome, imperious but gracious manner and good taste, could possibly be intoxicated.

His fascinated eyes were drawn to her bosom, which seemed to him very still, and at last, allowing the animals that he was escorting to amble away, he approached the woman and knelt beside her.

Up to that moment he had no thought but that some misfortune or disgrace was responsible for her strange bedchamber, but when he gently placed his hand on her cheek he sprang off from her clear into the road, stared a moment to verify what his eyes had already seen, and raced to Stratford, where he stammered out his news and then fainted, both from fright and from the terrific sprint with which he had covered the distance.

This dramatic incident began the story of the finding of what was cruel murder, but by whom and for what purpose has never been solved to this day.

It also brought forward a case which engaged the best detective and police and legal intelligence of the time without any result whatsoever, except the turning up of seeming clews which ended in nothing.

Rose had lived with her father, Captain Clark, at Paradise Grove, a small pleasure park on the outskirts of Stratford, and it was there that she was taken a little later on in the day by the authorities.

Her father, an old man of immense physique, with a wooden leg and the manners of a past generation, who had been a sea captain for most of his life, became for a few hours a maniac, when he saw the body of his only child; for she had been murdered.

There were the marks of deeply sunk fingers on her throat and three deep scratches on her cheek.

Careful investigation of the place where she was found showed that the murder could not have been done there. While the rocky nature of the Connecticut soil would not show footprints, especially as there had been little rain that fall and the ground was very dry, it would have been impossible for any kind of a struggle to have taken place.

Such a struggle as would inevitably occur should a strong young woman like the deceased fight, even momentarily with an assailant, surely would leave marks in the long grass.

Rose Is Buried

There were no marks in the grass except the slight depression caused by the weight of the body. It was not even possible to see any evidence of such marks in the grass as would be made by a man carrying a heavy burden on his way to lay it down.

The village of Stratford, where, it was true, the young woman had a few detractors, nevertheless arose in a fury and made demands for the most rigorous investigation. The State attorney general was at the coroner's inquest.

There it was determined that she had been choked to death, probably with one hand, the left. The scratches on the cheek were on that side, and the imprints showed that the hand had probably been put

around her neck from behind. She had not been otherwise attacked.

Four different sets of private detectives were called on the case before the woman had been discovered two days.

She was buried on the fourth day, with practically all of the village attending her funeral in a state of almost hysteria. She had been dressed by the women, many of whom had been slightly contemptuous of her when she was alive, and her beauty had been set off by every art known to those who arrange the dead for burial.

Precocious Love-making

The description of her dress, which appeared in the New York *World* and in twenty other metropolitan papers was as detailed as if she had been appearing in the production of a new opera. It was " cream flounced lace with satin shoes." There were tiny roses in her hair and heliotrope in her hands, and her entire body rested on a blanket of white and pink roses.

Her white casket was loaded with silver ornaments, the gifts of the prominent families of the town. Flowers by the armsful were thrown on the coffin before the earth was added. The whole town shut up business for the day. Flags were flown at half mast.

The very next day officials and private detectives set to work. They unearthed an astonishing story and many mysterious figures, but four months after the report of the death the newspaper accounts gradually dwindled away, and a year afterward only an obscure item in a local paper mourned the fact that no light had been thrown on the murder. A number of young women, it stated, had that day heaped the dead girl's grave with the roses that she loved.

Let us go carefully through the newspaper files of September, October, November, and December of 1883, and then pick up the few scattering notes of the next three months of 1884.

Rose Clark's mother had died while Captain Clark was off to sea, and when he got back from that voyage he had purchased the pleasure park, which he kept until after his daughter's death, so that he might remain on land and be with her.

When Rose was twelve years old, a merry and very pretty girl, he had had the park for half a year and she left the school in Stratford, where she had been for several years, and went to a newer one, outside the town and nearer to her father's place of business, which was also her home.

In the school which she left a boy named Norman Ambler had been her favorite, and, although he was only a year or two older than she, the two children had already declared their intention to marry as soon as they were older.

Captain Clark and Mrs. Ambler, the boy's widowed mother, saw no harm in this precocious love making. Both the youngsters were healthy and normal; Rose a good scholar, and the boy prominent in sports. In fact, the captain, feeling that the company at the park, where picnic parties from all that section came and where there was sometimes rather rough characters, was none too good a home for his pretty, rather-mature-for-her-age daughter, eventually decided that she should board with Mrs. Ambler.

There the two children grew up together, Rose never ' going with " any other boy, and Norman never showing the slightest personal interest in any other girl.

Several Years of Happiness

They were such a serious pair of young folks, and the story of their attachment was already so established by the time that they were fifteen or so that they escaped the teasing which is so often the lot of young people in rural communities.

Norman Ambler was not a good scholar, and he left school before Rose did, going in for farming on rather a small scale and continuing to live in his mother's house.

He was a failure as a farmer, and after several disastrous years he turned to the making of saddle trees, at which he had considerable skill, and while this never paid especially well, there was a little money in the family, and the house and its lands were " free and clear " of mortgages, so at last Rose and Norman were married.

The home was never a luxurious one, and the pretty young woman would have had not so much on which to dress if her doting

father had not continually supplied her with little extras. Nevertheless, for several years, Norman stated, and was corroborated by all his neighbors, Rose was perfectly happy.

She had never cared for any other man, and he had never cared for any other woman, at least up to the time that he, with all the other characters, fades out of the public eye.

Norman had always had a cousin, Will Lewis, and the two boys had been more like brothers than more distant relatives. One of the first things that brought Rose and Will Lewis into confidential relations was when she confided to him that Norman had an obsession.

An Action for Divorce

Of course, she did not call it that, for the word had not become popular then. She called it "a notion." Norman had a notion that his life and hers—their life together, since their very early childhood, had been "too happy to last."

He feared the future. He feared that he would lose Rose by death—that she might die in childbirth. Will undertook to chase this "notion" away from Norman. He and Rose had a number of consultations about it.

The first child came and Rose did not die, but Norman had begun to suspect that his premonition was to come true, for Will Lewis was at his cousin's home every day; he was always appearing and escorting Rose when she went out; he brought little luxuries into the home which Norman could not afford.

The wretched young husband began to suspect that he often slipped money to Rose wherewith to buy things for herself. He went to the old captain about all this, but Captain Clark could only sorrowfully wag his head. He seemed to be one of those fathers who adore their girl children and can do nothing whatever with them.

With the coming of this cloud, which he had feared, although he did not know the form it would take, Norman Ambler took to new habits and worse ones. He got home late at night, the worse for the liquids he had had.

He foreclosed a mortgage that his mother had left him, and with two thousand dollars that he got for it was away from home for ten days, driving a pair of fast horses, drinking in road houses, and, when very far gone in liquor, telling the story of his troubles to all who would listen.

When he got back Rose packed up everything, left him and the child, and went to live with Will Lewis's mother. Lewis went to see his cousin and asked him to give Rose a divorce.

After this visit Norman sent his child to a relative and for several weeks was not seen about his house. Then he opened the shop again, hired a woman to keep his house and look after his child, and became the steady, thrifty person that he had been when he and Rose were first married.

Norman was not a rich man, or even a well to do one. Rose's father, by this time, was not so very prosperous, for other forms of amusement were creeping in and the amusement park was not paying.

Will Lewis, it was believed by every one, gave the money with which Rose instituted her action for divorce, charging that her husband was a drunkard.

She then went to live with her father again, and became a saleswoman in a large department store in Bridgeport, where her beauty and her popularity and her good style in dressing won her a place as forewoman in the corset department.

Unsubstantiated Rumors

Rose never spoke to her former husband, and never tried to see her child. Her companions in the store said that she often looked in the morning as if she had been crying all night.

They said that she did not seem happy at the prospect of waiting for the expiration of the term when the divorce would allow her to marry again, and that Will Lewis on several occasions went into the store and paid a little too much attention to one or two girls whom he knew and who were employed there.

The few in the village who, before her death, had been her detractors, said that she was out late at night, which was the reason that her eyes were red in the morning and that she was the flirt and not Will

Lewis, who already regretted that he had allowed himself to be enticed into a promise of marriage.

These rumors, however, were never substantiated in any way whatever, and after her death every one denied that there had been any foundation for them.

No one came forward to say that Rose had ever been seen in any place of entertainment save her father's, or that she had ever been seen out with other men than her husband, when she was living with him, and his cousin, Will Lewis, afterward.

However, this has an exception.

Not a Witness

In the summer of 1883 a man named Curtis Featherstone had come into the village of Stratford and roomed with a man named Benjamin. He seemed to be very well to do, but was exceedingly eccentric in his behavior, and a feeling gradually grew up among those who knew him or knew of him that he was "not quite right in the head."

From what he said it seemed that he was from Philadelphia and had had some disagreeable experience there, which was thought to have been that of having his wife divorce him.

This man had several times been seen walking with Rose, but as she knew Eva Benjamin, where he lived, and as he had a half bold and half absent-minded way of turning and walking with any one whom he knew at all, until dismissed, nothing much was thought of it. However, in time, it was to be remembered.

This brings us up to the Sunday evening of September 7, 1883. Norman Ambler is in his lonely home, sobered, prosperous, and gradually winning his way back into the good graces of his fellow townspeople; Curtis Featherstone is said to be at church, and Rose is doing what she often does of a Sunday afternoon. She is visiting at the home of her husband to be, having walked there from Paradise Grove.

Mrs. Lewis, the mother of Will, was in the dining room, where the murmur of their voices could reach her, although she could not hear what they said.

She stated that those voices were never raised, and that at ten o'clock her son and the girl went to the garden gate, where they said good night, Rose preparing to walk the distance back to the grove, as she usually did, alone.

This act of discourtesy on the part of the young man was explained by both himself and his mother, and then seemed very natural; the fact being that at two o'clock every morning but Sunday he was up, to load a wagon with vegetables grown on his mother's farm, which he took into Bridgeport.

Thus it was, they both stated, that Rose went home alone, and that she visited him rather than he her—as he got so little sleep between his duties with the truck produce and his work, as soon as he got back home on the farm.

Anyway, Rose set off from the garden gate, and that is the last account that we get of her. There was not a witness to the fact that she started to return alone, not a person who saw her at the gate.

The night was clouded and the fog was heavy, so heavy that garments exposed to the weather became as wet as though with rain.

This was something over which there was afterward to be a good deal of wrangling.

A good many people had seen the girl walking *toward* the Lewis home at about nine o'clock that night, but no creditable witness was ever found who saw her afterward.

How Will Spent the Day

That word "creditable" needs emphasizing, for a veritable host of witnesses came forward, off and on, who had seen all sorts of things that Sunday night.

However, little of that developed in the first few days of the inquiry, for attention, of course, was riveted on the two most likely suspects, the man she had discarded and the man who had caused that discarding.

Will Lewis appeared in Bridgeport at his usual time Monday, with his usual load of vegetables, and went from store to store selling them. All who saw him stated that they could remember nothing unusual in his manner.

He returned to his farm about midday, drove his horses in at the barn and went into the house.

His mother, having heard some rumors of the discovery, was at a neighbor's house, where a number of people had congregated.

Will ate some lunch, stacked the dishes, to call his mother's attention to the fact that he was home, and went out to the fields to work. It was five o'clock before, as he returned from a distant field, he met a neighbor sent to find him and heard the news.

Questioned by Detectives

The man who delivered this news was a singularly unimaginative person and never could give a coherent account of how Will Lewis took the crushing announcement that the woman he was planning to marry had been found strangely murdered in a distant field, except that "he catched his breath like," which is not very illuminating.

By the time that Lewis got to his home and found neighbors there, he was the silent, grim man that he ever afterward remained. This change in the man who had always been a laughing, whistling, gay sort of a fellow persisted to the very last notice concerning the tragedy which appeared a full year afterward in the newspapers.

When questioned as to the events of the night before, both he and his mother stated that he had left for town, as usual, about half past two. She said that she did not see him go as she was in bed, but that she heard him whistling and heard the horses.

She had not see him come back into the house after leaving Rose at the gate, but she had heard him.

Will said that during the time of Rose's visit they had discussed nothing more exciting than the kind of a dinner set they would buy when they went to housekeeping in the small cottage across the road which he was then completing in his odd moments, and that, because it was so foggy, he had offered to take the girl home, but that she had refused, knowing how little sleep he got.

In the cottage parlor where he was eventually questioned as to all this, the walls were hung with several pictures of Rose, prettily framed, and a framed bouquet of wild flowers, one of her clever handicrafts.

At the time he was not shown that he was under suspicion, but neither did he seem in the least nervous, although never relaxing the grimness of his face.

The next day, when he was again questioned, the officers and detectives found him under one of his apple trees, smoking a pipe, the traces of a recent fit of prolonged weeping not to be disguised.

He got up and stared for a full minute at the detective whose questioning showed him the suspicion under which he lay, and then said, scornfully:

"Do I look like a bloody desperado? Look through everything here. You'll find nothing but what speaks of how she was loved here. I would give all I own, I would give my right arm and all my hopes of Heaven to take the murderer of my girl to the gallows."

The officers and detectives were affected by the sobs which he could not repress. He turned his face against the tree, and they drew away to allow him to calm himself. Nevertheless, they made a search of the whole place, and in the barn, on his driving coat, they found small bloodstains.

A Thing He Never Explained

He was disdainful of them and of the questioners. "What of it?" he said wearily. "Hardly a day passes but I cut my hand or scrape my finger."

They found several fresh cuts on his hand. Neighbors said that from a boy he had been careless with his hands. Still—what looked like cuts might be a wound made by the finger nails of a woman desperate with fear.

They thought that the finger nails of his left hand were darkened a little. Had blood from a woman's cheek been under them?

An old woman who lived near, not so very much respected and always "a little crazy," swore that Will Lewis, coming by her house on Monday afternoon, walking, had stopped to say: "I suppose you heard that my girl was killed last night?"

Will swore that he said it on *Tuesday* afternoon!

Norman Ambler was at home and in bed from nine o'clock on Sunday night, his housekeeper said, but she did not see him. She knew that his door was closed. She sat until after nine where she could see the stairs.

He had not gone down them, after telling her good night. She retired then. He was awake and at work when she came down on Monday morning.

The one thing which Ambler never explained, the one thing which he absolutely refused to talk about, was the most confusing of all the "clews" with which the befuddled authorities struggled, and it was this:

Two Handkerchiefs

On Sunday afternoon he and another man, a stranger, who was never identified, called at a local livery stable and engaged a "team," as a two-horsed vehicle was called.

This team was never returned, was never heard of—never accounted for. Ambler paid the livery stable for it, and simply sat tight on the statement that the other man was some one whom he had known when on drinking bouts, while he and Rose were having "our trouble," that the man had come to say that he was in trouble and wanted to get out of that part of the country, and had offered to leave money for the team did he not return.

Repeated questioning failed to shake Ambler's avowed intention not to tell who the other man was, and the attendant who rented the team had not seen more of him than a side view, Ambler negotiating for the rental and picking up the other man outside the stable.

Curtis Featherstone, who had been out all day Monday listening to the gossip in the town about the murder, returned to the Benjamin house that night, talking to himself.

He was heard to be weeping in his room, and soon after began shouting: "Save me, save me; they are after me—here they come—" and was subdued only with the help of several neighbors, who were called in by the frightened Benjamins.

This brought Featherstone under suspicion, and while he lay all night in a sort of delirium, muttering that detectives were watching him and every once in awhile starting up in a fresh paroxysm of terror, his room was searched and some very peculiar discoveries were made.

There was a satchel which contained two handkerchiefs, one of which was heavily perfumed. There was no other perfume on any other article belonging to Featherstone.

The handkerchief was black with mud. The other handkerchief was clean, but had three minute specks of blood on it. There were three soiled shirts in another part of the room, quite damp, one of which had the starched attached cuffs extraordinarily rumpled, "as if," said the newspapers, "those cuffs had scraped along the sides of something as he was lowering the dead girl over something or carrying her body a distance."

Benjamin and his daughter were home all of Sunday evening, and declared that Featherstone had gone to church. They had not heard him come in, but at ten thirty Miss Benjamin "smelled his pipe." Benjamin did not smoke.

Both he and his daughter thought that Featherstone was "a little crazy," and that he had had these delusions of persecution often.

"A Hair of Her Head"

While debate was being held the next week Featherstone departed for Philadelphia, declaring that he would return to sue all concerned for slander, and that he was going home to place the matter in the hands of his family lawyer.

He was never heard from again, and a belated effort to find him in the town which he had given as his residence failed to bring him to light.

He simply vanished off the face of the earth.

Ambler, brought to make statements to the detectives, stated that while it was true that he had made threats against the lives of Rose and Will Lewis, if they married, these were only when he had been drinking and that when Rose actually left and he saw that it was really all over and that the sorrow which he had always felt "in his

bones" would cloud his life, had come, then he settled down to make the best of it—that he loved Rose far too well to hurt "a hair of her head."

Will Lewis as stoutly maintained that not only did he not kill his sweetheart, but that he had not a suspicion as to who did; that he did not believe that his cousin Norman would have hurt Rose, even if he had cherished resentment against himself.

What Arnold Believed

Asked about a vague "girl" in Bridgeport who had fallen in love with him, unknowing that he was engaged to be married, he just impatiently shook his head and said that he had never paid any woman attention except Rose.

Indeed, this seemed true of both Will and Norman, the two men whom the dead girl had loved.

Outside of the detectives hired by Captain Clark, by Will Lewis, by Norman Ambler, by the store where Rose had worked, and outside of a dozen newspaper reporters who used every wile and ruse that they knew in order to get statements out of somebody, was a Detective Arnold. He certainly turned up a surprising number of clews, the only difficulty being that none of them fitted the others. For instance:

Two weeks after the murder, Arnold appeared in company with Charles Mallory, the village ne'er-do-well, who had a very small, tumble down cottage not far from the Lewis home.

He seemed to have been on a prolonged spree, but could not be brought to tell where he had been, having been totally lost to view from the Sunday on which the murder had occurred.

He made this statement: "On the night of the murder I was on the Old Farms Road about eleven thirty. I was getting some corn for myself from a field that was there. I heard a team being drove hard and I got down behind the stone wall.

"It was a black wagon and dark horses. I saw them plain and knew them, for they belonged to Will Lewis's mother and I had seen them many's the time. The man that drove was Will Lewis. I swear it. The team went by and disappeared."

Arnold had met the man outside the village, and, attracted by the wildness of his hair and the dilapidation of his clothes, had soon got him to talking.

However, he would do nothing more than recite his piece, and the detectives soon began to believe that it was one which he had been taught. By whom? By some one who either knew that Will Lewis was guilty or who wished to make it appear that he was.

Norman Ambler repudiated with horror the suggestion that he might have instigated the accusation, but Mallory still insisted that he had actually seen Lewis drive by, when his mother swore that he was in bed at home, and when he swore the same thing.

Arnold never ceased to believe that Lewis was the murderer. His theory was that he had been trying to evade the marriage, his ardor cooling after he had won the girl away from his cousin, and that she had gone that night to his house to demand that he fulfill his promise.

They talked and he pretended that he wanted to be married right away. He pretended unusual ardor, took her to the gate, said that he hated to allow her to go home alone, let her start, then ran after her and said that he'd be out in a few minutes, but to let him go back and make his mother think him going to bed, as usual—she'd worry if she thought that he was up late.

Powers of Magnetism!

Rose consented, Arnold contended. She waited in the dark of the road while Will Lewis went into the house and made his mother think that he had gone to his room; then he slipped downstairs the back way, went out to the stable, got his horses and hitched up, without a light, led the team silently to the lane and he and the girl got in and drove away.

Using his powers of magnetism, which had always fascinated her, he made her so interested that she did not notice that she was being driven out of the way to Davy Lane; besides the fog, now heavy, served to confuse her.

The fog got heavier and she put up her umbrella which kept her hat dry, but her skirts from the knees down were saturated,

which accounted for them still being wet in the morning, when her upper garments were comparatively dry.

In Davy Lane, with no house for half a mile, holding the reins in the right hand, Lewis, who had had his arm around his sweetheart in the approved manner of swains, had suddenly slid his powerful hand up to the throat and applied pressure.

As the body sagged, as death took her, his hand had slid across her cheek and his nails had scratched her.

Not One Girl to Accuse

As soon as he is sure that she is dead he steps out of the carriage, takes her in his arms, steps gingerly into the field and lays her down. What impulse prompts him to lay her head gently on her hat, to fold her hands, to lay her possessions by her? Or—does he?

A detective employed by Captain Clark thought that he had evidence that a man on foot was seen following a carriage along Davy Lane on that fateful night—a man whose walk was not that of a countryman, but of a mincing, dawdling, stumbling gait which closely resembled the odd mannerisms of Featherstone, that mystery man.

Did Featherstone, lurking after Rose, for purposes of his own, come on her after the deed? Did that queer crack in his mind which made him the eccentric that he was, cause him to compose the possibly huddled figure of the girl his distorted brain had admired?

Did he then go back to town and slip upstairs? If so, it must have been a great deal later than ten thirty that his pipe was smelled downstairs. Or—was it?

Featherstone had a great deal of money, in comparison with the standards of Stratford. Did he buy silence?

And then, his nervous system wrecked by the vision of the dead girl he had come upon in the fog, did he fall into a delirium? Could it have been his money that paid old Mallory for the tale which accused where he could not, without throwing suspicion on himself?

Detectives on the case professed to " dig up " records of the night life of Rose Clark Ambler, which were not savory, but not one shred of evidence was ever brought forward to substantiate these claims.

Not one girl who knew her, and whose claims to beauty might have been thrown into the shade and whose jealousy might have been aroused, ever came forward to accuse the dead girl of evil.

Not even the little town of Stratford, considerably shocked by the parting of Rose from her husband and her very obvious intent to marry her husband's cousin as soon as she was free, ever really cast a slur on her. Yet there were some very, very odd things happened about the time that she was murdered.

James Pierce, occupation unknown and generally bearing the marks of the " flash " gentry, was taken off a freight car two miles from Davy Lane about twelve o'clock on that Sunday night suffering from a broken arm, which seemed to have the marks of teeth on it.

He refused to say how he was hurt, was found because he groaned. He never did say anything and eventually was let go.

A Problem That Remains

A porter in the Bridgeport store where Rose worked, said he had seen the man hanging around the employees' entrance. Pierce, or whatever his name might have been, denied that he had ever even seen Rose, and declared that he had got his arm hurt when running away from a dog which had attacked him as he was stealing into the freight car, as it lay out on a siding near where he was found. This was before the days of finger-prints.

Isaac Booth, an itinerant peddler, said that on the night of the murder about ten o'clock, he was leaning on a bridge rail, over a little stream near the place where the girl was found, and was passed in the darkness by a well dressed man in a hurry, his coat under his arm and his sleeves rolled up.

Conductor White, of the Boston Limited, stopped the train on signal at the Housatonic Drawbridge at Birmingham three miles from Stratford, at eleven o'clock, Sunday night, September 7, to let on a man whom he had never seen before, who showed a commutation ticket.

As he knew almost every commuter by name, he was surprised and suspected that the stranger was using a ticket other than his own, but something occurring to divert his attention, Conductor White did not notice where the man got off.

Mrs. Mary Dibble was sitting at the window of her cottage on the Oronoque Road at ten o'clock on that same Sunday evening, looking out anxiously for some of the members of her family who had not come home from church services.

She saw a team and wagon dash by at a very high rate of speed and thought that she knew the figure driving, but was not certain.

The vehicle turned into Davy Lane. She remarked it because she knew the people who lived along that route and none of them were apt to drive in that way.

Boston White, a negro employed at Paradise Grove, said that early Monday morning he saw two men changing their clothes in some bushes back of a boat landing on the place. They went up to Boston and said that they had been " butchering " for a local farmer and had got their clothes dirty.

They showed Boston the rolled up bundle and said they wanted a boat so they could go out in the stream and wash the clothes and take a bath themselves, where they would not be seen.

Boston suggested that they go " around the bend " which was quite secluded. They took a flat-bottomed boat and went. When they came back they did not have the bundle and one said to the other:

" Frank, how could you lose my good working clothes like that." The other replied, and from the conversation it seemed that the man addressed as Frank had lost the bundle overboard!

They paid Boston a quarter for the use of the boat and immediately went off toward the road.

Well—there we are. That's all there is!

After a time even Detective Arnold gave up. The reporters gave up. The police gave up.

Will Lewis, at the last reports, was the grim, unsmiling and taciturn man, living with his mother, the small house across the way where he was to have taken his bride, still unfinished.

Norman Ambler was going right on with his business, more prosperous and more orderly in conduct every day.

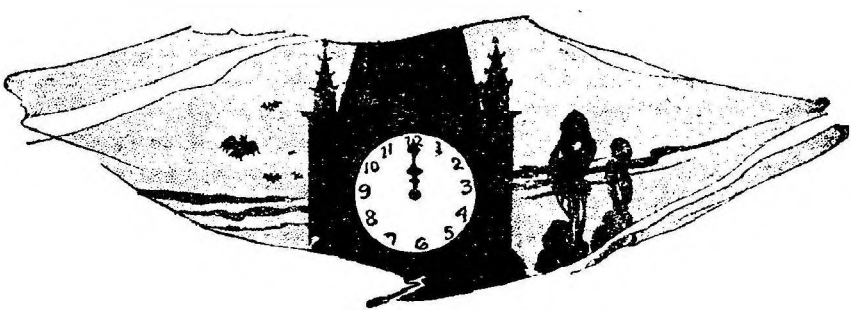
Mallory was back at his shack, never spoken to or looked at by the Lewis family. The Lewis family and the Ambler household speak, and that's all.

Featherstone has utterly disappeared.

Captain Clark, having sold the park, sits all day in a little grocery store opposite the Benjamin's and scrutinizes every woman who passes as if he hopes to see his pretty daughter in one of them.

The village of Stratford puts flowers on the grave of the beautiful Rose. Lovers walk out to see her grave.

Forty-four years ago Rose died. There's no hope, now, of knowing what hand struck her down, but the strange problem of her death is something which no criminologist can avoid.



CRUSHED BY THE CAR OF JUGGERNAUT

HE word " Juggernaut " is popularly associated with the massive vehicle wheeled over voluntary victims of fanatical frenzy; but Juggernaut—Jagganath, Jaghernaut—is actually the name of a Hindu god, " lord of the world," and " sin-remover," with a temple at Puri, in Crissa.

His image, wrote E. Cobham Brewer—" Dictionary of Phrase and Fable "—was on view three days in the year: the first day, in the bathing festival when the god was washed and then supposed to suffer from a cold for ten days. At the end of this period he was transported in his mighty car to the nearest temple. A week later, the car was pulled back while the multitude rejoiced over his recovery.

It was on the final day, said Brewer, that devotees used to throw themselves beneath the wheels of the enormous decorated machine, in the conviction that they would obtain a quick admission to Paradise. The phrase, " the car of Juggernaut," applies to customs, institutions, *et cetera,* beneath which people are ruthlessly and unnecessarily ground.

The Hindu mind works curiously. Edwardes heard of a taxi driver that deliberately ran his cab over people sleeping in the street on a hot night. When the case was brought to court, the magistrate favored the driver!

Like a Moving Picture

The expression " running *amok* " is often met with in Western writings. " Running *amok* " is fairly common in Bombay, wrote Edwardes. A Mohammedan, praying in a mosque, felt an uncontrollable desire to go forth and kill. He stabbed several persons, including a police constable, before he was secured by a Parsee.

In Burma the vagaries of a man who runs *amok* are regarded much as a moving picture entertainment is regarded by Western villagers.

One man assaulted several persons with a *dah*—sword—and murdered a friend and his wife. Seven hundred people watched, unmoved, the dance of death and made no effort to seize the murderer. An inspector of police shot him dead.

Under the Influence of Drugs

In 1798, Wilcocke supplied these " Notes to a Translation of Stavorinus's Voyage to the East Indies ":

> The Indian who runs *amuck* (" *Amok! Amok!* " — " Kill! *Kill!* ") is always first driven to desperation by some outrage, and always first revenges himself upon those who have done him wrong. They are generally slaves—most subject to insults and least able to obtain legal redress. It has been usual to attribute *moks* to the consequence of the use of opium—but this should probably rank with the many errors that mankind has been led into by travelers addicted to the marvelous. The resolution for the act precedes, and is not the effect of the intoxication. The sanguinary achievements for which the Malays have been famous are more justly derived from the natural ferocity of their disposition than from the qualities of any drug whatever.

Dr. Oxley considered that among the Malays monomania almost invariably took this terrible form. Chevers set down the case of a prisoner at Moradabad who wounded fifteen persons, with none of whom he had any enmity, in a court room. Disagreeing with Wilcocke, Chevers was convinced that a very large proportion of the murders by hacking to pieces were committed under the influence of intoxicating drugs which, without doing more than add to and maintain furious excitement, enabled the otherwise timid savage to carry out his ruthless purpose.

Compare New York and Chicago gunmen and robbers who dope themselves with heroin before " croaking " their prey. One gang of New York youths was caught and broke into tears of terror when the effect of the drug had worn off. This gang was nicknamed " the Cry Babies."

Trent's face was above water, and he was held securely—

THE SQUARE EMERALD

By Louis Lacy Stevenson

BILL LAWSON, THE DETECTIVE WHO LIKES TO SHINE HIS SHOES WHILE HE THINKS, IS BACK AGAIN TO DO A LITTLE OF BOTH

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING THE AMBITIOUS

MRS. H. ADDISON CLEVES, seated on a low divan at one end of the long, wide room, felt her pulses quicken as she surveyed the animated scene about her. The best jazz orchestra in the city was earning its large fee and the floor was filled with dancers, most of them neighbors and almost all of them with their names in the Blue Book.

To her, it was the fulfillment of a dream—a dream of many years standing, for she had visioned just such a gathering in just such a home when H. Addison Cleves had graduated from the bench and became the proprietor of a small machine shop. But it had taken a World War and many munitions contracts to make it actual.

Mrs. Cleves's setting was advantageous, the upholstery blending with her evening gown and the mural decorations furnishing the contrast that gave tone to the picture while the wall lamps erased her years, and, though her hair was white, gave her the appearance of youth, since her features still retained a fineness that suggested a cameo, and her skin, especially that of her throat, was yet soft and unwrinkled.

At the same time those lights caused a great gem on her left wrist to scintillate as if it were alive and to flash rays in which was the green of early spring, of mountain lawns and the depths of the sea.

That jewel was even dearer to her than the mansion in the exclusive river section of the city. Others might buy property there or build finer residences, but possession of such a gem as the one she wore set her apart, gave her an advantage in the long uphill climb and made her envied by

—Lawson noticed as he grasped the last pile

those who still refused to disassociate her from the days when H. Addison Cleves was known to his associates as " Hank."

None other could duplicate her adornment since it was the largest square cut emerald ever known.

She had determined to become its possessor when first she learned that it was to be brought from London to America to be sold. Attainment of her desire had been easier than she had anticipated. At the time, she was suffering with neuritis and despite the best medical care, the disease persisted, which worried her husband not a little. Then, too, H. Addison Cleves had been canny.

Sensing a period of deflation at hand, he had closed his business interests and invested the proceeds in tax exempt securities. The expected annoyance over the government's share in his earnings on those contracts and the profits from the sale of his properties had been much less than anticipated, the final settlement having been something like a quarter of a million dollars below his estimate.

So when Mrs. Cleves suggested that he go to New York and purchase the jewel for her, he agreed without dissension.

The price, however, had made him gasp and had Mrs. Cleves not been ill and if he hadn't made that advantageous settlement of his income tax, he would have regarded it as extortion, for, despite the change in his name and his circumstances, H. Addison Cleves was a plain man.

But having gone East for that emerald, he acquired it, though he had to part with three hundred thousand dollars Nor was that a sore point for long. Jim Thompson, who had started at a bench even as Cleves had, had gone into business when Cleves had and who had also successfully fathered a war baby, arriving just after the deal had been closed, had offered him fifty thousand dollars for his bargain, Mrs. Thompson having also set her heart on owning that particular bauble.

Therefore, Cleves, as he told his wife on his return, regarded the bracelet as a good investment. Mrs. Cleves, however, looked on it otherwise. Nor was the publicity attendant on her acquisition unpleasant. On the other hand, her patronage added considerable to the revenues of clipping bureaus.

The emerald had given the high-priced specialists the assistance they needed, and within a fortnight Mrs. Cleves had left her bed. Not that the disease had been conquered entirely.

Though she had had the bracelet for more than six weeks, this was the first opportunity she had had to display it in

public. During all of these weeks, except when she took it out in the presence of close friends, it had reposed in an especially constructed wall safe. It seemed a shame to hide away a thing of such beauty, but in her was an element of caution.

Yet as she sat looking at the dancers and sensing new pleasure whenever she detected one of those Blue Book personages, which was frequent, she felt twinges of pain in her wrist Finally, though she hated to spoil the picture she knew she was making, she moved to one side slightly, fearing that she was in a draft.

When she had composed herself once more and was certain that the setting had not been marred, her fingers strayed to the emerald, and contact with the jewel seemed to provide an anondyne, since it assured her that she had broken definitely with the past.

Not entirely, however. So long as H. Addison remained, the past could not be eliminated. Time after time, though often she had warned him as to the danger of such procedure when considered in relation to the future of his daughter, he would refer to the days when he had worn overalls, the allusions occurring no matter what company was present.

At the instant the thought entered her mind, she caught sight of Cleves among the dancers. Being a man of considerable bulk, he was easy to see. But though he was so large he looked down on most other men, there remained nothing in his appearance, especially when he was in evening clothes, to suggest that he had worked with his hands.

That was her influence—her's and Helena's—since for his wife and daughter he would do anything save forget that he had once been Hank Cleves.

Helena! Quickly the thoughts of Mrs. Cleves shifted from her husband to her daughter, and with the change her eyes glowed with pride. The spur to all of her ambitions was Helena.

It had been for Helena that she had induced her husband to sell the old comfortable home and move into the mansion, a migration which brought with it the problem of servants; it had been for Helena that she had endured snubs and rebuffs until she had been accepted by society.

Even when dreaming of the time when the square emerald would be hers, she had thought of the day when it would be Helena's.

Helena was altogether lovely—an opinion shared by many others besides her mother, proof laying in the fact that the stag line that night would have caused any hostess much satisfaction.

Helena's hair was a shimmering gold frame for the pure oval of her face. From her mother she had inherited that smooth, white skin—skin soft like old velvet—and from her mother she had inherited the clear cut, regular features that suggested the cameo.

In the expression of the daughter, however, there was more softness and warmth than that in the face of the mother, and her eyes, though the same color, deep blue, were different also.

Just a trace of sadness was often visible in the eyes of Mrs. Cleves, but never in the eyes of her daughter.

Helena was dancing with Robert Trent, a fact which caused a slight feeling of constriction about the heart of Mrs. Cleves. Robert Trent's family went away back to the beginning of the city; his name stood for everything desirable socially; that he lived in the neighborhood had been the determining factor in Mrs. Cleves's choice of a home.

And Robert Trent was undoubtedly deeply interested in Helena Cleves, and as Helena flashed a smile at her, Mrs. Cleves could see her daughter as mistress of the somewhat gloomy, old-fashioned manor where Trent lived alone, except for an ancient housekeeper, both his parents being dead.

Mingled with the elation was a sigh. In the stag line was a brown-haired, brown-eyed young man who was watching Helena and Robert intently.

Large he was and rugged in build, his movements suggestive of smooth muscles under excellent control and his mouth, despite the squareness of his jaw, indicating a sense of humor.

In fact, he was a junior edition of Jim

Thompson, which he had a perfect right to be as he was Jim Thompson's only son.

Mrs. Cleves did not favor Jim Thompson; though, except for one or two minor differences, she and Mrs. Thompson got along fairly well, their ambitions being largely similar.

Therefore, when the Thompsons purchased the adjoining property, it was a blow to Mrs. Cleves.

Jim Thompson was a bad influence on her husband. Cleves had become H. Addison, but Thompson still remained Jim and refused to change to even James.

Inasmuch as his son had many of the characteristics of his father, Mrs. Cleves believed she had reason to sigh. When the United States went into the war, Bruce Thompson had enlisted as a private in the infantry instead of going to the officers' training camp.

Not that there was any disgrace in being a private in the infantry, but Bruce Thompson persisted in maintaining friendships he had made when fighting in France.

That was why Ben Breen was the Cleves's chauffeur. Thompson and Breen had served in the same outfit overseas and when Mrs. Cleves had decided that a chauffeur was a necessity, Thompson had recommended him. And H. Addison, without waiting for her to give her consent, had employed him.

Breen was a good driver, Mrs. Cleves admitted that, and always kept the car in the best of condition, but it was disconcerting to have a young man who paid court to her daughter treating a mere servant as an equal. And Bruce Thompson always shook hands with Breen whenever he met him, though Breen was in the uniform of his calling!

Nor was that the extent of her grievance against young Thompson. He was the obstacle in the path of Robert Trent, an obstacle which Helena did not help to remove.

Cleves was also displaying his usual lack of sense. Instead of looking to social advancement, his preference was plainly for the son of his old friend. Mrs. Cleves felt as if she were the victim of a conspiracy. But she could wait—and on her wrist was the square emerald!

Turning her attention to her wrist was unfortunate. Without a doubt the pain was worse, and try as she would she could not take her mind from her suffering, though she endeavored resolutely to concentrate on her guests.

And Ben Breen kept intruding, which was not at all soothing. Her suspicion was that Breen intended to take Barbara from her, and Barbara had been with her four years. There was no other servant like her, save Paula, her own personal maid.

Marriage always meant lost maids—she knew that from experience, since Paula had been preceded by Huldah. True, in that instance she had been lucky, but should Barbara leave, there was no assurance that another Paula would appear.

Again that pain! But one thing could be done about it: She would have to leave her guests, go to her room and have Paula massage her wrist.

In the slim fingers of the young French woman was a mysterious something that no matter how poignant the pain, brought relief. Since the arrival of Paula, Mrs. Cleves had not found it necessary to call her physician.

In the hall, she passed Greening, the butler, who regarded her with a question in his washed out blue eyes, but whose countenance, as usual, was woodenly impassive. Greening was a source of great pride to her. He was so unquestionably English. The Thompson family did not have an English butler—theirs was a Japanese.

Despite her suffering, Mrs. Cleves did not go directly to the second floor. She did not know how long she would be away and there were the refreshments.

Stepping into the kitchen, she found that Hannah, the cook, had completed her preparations, and that Barbara, assisted by Martha, the second girl, was making ready for the service. In so far as the food was concerned, she had no worries. Still she lingered a few moments.

As she had entered, some one had gone out of the back door, and the guilty look on Barbara's face had convinced her that, despite her orders, Breen had been hanging around the kitchen. Finally deciding

not to utter the reproof that was in her mind, she departed.

When she reached the second floor, she saw some one passing through the French doors that led to the balcony. She wasn't certain whether or not the man was Bruce Thompson and she didn't care. So long as Bruce Thompson was not with Helena it didn't matter where he roamed.

Mrs. Cleves passed on to her own room and summoned Paula. While the maid stood in the dressing alcove, drawing the hot water, Mrs. Cleves made herself ready for the treatment. As her evening gown was sleeveless, it was necessary for her only to remove her emerald, and with an admiring glance, she placed it on the chifferobe.

Cooing her sympathy in broken English, the pretty Paula made warm applications, then rubbed the arm so skillfully that in what seemed to Mrs. Cleves but a few minutes, the pain departed and she was ready to her guests.

"That's all for to-night, Paula," she said. "You may retire now, I won't need you any more."

"*Merci, madame,*" replied the maid. "*Bon soir, madame.*"

She left the room gracefully, Mrs. Cleves's eyes following her as she went through the door which she closed behind her carefully.

Satisfied that her experience had not wrought any havoc to her make-up, Mrs. Cleves applied a bit of powder to her nose, then went to the chifferobe, her wrist lonely for its adornment.

A spasm of horror so choked her that she could not cry out.

The square emerald had vanished!

CHAPTER II

MEET MR. LAWSON

WILLIAM LAWSON was polishing his shoes in his room in the Caliph Hotel, the same room into which he had moved the day he was sworn into the police department. He had occupied it very nearly a quarter of a century, for the detective was rapidly reaching the retirement age.

It was a modest room indeed, having but one window, through which he could see a small part of the gray bulk of police headquarters. But it satisfied Bill Lawson. It was his home, the only one he had known since childhood, and was packed with memories—memories which did not altogether concern that career in which he had attained a page of citations and won the reputation of always bringing in his man.

That a veteran detective should be engaged in the occupation of a bootblack—he had fourteen pairs of shoes spread out before him—so far as Bill Lawson was concerned, was nothing to cause comment. The nights when he did not shine at least one pair in addition to his working shoes were few indeed.

Bill Lawson's shoes, like their wearer, had a reputation in the department. Not only did he wear a seven and a half C, but a neat, well fitting shoe being a work of art to him, he cherished it the same way as a collector prizes an old master.

But Bill Lawson was a copper twenty-four hours a day; always had been, and would be until he died. Hence, the more intricate the police problem under consideration, the more shoes he shined.

With the brush moving over leather, his mind worked faster, and it was while he was so occupied that the solution of many of his hardest cases came to him.

Hence, with one exception, Lawson had never been known to report for duty without his shoes immaculate. When he wore blacks, they were twin pieces of anthracite; when he donned his favorite ox-blood brogues, they looked like matched carbuncles.

The exception had been when he was pursuing the thug who had slain his teammate Brown. Then he had gone about with his shoes unshined, and the detective bureau had thought his mind deranged through his sorrow. But though grief-stricken, Lawson had brought in his man.

It was not a police problem that caused Lawson to give his attention to his whole shoe collection on this particular night. There were no police problems, a fact which had caused Lawson to go up the river on a week's fishing trip.

He was merely removing the dust that had accumulated during his absence, particular stress being laid on the pair he intended to wear when he reported for duty the next morning.

Before picking up his brushes he had read the evening paper thoroughly, and the fact that there was a dearth of crime news had given him a sensation of pleasure. His chief, Parmer, had practically ordered him to go on that expedition; still, had anything of importance happened while he was away he would have felt that he had been neglecting his duty.

The police department was Bill Lawson's life, and he and Parmer were close indeed. They had been sworn in on the same day, and for more than two decades one had been the confidant of the other.

Relieved, he turned to his favorite page, "Advice to the Lovelorn." That he read line by line, and when he had concluded, instead of throwing the section away, he tore it out and filed it with many others on top of the wardrobe.

In the department Bill Lawson was regarded as a woman hater, but just as he shined his shoes every night, so he read that particular page. In the past, buried among the letters, he had encountered leads that had proved valuable.

So when perusing heart outpourings he had actually been working. But there was more than that. In his life there had been one romance, and those printed heart-throbs helped to keep it green just as did a faded photo on which, in a girlish hand, was written "From Nora to Bill," the date corresponding to the time when, a slim young copper, he had been walking a beat on Trumble Avenue.

But one man in the entire department understood that Lawson's avoidance of women was not due to dislike. That man was Parmer, and as Parmer never talked, even his associates did not know of the great tenderness in the heart of old Bill Lawson for all women and children.

Being a veteran, he knew of course that the quietness that had obtained for weeks was merely transitory, an armistice which might end at any moment. He had not informed Parmer of his return, but when the police phone rang, just as he was laying aside the last pair of shoes, he was not surprised.

Something of importance had occurred, and Parmer was giving him a chance at it. That, too, was like Parmer, and Lawson was proud of the confidence the chief had in him.

Stopping only long enough to partially cover with a black stiff hat a bald spot that began at his forehead and extended to the back of his neck, and to assure himself that his shoes would pass the most critical inspection, Lawson hurried to Parmer's office.

The chief had a visitor, a large, nervous man whom Lawson did not know personally, but whom he recognized. Parmer, however, was betraying no agitation—he never did.

He was relaxed in his swivel chair, his lean stogy sending a thin blue spiral toward the ceiling, his gray eyes untroubled.

"Glad you're back, Bill," said the chief, removing the stogy. "Mr. Cleves has just reported the loss of a very valuable jewel."

"The square emerald?" inquired Lawson, who had read of the acquisition of the stone by Cleves.

Parmer nodded.

"It may have been lost, or it may have been stolen, Mr. Cleves isn't sure which," the chief continued. "As soon as his wife told him it was gone he drove here—he doesn't care to have his loss known at present, so he didn't take a chance with the phone.

"Mrs. Cleves has told no one except her husband. I won't send the flyer. Get him by the traffic officers and the motorcycle men."

For Parmer that was a long speech.

CHAPTER III

THE MAN UPSTAIRS

THE party was still in progress when Lawson arrived. The refreshments having been served, the tables were being cleared, and the jazz orchestra was producing rhythm, the floor being filled with dancers.

Lawson, lingering unobtrusively in the concealment of the archway hangings, surveyed the scene for a few moments, recognizing a number of those present, including Robert Trent, standing in the stag line, and Bruce Thompson, who was dancing with Helena Cleves.

He had intended to remain there only a few minutes, but he lingered. He had become aware that he was being watched. Lawson had a gift very valuable to him in his profession.

His eyes were like the lenses of a wide angle camera, and he could keep a person under observation without looking at him. While apparently interested only in the dancers, he saw that the butler was eying him intently. Turning slightly, the stairway came into his line of vision.

His movement was deliberate, but it was quick enough so that he saw a young woman, whom he classified as a French maid, draw back hurriedly from the upper landing.

"Where's Mrs. Cleves?" he asked, without giving any indication of what he had detected.

"Upstairs," answered Cleves.

With Cleves he ascended the stairway, the French girl having disappeared; the upper hall was unoccupied. Mrs. Cleves, a bottle of smelling salts in her hand, and her face so pale and bloodless that it had a greenish tinge, was alone.

Ever since informing her husband of her loss, she had been searching. Various articles of furniture had been moved about, and the contents of the top drawer of the chifferobe were on the floor. The cover had been removed also.

She had shaken it thoroughly, she explained, in the last hope that her jewel might have been caught in a fold.

"No possibility of finger-prints," thought Lawson as he surveyed the crumpled tapestry.

"I've looked everywhere, but it's gone," quavered Mrs. Cleves, her eyes filling with tears.

The detective was uncomfortable. Despite his reputation as a woman hater, no member of the department was more susceptible to feminine distress.

Through his mind were floating several possibilities, and with them the thought that any slip might result in lost time and perhaps the loss of the emerald itself.

To his relief, when her husband laid his hand on her arm with words of reassurance, she steadied herself and replied intelligently to his questions.

She had been in the alcove with Paula no longer than fifteen minutes, possibly not more than ten, she said. Lawson, judging the time was opportune, interrupted with a question as to the identity of Paula. Mrs. Cleves described her, and the description tallied with that of the young French woman Lawson had seen on the stairway.

"Was the door of your room closed?" he asked, his eyes roving about.

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Cleves. "Paula always closes the door when she enters or leaves."

"How were you sitting?"

Mrs. Cleves seated herself in the alcove, her back toward the door.

"And Paula?"

"She stood behind me. I could see her eyes in the mirror. She has pretty eyes—large and gray."

"How long has Paula been serving you?"

"Not long. My other maid, Huldah, left—she got married—and Paula came about a week later."

"She came just about two weeks after I bought the emerald," interposed Cleves. "My check book will show the exact date. I can fix it definitely by my bank also, as I gave the agents a certified check."

"I remember now," said Mrs. Cleves. "You are right, Addison. I'd been up just one day when I engaged her."

"Through an agency?" asked Lawson, flicking a bit of lint from his shoe.

"Yes. I called up Guynon's, and Paula came out. Her references were so good I employed her immediately."

"Did you know any of the people she'd worked for?"

"Not personally, but I knew the names. They were all from out of the city—from New York. And then she had come from the Guynon agency, and they wouldn't send anybody unreliable."

"Are you sure the Guynons sent her?"

"When I called Guynons, they told me that no one who would suit me was registered, but if a girl should register they would send her out. I called them up in the morning, and Paula came out in the afternoon. She said Guynons had sent her."

"Did you talk with the agency again?"

"Paula told me the agency was on the wire the next day, and I told her to tell them the place was filled."

Lawson went to the windows which were not visible from the alcove, as the curtains shut off the view of those on the side and in the front. He inspected the front windows first.

They were both firmly locked, and had not been opened within a week. Mrs. Cleves said, the condition of the catches showing Lawson that they had not been disturbed in at least that time.

Then he went to the side windows, one of which had been opened a little for ventilation, the aperture, however, too small to admit the body of a man or even a child, and the window held in place by a sash lock which could be operated only from the inside.

Raising it, he looked outside. Below was the driveway, and there were no vines or water pipes, the side of the house rising sheer from the concrete.

Unless the thief, if he had entered that way, had been able to scale the smooth stucco wall, he had used a ladder, and no ladder was visible. Neither was there one about the place.

Through the window came the sound of the machine-gunlike exhaust of a fast motor boat, and the night was just light enough so that Lawson, looking out the front window, could see the white of the wake.

"Probably a rum runner," said Cleves. "We get a lot of salutes like that, as they are numerous on this part of the river."

"Do they land the stuff near here?" asked the detective, applying his handkerchief to a shoe which did not glow as brightly as the other.

"Usually somewhere down farther. But they seem to have some kind of signals that tell them where the dry navy is working, so we are not surprised when we hear them up here.

"Both young Trent and young Thompson have fast boats, but they don't use them much at night. Neither likes to be shot at by some government cutter."

"Before we go any farther, we'd better look this room over again," responded Lawson, his ministrations concluded, as both shoes were satisfactory. "There's a bare chance that emerald's somewhere around here."

"I'm afraid not," replied Mrs. Cleves, her voice again trembling. "I've hunted and hunted."

She and her husband assisted the detective in another search, one that included every nook and corner of the room. No gem with lingering green lights could be found. Nor had Lawson expected that it would be.

"By the way," said Lawson, swinging the door back and forth and causing the hinges to squeak, "did you notice any one upstairs when you came up?"

Mrs. Cleves's white forehead knotted in a little frown.

"Yes," she answered after a brief interval of thought, "I did see some one."

"Who?" asked Lawson, stopping the protest of the hinges.

"I'm not sure—I didn't see his face—but I think it was Bruce Thompson."

CHAPTER IV

A NOSE FOR CRIME

TO continue his check-up of the servants, Lawson visited the kitchen. Barbara and Martha had not left the room during the evening. Nor had Hannah. All had been busy with the refreshments and they were washing the dishes when Lawson entered.

Breen had been in the kitchen also, Lawson learned from Barbara, who blushed when she gave him the information, the cook and the other maid giggling at her perturbation.

"Didn't he go out at all?" asked Lawson, fixing on the girl his pale blue eyes

which were as mild as spring water, but which carried an inquiring look.

"Only for a few minutes," answered Barbara.

"Why?"

"Mrs. Cleves came in," Barbara almost whispered, her face a vivid scarlet and the giggles of the other two servants increasing. "She was looking after the refreshments. Ben heard her coming and stepped out the back door. He stayed there until she went away and then he came back in."

"Why did he leave when his mistress entered the kitchen?" persisted Lawson.

Barbara would have evaded his eyes, but he refused to allow her to do so.

"He knows Mrs. Cleves doesn't like to have him hanging around the kitchen," the girl choked.

"How long did Breen stay here after Mrs. Cleves left?" Lawson continued.

"He went to his room just a few minutes ago."

"He didn't go outside again?"

"He did," answered Hannah, coming to Barbara's rescue. "We thought Mrs. Cleves was coming back and Ben ducked. But it was only Greening. Barbara had to go out and tell Ben it was all right to come back in."

"Show me the chauffeur's room," said Lawson to Cleves, who had been waiting in the hall. Cleves accompanied the detective to the third floor. Breen was reading. A somewhat stocky but powerfully built young man, he looked up sullenly when Lawson came through the door.

"What the hell do you want?" he asked, his hand moving toward his hip pocket.

"Keep your hands in front of you," ordered Lawson, "I'm an officer."

"What business have you with me?"

"Ask your boss."

Cleves was standing in the doorway.

"I don't get the idea," continued the chauffeur, "unless—"

"Unless what?" inquired Lawson, his voice hard.

"Mr. Cleves knows. And he knows that we're going to be married just the same."

"Who's going to be married?" asked Lawson, his tone gentler as his mind went back to "Advice to the Lovelorn."

"I might say it was none of your business—I'm not strong for gold bricks."

"You and Bar—Miss Smith?"

"Yes, Barbara and me. I'll give it to you straight. We'd been married before now only I lacked the jack. Now I've got it and Barbara is going to be Mrs. Breen whether Mrs. Cleves likes it or not. I suppose she brought you here, though God knows what she's trying to hang on me."

"Nobody's trying to hang anything on you, son."

"What do you want then?"

"Just answer a few questions."

"What about?"

"What you did this evening before coming up here."

"I didn't do nothing—that is, nothing I could be put in jail for."

"I haven't said anything about jail. What I want to know is how you spent your time this evening."

Again Breen looked at Cleves.

"All right, I'll tell you."

His story checked with that of the girl's in the kitchen with but one exception. Instead of being on the back porch a few minutes, he averred that it seemed as if he had been out there a couple of hours.

"What did you do while waiting?" asked Lawson, looking at the man's shoes.

"I walked around a little—but not far enough so I'd miss seeing the back door open and Barbara giving me the high ball the coast was clear."

Lawson nodded.

"I guess that's all," he said slowly. "Good night."

"Good night," replied Breen, again turning his attention to the magazine he had been reading.

"Don't let my wife know, but I'll admit I've been doing a little conniving," said Cleves on the way down the stairway. "Breen's a fine young chap and Barbara's a good clean girl—been with us four years now."

"How long has Martha been in the house?"

"About two years. She almost caused trouble between Jim Thompson and me. Mrs. Thompson accused Mrs. Cleves of coaxing her away and, of course, I had

to side with my wife—when she was in earshot."

"The cook?"

"Since 1916 or 1917. We had her before we moved."

"And your butler?"

"My wife's chief treasure! He came about a week after Paula."

"Did you get him from an agency, too?"

"No, and I didn't hire him. The next to the last thing in the world I want is a butler. I can't get used to him and that drives Mrs. Cleves frantic.

"I let her take him on for fear she'd insist on that last thing in the world I want—a valet."

"I asked if he came from an agency."

"Some one she knew all about in the East sent him. He had letters from several well known New Yorkers, and she hired him on the spot. The letters said the New York climate was affecting his health, so he had to leave."

"Have you any other help?"

"None that need be considered."

"But is there anybody else?"

"Nobody except Sam, the gardener. But he—well, he never comes into the house."

"Where does he live?"

"He has a room over the garage and carries his meals there from the kitchen. You don't need to bother about him. He's just a bit"—Cleves touched his forehead. "And he has only one interest in life, digging in the ground that things may grow.

"He loves flowers and isn't happy unless he's among them. He can make them grow anywhere—that is, almost anywhere. There's a place down on the river bank, a clay bed, that so far has resisted all his efforts. He's planted a high hedge which hides it from the house, but that clay is his only failure."

When they reached the foyer, Lawson looked about for the butler, but Greening was nowhere in sight. The orchestra was still busily engaged in producing popular airs and the utter lack of excitement showed that none on the dance floor knew of the loss of the hostess.

As Lawson and Cleves stopped, a girl who seemed to the detective like a bit of gold flame hurried up to them.

"Where's mother?" she asked, her voice music.

"Upstairs," answered her father.

Evidently his tone was not entirely natural as she flashed him a searching glance.

"Is she ill?" she asked, her tone anxious.

"No, she's—" Cleves began, only to halt.

Helena was not looking at him, but at Lawson, a puzzled expression in her blue eyes. There had been no time to don evening clothes, and Lawson was in his working suit, a dark gray, which, though it was pressed neatly, was not exactly attire for an evening gathering. His shoes gleamed, however.

From the stag line, Bruce Thompson came hurriedly and a little distance behind him was Robert Trent.

"Hello, Lawson," said Thompson easily. "You don't remember me?"

"I do," replied the detective.

"That shows you haven't lost the old eye. Quite a lot of water has gone over Niagara Falls since the Thompsons lived on Trumble Avenue. But what brings the star detective of the whole department to this party?"

Lawson had no time to answer. From the white, rounded throat of Helena Cleves came a gasp of surprise.

"A detective—the square emerald!" she exclaimed.

Cleves nodded.

"Excuse me," she said, and with the eyes of both Thompson and Trent following her, she hurried to her mother.

CHAPTER V

WHAT TRENT SAW

THOUGH the two young men were evidently very much interested in her, Lawson was not keeping Miss Cleves under observation. He was contrasting the two youths.

Both were of about the same height, but there the resemblance ceased. Trent was very dark, lines of good breeding in his face, but with them an expression that Lawson did not like.

His black eyes were unsteady and the

classification into which the detective placed Trent's mouth was not complimentary. "The old stock has run down," was his mental comment.

He had not seen the younger Thompson in some time, but he had kept track of him—just as he had of other Trumble Avenue boys and girls he had led across the streets on their way to and from school.

Thompson was of heavier build than Trent and his brown eyes were frank and level. He gave the impression of both capability and dependability. His war record was excellent and on his return home, though the family fortune made it unnecessary, he had gone to work—started at the bottom in an office that he might become an architect.

That, like so many other things, was all catalogued in Lawson's mental store of facts. .

While he would have preferred that his identity and mission in that house be kept under cover for a little longer, he could not hold it against young Thompson for having recognized him.

Instead, he took it as a point in the young man's favor, since when the Thompsons had lived on Trumble Avenue they had been vastly further removed from association with Robert Trent than mere city blocks.

Lawson's musings were interrupted by the abrupt departure of Trent, the look on his face, to Lawson's mind, that of one hurrying away from the contaminating presence of some menial.

"Know everybody here?" Lawson asked Thompson, in his voice no betrayal of any resentment he might have felt.

Thompson said that he did not know all of the guests. But that was nothing unusual, he added. He didn't get about socially as much as the others because he was too busy in the office.

Then again—and he smiled as he spoke the words—lines were not drawn as tightly as they had been in the past, which was just as well since if they were, the Thompson family's Trumble Avenue past would would have its effect.

Quite often guests brought others who were not invited and the strangers were made welcome if they were good dancing men, it being the ambition of modern hostesses to have long stag lines.

Lawson did not ask more questions. He was intent on watching Trent who was going from group to group. Quite evidently he was retailing the news that there was a detective in the house as rapidly as possible.

"You might as well give them the details," said Lawson to the young man at his side.

"But I haven't any details," replied Thompson. "From Helena's remark and because you're here, I'd gather that the square emerald has been stolen."

"While Mrs. Cleves was upstairs with her maid, her bracelet disappeared from the chifferobe where she had laid it. So far, that's all any of us know."

"It might have fallen—"

"It didn't," asserted the detective.

Stepping into the foyer, Lawson again saw Paula, still in her cap and apron, peering down at him from the upper landing. He made no effort to speak to her.

When he judged the time was opportune, he would question her, though, according to Mrs. Cleves's statement, she could have no direct knowledge of the theft.

While ministering to her mistress, her back had been toward the door and the mirror was set at such an angle that it commanded no view of that entrance—a fact established by Lawson as he had stood in the dressing alcove.

His interest was in the butler. Greening was not in the lower part of the house, Hannah, Barbara and Martha not having seen him since he had served the refreshments.

Barbara suggested that possibly he had gone to his room which was on the third floor. Cleves was still with the guests, and Lawson went up the rear stairway alone. On the second floor, he met Helena. The girl's eyes were bright and unclouded; her loss of poise had been but momentary.

"Is there anything I can do?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered, "tell me which is Greening's room."

The butler's quarters were empty, and as he surveyed them, the look of the man-hunter was on Lawson's face. Evidences

that the occupant had made a quick flight were abundant.

Drawers had been pulled out, emptied of their contents and not replaced. A trunk was standing open and the closet was bare. But despite his haste, the man had been thorough.

Lawson could find nothing that would lead to an identification if the butler were other than he had represented himself to be.

From an upper floor telephone pointed out to him by Miss Cleves, Lawson communicated with headquarters, the girl supplementing his description of the missing man with various details.

In concluding, he asked a question which was apparently a casual inquiry as to affairs at headquarters, but which in reality told Parmer that Lawson wished the Cleves's residence placed under guard.

"Is there anything further I can do, Mr. Lawson?" asked the girl.

"Nothing—at present," answered the detective.

"I'll leave you then. Mother is suffering much pain, but she won't let me call a doctor. She prefers Paula's massages to medicine."

"Stay with your mother and Paula for the next fifteen or twenty minutes," advised Lawson.

"Our guests—"

"They'll excuse you, this is—"

"You know best," she answered with a smile that warmed the year-crusted heart of the man-hunter.

Lawson went down the front stairway slowly, now and then pausing to apply a handkerchief to his shoes, his attention apparently fixed on his footwear, but his wide-angle eyes always watching.

At the bottom, he encountered Robert Trent. The young man's superciliousness had vanished completely; he was conciliatory, almost oily.

"Meet me outside," he whispered. "I've got something to tell you I think is important, and I don't want anybody to see us talking. I'll come out in about five minutes."

Lawson passed through the kitchen and walked around the house slowly. Underneath the side windows of Mrs. Cleves's room, he stopped and taking out his flash light, made an inspection of the drive and the grass along the edge.

Neither the concrete nor the close-cropped sod told him anything. Again wiping off his shoes, he loafed toward the *porte-cochère* in the shadow of which he awaited Trent.

The delay was not long, Trent approaching furtively.

"I've been doing a little investigating," he said, his tone that of addressing an equal. "Thought I'd give you a hand."

"Yes?" queried Lawson.

"Two young men were here to-night whom nobody knew, except perhaps one person. I happened to notice them.

"Don't know why unless it was because they were strangers and I rather pride myself on knowing every one worth while in town. They were correctly dressed, but something about them made me suspicious."

"What was that?" asked Lawson.

"I don't know—they seemed different."

"Are they still here?"

"No—that's why I wanted you to wait; wanted to see if they weren't still about."

"What did they look like?"

"One had black hair and the other had hair that was almost blond. They were young—about twenty-five or twenty-six."

"Tall or short?"

"I should say about medium."

"What would they weigh?"

"I'm not good at guessing weights."

"Who was the one person who might know them?"

"Bruce Thompson was talking to them just before Mrs. Cleves went upstairs."

CHAPTER VI

FIND THE MAN!

HALLIGAN and Harper, two other veterans, were the assistants who came in response to Lawson's request to Parmer for help, their arrival being within fifteen minutes after he had sent the call.

From them, he learned that at the time of the robbery, two beat men had been in front of the house. After Cleves had pur-

chased the square emerald, at the suggestion of Parmer, the captain of the precinct had kept the residence under as close surveillance as possible without using a special detail for the purpose.

The two uniformed men, Halligan said, had observed nothing out of the ordinary.

That was an additional link in the chain of evidence that the theft was an inside job, a theory toward which Lawson leaned strongly, but not so strongly but that he could revise it without much difficulty.

He was too experienced an officer for that and in addition, there were the two strange young men who had been in the home when the robbery was committed.

Cleves had not been cognizant of the presence of strangers. As a matter of fact, he was acquainted with no more than half of his guests, society not being of great interest to him.

"Jim and I sneaked out whenever we got a chance and smoked and fanned in my den," he continued. "That's the only refuge I have in my house—the only place I can call my own.

"Even Helena doesn't horn in when I close the door. By the way, if you want to do any phoning that's a good place; no one will disturb you, and it's a one-party line."

"Perhaps Mrs. Cleves could—"

"She's asleep and her maid's with her. But I'll wake her if you think it's necessary."

"Maybe you'd better."

"Come along then."

Cleves stepped to the side of the bed and spoke, but his wife did not respond until Paula touched her arm.

"What is it?" she asked in a drowsy voice. Then, as if unable to arouse herself: "I dreamed—my emerald—stolen."

"*Madame,*" said Paula again touching her mistress.

Mrs. Cleves's eyes snapped open as if she were roused from a trance.

"You have it!" she exclaimed joyously.

"No," answered Cleves, "Lawson wants to ask you some questions."

"Oh!"

Lawson caught the mighty disappointment in the word, though he did not see the expression on her face, his eyes being fixed on Paula.

"I only wanted to ask you—to ask you, if you knew all the guests," stammered the detective absently.

"Certainly. Paula, please rub my arm."

"All of them?" insisted Lawson.

"Possibly not all of the boys—one doesn't always, nowadays. But I can't recall any in particular."

"How many guests did you invite?"

"Thirty. Won't you please ask the rest of your questions in the morning? I'm very—"

"Sorry to disturb you," apologized the detective. "I'm through now unless there are further developments."

"Of course, if you find my—"

"We'll let you know right away," responded Lawson, giving Paula a side glance.

The maids said refreshments had been served to thirty-two guests.

Skirting a bit of shrubbery, Lawson worked himself toward the back porch from which came low-pitched voices. An argument of some kind was in progress and his intent was to eavesdrop.

But when he was close enough to hear, it had evidently ended as all he caught was an order given Ben Breen by Bruce Thompson to return to the house and to stay there until he was told to leave. The opening of the door showed Lawson that the chauffeur was not in uniform and was carrying a bag.

Thompson did not go into the house, but walked back in the direction of the river, Lawson following. The moon had not arisen and the night was so black that Lawson lost him completely.

As he rounded a bush he was stopped suddenly, so suddenly that he leaned backward. His arm had been clutched and the muzzle of a revolver thrust into his stomach.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" snapped the detective.

"Lawson!" gasped Bruce Thompson.

"Yes Lawson. And now young man, what do you mean by interfering with an officer?"

"You didn't look like an officer to me coming through that darkness. I thought—"

"Take away that gun."

"Sure."

The weapon removed from his midriff, Lawson felt easier.

"Thompson, are you in the habit of carrying a revolver when you go to parties?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, then, why have you got one to-night?"

"I borrowed it."

"Why?"

"I thought I'd take a little stroll around the Cleves's estate and with a crook—"

"Whose gun is it?"

"Breen's."

"He loaned it to you?"

"I called it a loan, but I took it away from him."

"Why?"

"For two reasons. Breen was the best pistol shot in our outfit and his temper's short. Besides he hasn't any permit to carry a weapon and I have."

"And you sent him back into the house?"

"Sure. He wanted to quit his job, but Mrs. Cleves will need a chauffeur just as much without her square emerald as she did with it."

"By the way, Mr. Thompson—"

"My friends generally call me Bruce and so did you when I was a kid on Trumble—"

"It's a long way from Trumble Avenue to this part of town, Mr. Thompson. There's a question I want to ask you."

"Fire away," answered Thompson, putting the revolver in his pocket.

"Did you go upstairs after Mrs. Cleves left the party?"

As they talked, they had been strolling toward the house and, as Lawson intended, the light from a window shone on Thompson's face when he put that question to him, and he could note a sudden change of expression.

"Who says I was there?" he asked in turn.

"You were seen on the upper landing going toward the French door that leads to the second floor balcony—"

"Yes, I was up there. I went up there as soon as Mrs. Cleves quit watching me. I didn't know then that she had gone to her room—I thought that more than likely she had gone into the kitchen."

"She did stop there, but she went on up to her room, and it was while she was in her room and you were on the same floor that the emerald disappeared."

If Thompson was agitated by any insinuation that Lawson's words might have carried, he did not indicate it.

"Why did you go up there?" asked Lawson.

"I had a very good reason," answered Thompson, "one that just now, I don't care to discuss."

They had reached the driveway and with Thompson, Lawson entered. The guests were leaving.

"There's one other question," said Lawson detaining his companion. "Who were the two strange young men with whom you talked to-night?"

"You've got me there, chief," answered Thompson. "They spoke to me and I answered. I'd never seen them before."

Lawson asked no more questions, Thompson leaving him abruptly to speak to Helena. With her father, she was saying good night to the guests.

Standing behind the curtains where he could see without being seen, Lawson's pulses quickened with the loveliness of the girl, in him a dual hope—one that the solution of the mystery would restore the great jewel to her mother and the other that that solution would cause the girl herself no pain.

Helena's beauty, however, did not keep him from using his wide angle eyes. Paula had left her mistress as once again she was on that upper landing, still in her cap and apron.

To an experienced observer, though they were well concealed, traces of agitation were visible in her behavior. Deliberately he turned so that she could see that he knew that she was there. For just an instant, she looked at the detective, then fled.

One by one, Lawson inspected those who were departing. He did not know them all, but Cleves and his daughter evidently did, and that satisfied him. The two strangers indeed had left previously.

When all had gone, he sought Helena, not a difficult task as she was coming toward him.

She, too, had noticed the two strange young men and had wondered who they were as she was certain she had never seen them before.

She had thought of making inquiries, but had forgotten to do so. Just why such an admission should bring color to her face, Lawson could not explain to himself. But it was a fact that it did—a glow that made her even more beautiful, so beautiful that in talking to her, the veteran Bill Lawson felt a queer vibration in his heart and with it envy—envy that the fates in weaving the warp and woof of his life had left out of the pattern a daughter such as Helena Cleves.

She was so fresh, so youthful, so attuned to life that she reminded him of spring, of the clean spring when all nature is young.

With it all, she was sensible and observant since, when her duties as hostess were ended, the description she gave him was so detailed as to be almost photographic. Indeed, it was photographic to the sensitive brain of Bill Lawson—a brain in which were many pictures indeed.

Trent's extremely sketchy portrayal had made no images clear, but hers did, so clear that again his heart was stirred—though for an altogether different reason.

This time the flutter was strictly professional and while associated was a certain disruption of his previous theory, still that theory had been elastic enough to permit of ramifications.

CHAPTER VII

THE VIGIL

FROM Cleves's den, he called headquarters. Parmer was still there despite the lateness of the hour, which was like the chief, since he never left so long as remained that which should demand his attention. Fast work was necessary in this case.

The square emerald was not a jewel that could be disposed of to any ordinary fence, but it could be taken out of the country and Canada was only a half mile away. Or it could be cut up into smaller gems, which would impair its value materially, but would facilitate the sale mightily and so large was it that such a process would be profitable.

Therein, according to Lawson's thoughts, was the danger since, if his suspicions were correct—that the two guests had been part of a band of jewel thieves for whom the police of the country were searching—the emerald would not be taken to Canada.

Parmer agreed. He also agreed that Harper and Halligan should remain in the vicinity of the Cleves's residence and that Lawson should continue to watch the case from that end.

Though the net had been spread, there had been no trace of Greening. Canadian officials had been notified and a lookout was being maintained for him throughout the Dominion.

Helena met Lawson when he emerged from the den, a Helena whose color was much higher than it had been when he had entered. She wanted to talk to him alone, she said, indicating that he should return to the room which he was leaving.

Closing the door behind her, she waited, her pose natural, yet nevertheless a bit of unconscious art, as if she desired Lawson to ask her a question. Lawson did not obey. He was still the copper, but for once at least, he was completely at a loss.

"You—you—you," she stammered, the blood suffusing her face.

"I did what?" asked Lawson.

"You asked Bruce about being upstairs when the bracelet was taken," she answered.

"Yes, and he said that he was."

"And so was Bob Trent," she replied, her face even more scarlet.

"Why?"

The calmly uttered three-letter word used so often by Lawson seemed to confuse her utterly, though only for the space of a watch tick.

"Mr. Lawson, would you believe me if I gave you my word of honor?" she asked.

"Sure."

"The reason why Bob and Bruce were up there at that time had nothing—had nothing in the world to do with mother's bracelet. I didn't want you to waste your

time, so as soon as I found you asked Bruce why he was there, I—I—I—"

"Yes," answered Lawson, "and I believe you."

Noting that Halligan and Harper were in their places, Lawson worked his way slowly toward the river. Since two officers had been in front of the house, Greening, if he had taken the emerald, had not escaped in that way.

But it would have been comparatively easy for him to have followed the bank of the stream some distance either up or down and then made his way to the street without exciting suspicion.

Or confederates might have been waiting for him in a boat. Greening's countenance did not fit in the mental picture retained by Lawson, but he might have been an acquisition to the gang and an inside man of much value.

That Greening was still on the grounds was a possibility most remote. But Lawson's method was building up his case bit by bit until it was dead open or shut.

For the moment he had nothing else to occupy his attention since Halligan and Harper would take care of the house should there be any developments in or about the mansion. Hence, he was free to comb the grounds as thoroughly as he could in the semidarkness.

A movement in the shadows caused him to suddenly secrete himself in a screen of ornamental shrubbery about two hundred feet from the house.

Freezing like a pointer dog that has scented a bird, he tried to pierce the darkness with his keen eyes. Then, his vision becoming accustomed to night, he picked up the outlines of a man who had sought cover even as he had done—a man whose figure blended curiously with the greenery about him.

With vast patience, Lawson kept up the vigil, his nerves taut, for he could see that the person under observation was watching the house. Lawson's hand slipped back to his service revolver. The presence of the sentry was a mystery and he was taking no chances.

Suddenly, the kitchen door opened and a stream of light made a bright pathway in the night. The skulker became animated. Framed in the open doorway was Barbara. The man who had been hiding was Breen.

Plain it was then to Lawson why he had been so hard to detect and why a background of green blended with his form. Again he was wearing his uniform of olive drab.

Barbara and Breen lingered for a moment on the porch, their lips meeting. Then they went into the house.

CHAPTER VIII

LAWSON'S HUNCH

AS Lawson resumed his progress toward the river, he felt a "hunch." Such sensations were by no means a rarity to him and almost always they were so accurate that he had about reached the belief that in the long years he had worked at his profession, he had acquired some sort of a sixth sense which warned him of the imminence of danger.

Once he had disregarded the nudge of whatever fates had his destiny in their keeping and his disobedience had so nearly cost him his life that from that time on, his obedience had been absolute.

Himself a trailer of men, he was adept in all the tricks of the trade which, of course, included means of eluding any one who might be trailing him. Hence his course was filled with halts and waits and crouches behind cover, his eyes and ears strained to the utmost, it being his conviction that there was some one behind him.

His expertness brought no results. His vision was unimpaired and his hearing was of the best, but he saw nothing, and to his ears came nothing save the usual night noises.

Nevertheless, instead of being allayed by these physical evidences of error, his hunch grew rapidly stronger. It was an uncanny feeling, indeed, a sensation that had Bill Lawson been nervously organized it would have caused his skin to prickle.

Ahead was a black blob, the hedge of which Cleves had spoken. Rounding it,

with all of his senses alert, Lawson found nothing save the clay bank that had resisted the efforts of the gardener, a bald spot in the lawn, still soft from a recent rain. He replaced his flash light and stepped forward.

At that same instant his body was encircled by arms with a grip of such power that he felt as if he were girded by steel hoops.

Bill Lawson was middle aged and his waist line bulged, but he had lived a clean life; his exercise had been constant, and on him was no flabby flesh.

Nor had he been taken completely off his guard, despite the suddenness of the onslaught—his hunch in a measure having caused him to anticipate attack. Nevertheless, his own arms pinioned at his side by arms which might not have been human as he could feel hair against his flesh, he could reach neither his billy nor his revolver.

He could only struggle, using his feet and endeavoring to find some opening through which he could eel.

Strain as he would, he could not force that grip, his efforts handicapped by the slippery footing, the treacherous clay affording him no hold. Inch by inch, he was forced back by a power that overwhelmed him completely until he could feel his spine cracking under the strain and his own strength ebbing.

Over his anhydrous lips, his breath whistled, but his adversary did not even pant.

So intent was he on battling that the thought of crying out had not occurred to him. A shout would have brought either Halligan or Harper. Perhaps both.

And when he finally attempted an outcry he found that he had waited too long—that he could only whimper—whimper like a man who, pursued in a nightmare, is unable to make his terror known.

Bill Lawson had faced death many times; in his body were two bullets which he would carry to his grave; trussed up and helpless, with the mercury below zero, he had been left to freeze.

Death had grinned at him so often that it had lost most of its terrors. But that silent struggle in the shadows, a tragic pantomime without an audience, caused something of the night to enter his being, and a coldness ran in his veins.

It was not the chill of fear, but rather a consciousness of futility, a flash that for once in his life he would not bring in his man! But with it was a minim of warmth; his excuse would be legitimate; he had died trying.

Not even that thought stopped his struggles, for such was his nature that he would continue to struggle as long as his heart kept up its throbbing, though he knew that effort was useless—useless indeed since even at the moment his knees were sagging and he was being borne to the earth.

"Help!"

In a woman's voice that cry came through the night, and with it Lawson's attacker loosed his grip with such suddenness that Lawson dropped as a sack of meal.

Yet he was still a copper, since, even as he struck, he reached for his revolver.

His fumbling fingers were inept and he lay there panting, his starved lungs clamoring for oxygen. And as he lay, gaining strength and waiting for a repetition of that cry or the appearance of the one who had uttered it, into his ears came the roar of the exhaust of a fast motor boat.

That was the needed stimulant. Painfully he raised himself to his elbow, and still more painfully—with the feeling that his legs had been disconnected from his body—he got to his feet.

Then, instead of drawing his weapon, he sent the beam of his flash ahead of him and followed it, guided by the voice of Helena Cleves.

She was standing beside a body.

Lawson turned the ray downward.

It played on the pallid and rigid features of Greening, the butler.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHASE

SNAPPING out the light, Lawson thrust the girl behind him almost with violence, drawing his revolver with his free hand as he did so.

Some one was approaching on the run, the footsteps dull pads on the grass, but

sufficiently loud for Lawson to know that they were those of neither Harper nor Halligan.

"Don't move, Miss Cleves," whispered the detective as he endeavored to pierce the opaque wall with his eyes.

She did not answer, though she was unfrighted since there was no tremor in her body, which he was shielding with his own.

"Helena!"

The call caused Lawson to lower his weapon and turn on his light.

"I heard you call," panted Bruce Thompson, "and I got here as quick as I could."

"So did I," added Robert Trent, his well bred voice as carefully modulated as if he were in a drawing-room.

"What's wrong?" asked Thompson.

Lawson turned his light to the face of the corpse.

"Greening!" exclaimed Thompson.

Trent stood wordless, his countenance a curious white.

With a deft hand, Lawson searched the body.

"I want a boat—a fast one," he asserted, rising to his feet suddenly and looking down the river.

"Mine's at the end of the dock," replied Thompson. "She's full of gas and ready. Come on—I can get every inch she has."

Lawson's recuperative powers were great, but he was still clumsy as he followed Thompson and the girl to the pier. Despite his slowness, however, he easily distanced Robert Trent.

Their haste was useless. No craft was at the pier, and it was unnecessary to look in the boathouse—though Thompson did so—as the mooring lines had been cut. Lawson was not surprised. The surprise would have come had they found the boat.

"We can use Bob's," Helena cried. "It's faster."

"I don't believe there any gas," asserted Trent in what seemed to Lawson an unconvincing tone.

"Why, Bob!" exclaimed the girl. "The tank was full this afternoon, and you haven't been out since."

"I forgot that, but I can't—"

"You must go," she insisted.

Still he hung back until she jerked at his sleeve.

But he refused to show haste in getting the craft from its shelter until Thompson, seemingly as impatient as Lawson, towed it along the pier.

"I'll go with you," he said.

"So will I," added Helena.

"A speed boat's not built for passengers," averred the detective, "and if we're going to catch those birds we'll have to step lively. Start her, Mr. Trent."

Instead of obeying, Trent merely fiddled with the mechanism.

"I know how," said Helena, deep scorn in her voice and making a move as if she would leap aboard.

"Don't, don't, Helena," begged Trent. "I'm ready now."

The starter whined and the motor roared, but Lawson delayed casting off the lines for a moment.

"Miss Cleves," he said.

To catch his words, she bent her head until her soft cheek was close to the stubbly face of old Bill Lawson.

"Call headquarters," the detective whispered with his habitual caution, though the noise of motors made lowering his voice unnecessary. "Get Chief Parmer—nobody else. Tell him you're talking for me. Tell him about Greening's body, and that I've gone down the river with Mr. Trent. Don't let any one overhear you."

"Is that all?" she asked.

"No," he replied, letting go the restraining line. "Greening didn't have the emerald."

"Give her all there is," Lawson said to Trent.

Concealment was unnecessary, since it was simply a race. Time had been lost, but he believed he still had a chance to win, as Trent's boat was the fastest on the river, recollection of his capturing the open championship earlier in the season coming to Lawson as they swung out into the stream.

Even should those whom they were pursuing hear the voice of the great motors the chances were excellent that they would not be alarmed, since it was the time of night when the rum runners, who also used rac-

ing boats, would be especially active, if any loads were scheduled to be brought over from Canada.

That the odds were two to one, and that those whom he was chasing had probably taken human life only a short time before and would fight to the finish rather than surrender with their booty, never entered Bill Lawson's mind.

"Got a night glass?" he asked.

"No," answered Trent, his voice strained.

"Step on it."

With the order, the boat seemed to leap through the water, the wake, dimly visible, a huge twin line of billows. So fast was it going that the spray, instead of coming aboard, cascaded into the foam behind.

To Lawson, who never before had ridden in a racing craft at night, the sensation was strange, but not so strange that it took his mind from the matter in hand.

A watery old moon, but one capable of furnishing light, was rising. Light would help him, but it would also help those in the boat ahead.

Below the city was a swamp, a maze of islands and crooked waterways—a haven for those who desired concealment, its area so great that there were hundreds of chances for evasion.

Should the quarry gain that shelter with the square emerald the odds against the law would be heavy.

Residences gave place to warehouses and factories. Far downstream Lawson could see the lights of a ferry crossing over to Canada, but no other craft was in sight, and with the noise of the motors dinning in his ears he could hear nothing.

The warehouses straggled out into crazy buildings, and then the fleet craft rested on an even keel, its nose no longer pointing high.

"What the hell are you doing?" demanded Lawson. "Don't stop—step on it."

"This is my boat," answered Trent, sneeringly.

"I'm giving orders. Open her up or I'll make you," commanded Lawson, grimly.

"How will you make me?" and the sneer was more evident than ever.

"This way," answered Lawson, reaching over and jamming his foot on the throttle.

Once more the boat leaped like a frightened thing. Ahead were a cluster of piles, the last remnant of a long dock that had once reached out from a salt factory, but which, after the factory had burned, had been allowed to rot away.

The boat was at full speed.

"Can you swim?" asked Trent insolently.

"Not so good, why?"

"Because we're going to have an accident."

And before Lawson could grasp the wheel, he sent the boat squarely into those piles.

CHAPTER X

SINK OR SWIM?

WHEN Lawson, sputtering and choking, arose to the surface he found that, beyond the shock of having been plunged into the river at a speed of fifty miles an hour, he was unhurt, though his faculties were more than a little fuzzy.

In telling Robert Trent that he was an inexpert swimmer, he had spoken truly, since treading water, as the current carried him downstream, was purely instinctive.

The moon was high enough to afford light, and, peering about him while his brain cleared, he could discern no sign of life, merely the river carrying bits of refuse, parts of lemon crates, disreputable pasteboard boxes, pieces of timbers and brush coming into his line of vision.

Behind him he saw the hull of the speed boat hanging to the piles like an old coat on a fence. But Robert Trent was nowhere in sight.

Between Lawson and shore were several hundred feet of water, deep water, for in the past, when the salt block had been in operation, the great lake freighters had landed there.

Unskilled as he was, he might have made the bank without great distress, but, instead of struggling toward it, he breasted the stiff current and, puffing mightily, fought his way back toward the wreck, about which

were shadows that even his keen vision could not penetrate.

It was slow and laborious work, the water gripping at him and taking away his strength. His clothes were a handicap, and soon he realized that though he was putting forth his best efforts, he was scarcely holding his own; that unless he could free himself from some of his encumbrances he would never attain his objective.

Never before, despite the varied nature of his experiences, had he attempted to remove his coat while keeping himself afloat.

Nevertheless, he made the attempt, inhaling much water, which increased the rawness of the lining of his throat and nose. How he succeeded he did not know, but finally, when he thought he would never accomplish the feat, the coat was off.

Then he established another precedent, since, in his years of service, he had never lost or abandoned a single article of police property. In this instance, regardless of his record, he loosened his revolver and allowed it to sink to the bottom, followed by his cuffs and billy.

Thus lightened, he found he was able to defeat the clutch of those invisible fingers that were pulling at him so relentlessly.

It was a stern struggle, such a stern struggle that when he did reach the piles he could do nothing save cling and pant. Doggedly he held on until his breath returned enough to permit him to work himself around to the upstream side.

There he found the man he sought. To all appearances, the wrecker of that boat had already paid for his misdeed. His white face bobbed up and down in the swirl of the water, his black hair, matted with blood, and his clothing held by the pinch of the boat against the water-smoothed logs.

Seemingly there was nothing left for Lawson to do but to swim to shore and make a report.

He tore open Robert Trent's shirt and his fingers explored his chest. He was not dead—merely unconscious. With that discovery was another that added to the chill working into the being of Bill Lawson.

The efforts he had made had left him so spent that even had he not been burdened with the body of a man incapable of helping himself, he could not have made the shore.

Before embarking on that chase there had been the silent struggle on the river bank. How long he had been in the water he did not know, but his muscles seemed flaccid—flabby like his hands, which were wrinkled, shriveled and faded to a white resembling that of a fish's belly.

Deeper and deeper the cold of the stream was striking, and it was only by effort of will that he could keep his teeth from chattering.

Desperate though he knew his plight to be, he felt no fear. His heart might be beating more slowly, but the loss of strength was physical solely.

To remain clinging to that pile meant death by drowning, for underneath him were at least twenty feet of water, and below that many feet of soft ooze.

It was not a cheerful thought, but it was a fact, and Lawson was accustomed to facing facts—had faced them all of his life. For the second time that night he was looking death in the eye, but, so far as his soul was concerned, he was unquivering.

He made an attempt to mount those piles, but, try as he would, water-weighted and with only a smooth surface to grasp, he could not raise himself more than a few inches. And each endeavor took a toll from his slender stock of strength.

One hope remained, and that a faint one. On the Canadian shore he could see the headlights of speeding motor cars, a continuous line of them since the hour was early morning, the time when the road houses were closing and merrymakers were hastening to their homes.

But those lights were more than a half mile away.

On the American side were only darkness and silence. No industry having replaced the salt works, the property was an isolated, weed grown waste.

No residences were nearer than a mile and there being nothing to guard, the district was unpatrolled, the only highway on which there was any possibility of travel, being more than three-quarters of a mile back from the river.

Still there was that one chance.

Inhaling a great breath, he exhaled it in a mighty shout, a stentorian roar for help that traveled far out over the water.

Listening with such intensity that he could feel the pound of his heart in his ears, he waited. Not one of those lights stopped or even paused.

Again and again, he cried, his hail growing fainter and fainter, until his abused vocal cords rebelled and only a croak came from his rasped lips.

Not yet was he conquered, however. Loosening his hold, he endeavored to strike out with his stiffened arms, only to find that he could not exert enough effort to keep himself afloat.

Merely by a lucky clutch as he was being carried by under the surface did he grasp the last pile and thus save himself from being swept downstream.

Never had he known such weariness. His arms felt as if they were being pulled from their sockets though his body was strangely light—light and swaying as if it were moss that had grown to those chained, upright logs.

Thankful indeed was he that the face of Robert Trent was above water and that he was held securely, since if it had been otherwise, Robert Trent would long before have been past human aid.

Why had Trent sent his boat to destruction? That was a question that would not be answered definitely unless help came, and no help was in sight. Again Lawson tried to shout.

Slow minutes dragged by and the strain began to play tricks with his brain. No longer were his thoughts coherent. One second he was out there in the night with the current tugging at him; the next, he was a young copper walking over on Trumble, his step firm, his waistline unbulging.

He shook the water out of his eyes. Before him was the river and those lights over in Canada—long lines of lights. But out there on the piles, only blackness.

Between him and those lights water hurrying on and on eager to take him with it. His lips formed the name, "Nora."

Out of the black she came to him—and she had been dead almost a quarter of a century. He wanted to brush away the vision, but he could not raise his arm—only a little while now, for he was the victim of delusions.

Again he shook his head and once more was sane since Nora vanished. But he was the victim of delusions.

One of those motor car lights had separated itself from the others and was traveling over the water—a gleaming eye that seemed to pierce the very soul of him. He closed his eyes, but it seemed to come through his tight lids.

He turned his head, but it sought him out and such was its intensity that it penetrated the mist that was enveloping his consciousness.

"Help!" he cried. "Hel—"

The word ended in a gurgle, the water closing over his head.

His body was sore and a mighty nausea gripped him. He heard his name repeated over and over. He did not care; nothing mattered.

Then he was wrapped in blankets in the cockpit of a launch. Over him was leaning a familiar face—Quinn, old Sergeant Quinn for years in charge of the river patrol.

"Thought you were a goner, Bill," panted the sergeant. "I'm about all in from using artificial respiration!"

"Did you get 'em?" gurgled Lawson, his tongue like a piece of flannel, but still he was a copper.

"Shut up," responded Quinn, "you're not all the way back yet."

Lawson felt himself drifting, but he clutched at his faculties and sent the question to his brother officer with his eyes.

"Yes, we got 'em." Quinn stopped to stow a tremendous amount of fine cut into his cheek. "They're for'd with the cuffs on. And we got your friend, too—the one with the busted head. He needs a doctor damn bad."

It was in the downriver station. Trent and Lawson had been given emergency treatment and Lawson was recuperating rapidly, but Trent was still unconscious, his breathing stertorious. Fractured skull the surgeon said. An ambulance had been called.

"We stopped at the booth about four miles down while on regular patrol and got the word to be on the lookout for the Thompson boat," said Quinn, automatically offering Lawson his paper receptacle of chewing tobacco.

"The operator said you were on the way. They had a big start. They sure was in a hurry, but we headed 'em off and they give up without a battle. On the way back, we kept a lookout for you and wondered why you didn't show—we did till we found you hung up on them spiles."

"The square emerald?" asked Lawson, so tired that he wanted the climax at once.

"No square emerald—just boat thieves. Now, Bill, take it easy."

"Did you fan them?"

"Sure. Didn't have nothin' on 'em—not even guns. We know 'em anyhow. They're Johnny Brill and Willie Deal. Been running booze across the river ever since prohibition."

"What?" demanded Lawson, endeavoring to raise himself.

"Take it easy, Bill. They're the birds we went after—they admitted it. Couldn't help it because they were in Thompson's boat. Wouldn't admit bringing anything over, but said hi-jackers had knocked off their boat.

"Wanted to get back and thought Thompson's boat wouldn't be missed. Meant only to use it to take them over, then turn it loose. But just as they were getting ready to cast off, they heard some kind of a ruckus on shore and a woman hollered for help.

"Naturally they thought they had been caught, so they cut the lines and hauled out fast. Thought they'd elude pursuit by going down instead of landing at their own dock. Then we loomed up. They're sore'n hell at the break they got."

"Bring 'em in and let me see them," ordered Lawson.

"Bill, you're in no shape—there's plenty of time in the mornin'. I'll guarantee that they'll keep. Get back in them blankets, Bill! I'll fetch 'em out."

He kept his word. The two roughly dressed young men were short and stocky and with barrel-like torsos. In no way did they resemble the youths who had attended the Cleves party.

"Take 'em back and hold—"

Lawson was too weary to complete the sentence. He was still asleep when General Hospital was reached, so made no protest when Dr. Dresser, the superintendent, ordered him entered as a patient.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE HOSPITAL

AS soon as Helena Cleves learned that Robert Trent was in General, she set out for the hospital, driving her own motor car and taking many chances with traffic regulations.

Only once was she stopped, however. Barbour, who had the reputation of being the most hard-boiled member of the traffic squad, motioning her to the curb.

Advancing upon her angrily, he demanded to know why she had attempted to disobey his signal.

"I'm in a hurry," she answered evenly, though about her lower lip was a suspicion of a tremor.

"A hurry," repeated Barbour with heavy sarcasm. "You're in a hurry for a ticket, I suppose."

"Give it to me quick," she blazed, the delay rasping her. "I don't care how many tickets you give me so long as you let me get to General Hospital."

"You're in an automobile and not a flying machine," returned Barbour, his tone strangely gentle after he had looked deeply into those blue eyes. "So be careful four blocks down. That Loucks is a bad guy and likes to hand out summons."

"Thank you," she replied, and smiled at him.

During the rest of the morning, Barbour seemed to be in a daze, bawling out no one no matter how much jawbone he was given!

Helena reached the hospital just after Dr. Dresser, who was not only superintendent, but chief surgeon as well, had concluded an operation on Robert Trent's skull. At the information desk, she was informed that she could not go to his room, but before she could be stopped, she had

ascended the stairs and was at his door. There she met the superintendent.

"How is he?" she asked.

"Resting as comfortably as could be expected," replied the surgeon endeavoring to hide the red that stained the sleeves of his gown.

"May I see him?"

"Not just at present."

"When may I see him?"

"You are related to him?"

"No, I'm—I'm—I'm Helena Cleves."

"It may be some time before he can receive visitors, Miss Cleves. He's—"

Her lip did tremble then and on the instant, Dresser became coldly professional.

"He hasn't come out from the ether yet," he stated. "I would suggest that you return later."

"But may I not wait here?"

Her eyes were directly on him and the man of medicine looked away suddenly.

"Certainly," he replied, all trace of professionalism gone, "my study is unoccupied."

He led her there and left her hurriedly. As he told Lawson later, he felt as if her eyes were searching his soul and his fear was that she would learn the true condition of Robert Trent.

"He's pretty bad then?" asked the detective.

"He has about one chance in ten. But I couldn't tell her that."

"No, you couldn't tell her that," answered Lawson, his tone dull. "Has she left yet?"

"No—she intends to remain until Trent recovers consciousness—if he does. I suppose they are engaged."

"She's a fine girl—a fine girl. I wonder—"

"You re a bachelor."

Lawson's bald spot turned a dull red.

"And old enough to be her father," he snapped. "Let Parmer know the minute that fellow gets his senses back."

"Wouldn't it be easier to step in here and inform you?"

"I won't be here. I've got work to do. I don't care whether you like it or not, but I'm leaving your hospital right now."

"I'm in favor of that, Bill, if you feel well enough. Not that you aren't always welcome up here whether it's bullets or a bath.

"By the way, Bill, this is the first time you've been with us for submersion—all the others have been because some one used you for a target or else your record is wrong."

"My record's all right." A groan broke the sentence as Lawson tried to rise and found all the stiffness in the world in his joints. "And you run a first-class hospital, doc, but lying up here isn't getting me anywhere."

"Where are you going?"

"After a square emerald."

"In a night gown split all the way up the back?"

"No. And I won't need any damned orderly to help me dress or you either."

"I take that as a dismissal. Just for that I'll discharge you."

"That's kind. Where's Miss Cleves?"

"In my study."

"Is she crying?"

"She is not."

Dresser's tone was so positive that Lawson donned his clothes as hurriedly as his aches would permit, the pains being so numerous and his haste so great that he was unconscious that his usually immaculate shoes were far from presentable.

When he did reach the study he found that Dr. Dresser had spoken the truth. Helena Cleves was not weeping, and as she greeted Lawson the detective thought that beautiful was indeed an inadequate adjective.

In her eyes a light was burning, and her slight pallor made her resemble a flower—a flower with a soul. But, despite her paleness, the little hand that rested for an instant in the palm of the detective was cool.

She wanted to know all about the accident, the complete details, since she had learned little save that both Trent and Lawson were in the hospital.

"How did you find that out?" asked Lawson, his eyes dropping to his shoes and his heart sinking as he sensed what the river had done to them.

"When you didn't come back, I called

up headquarters—the number you gave me. I talked with Mr. Parmer and he said he would have me notified if any news came. He kept his word."

"Chief Parmer always keeps his word," asserted Lawson.

Then he told her of the collision and the wreck—omitting, however, certain salient facts.

Impatient to resume his work, he didn't talk with her long. Precious hours had flown.

From the hospital he went directly to headquarters, where he conferred with Parmer, the chief.

At the end of the recital his hand rested for a moment on the arm of his subordinate, and thus Lawson knew that had the water claimed him he would not have had a more sincere mourner in all the world than the silent man at his side.

The chief then related tersely what had been accomplished. Halligan and Harper, at the moment relieved by Laub and Stark, would be back at their old posts in the early morning. Every precaution had been taken to keep the square emerald in the city. If it got out officers all over the country would be watching for it.

"And I've ordered Quinn to keep an eye on that swamp?" concluded Parmer.

As Lawson picked up his hat, Dr. English, the county medical examiner, came in to make his report on the findings of the autopsy on Greening's body.

The butler had not been slain. His death had been due to a heart lesion, the result of disease of long standing.

Lawson's stiff hat dropped from his fingers. But the chief, though equally surprised, merely took his stogy from his mouth and laid it on the desk.

CHAPTER XII

THE FRENCH MAID

LAWSON first attended to his shoes. When assigned to the case he had been wearing a pair of light tans, and the long immersion had caused the leather to assume a mangy appearance.

His suit, which had been dried in the hospital, hung on him in wrinkled bags, but to him the shoes were of chief concern. He changed his wearing apparel, but instead of taking another pair of shoes from the collection in the closet, he prepared to restore those tans.

Not at once did he start the brush to swinging. His shoes removed, he found that, despite the length of time he had been in the water and the efforts of a hospital orderly, a crust of mud still clung to the space between the welt and the soles so firmly that he had to use a knife to remove it—a dull knife since he would not risk injury to the leather by employing a sharp edge.

After more than five minutes of intense application he daubed on the paste and set the brush in motion. Not until the leather was so glossy that he could almost see the reflection of his face did he end his labors.

At the Cleves residence he found that, outwardly at least, Mrs. Cleves had become, in a great measure, reconciled to her loss.

The marks of grief visible so plainly the night before had been replaced by a smile, a somewhat wan effort at cheerfulness, but evidently an honest one.

The detective was not kept long in ignorance of what had brought about the change. The theft of the square emerald had brought Helena and Robert together.

"She's going to watch by his side until the crisis is passed," continued the mother, her expression as of one already hearing wedding bells and her enthusiasm unlessened by the refusal of her husband to share it. "With Helena nursing him he surely will get well, and then—"

"In my opinion, which, of course, isn't worth a darn, the staff of General Hospital is entirely capable of handling Trent's case," interrupted Cleves.

"But she wants to be near him."

"Maybe, and maybe she knows that you want her to be there—she's a dutiful daughter."

"I didn't tell her to go. And I didn't tell her to stay—she called up and said she was going to. Anyway, in General Hospital that Bruce Thompson won't—"

"Where is Bruce? I haven't seen him since last night."

"I don't care if I never see him again. He's—"

"A clean, straight, young fellow with a lot of ambition."

"Nothing at present, Paula," said Mrs. Cleves to the maid who had entered unbeknown to her husband, but watched closely by Lawson.

"*Merci, madame,*" replied the maid, retiring noiselessly.

"Poor Paula!" exclaimed Mrs. Cleves. "She's so sympathetic! My loss has broken her all up—she cries all the time. She wanted to leave—had everything packed up. I pleaded with her; told her that all of us had confidence in her; that she couldn't have had any part in that dreadful theft.

"But she felt so badly that such a thing should happen while she was with me that she actually started! But she returned! She couldn't leave me, she said, I had been too kind. Indeed I was thankful.

"I have troubles enough without losing my maid. What with my bracelet gone, my butler dead, and my chauffeur—"

She stopped to touch her eyelids with her handkerchief.

"What about your chauffeur?" asked Lawson.

"As soon as he heard about that accident to Mr. Trent he disappeared. There's something queer about that. Why should he go away just at a time when he might be needed at any moment?"

"Can't I drive?" asked Cleves, somewhat truculently. "Guess I haven't forgot how to handle a steering wheel. When a flivver was good enough for—"

"Addison!"

"Why don't you and Mrs. Cleves drive over to General and see how Mr. Trent is getting along?" asked Lawson mildly.

"Helena will keep us posted," growled Cleves. "But that's a good idea, Lawson. Mrs. Cleves needs air, and we should show our sympathy," the change in tone being due to an extremely discreet signal from the detective.

"We can leave some flowers, and that will show the poor young man we are interested in him," said the unobservant Mrs. Cleves.

"He's all alone in this world, and sometimes even one's closest friends are thoughtless. And our asters are beautiful—there's none like them in town."

As she was speaking, she was arranging a bouquet of blooms gathered from various vases. So grateful to Lawson was she for his suggestion that she smiled at him as her husband brought up the car.

Lawson did not proceed directly to the business he had in mind—a bit of work which he did not desire to do while the family was in the house. Wandering about the long grounds in the rear, he found them deserted except for a solitary figure well down toward the river.

As he was working with the earth, Lawson knew that the uncouth man was the gardener. Squatted in a heap, with his legs curled up under him so that his feet were hidden, the man looked like a dwarf, his head entirely too large for his short torso.

"What are you doing, Sam?" the detective asked, approaching him.

The shaggy head was lifted, and Lawson looked into vacant blue eyes. The man apparently not comprehending, he repeated his question.

Instead of replying, the gardener pointed an extremely grimy forefinger at a rose bush. It had been broken off, but had been grafted together skillfully, and Sam, when interrupted, had been poulticing it with some kind of a sticky compound.

"How did that happen?" asked Lawson.

"Stepped on," replied the gardener, in a voice which was a childish treble.

"Who stepped on it?"

"It won't die. Sam 'll save it."

Turning his back on the officer, he caressed the injured plant.

"So long, Sam," said Lawson, but the gardener paid no attention.

Lawson looked over the clay on the river bank, where he had been attacked. But the record in the soft ground told him little, the footprints were so blurred and indistinct that he could not distinguish his own.

After some study, however, he went to Cleves's den, where he called the identification bureau, asking that a photographer be sent out.

When he had hung up the receiver so softly that the click was inaudible he tiptoed to the door and flung it open suddenly.

The hall was deserted, and, treading lightly on the deep runner, he crept up the stairway. The open door of Mrs. Cleves's room showed it was empty.

Proceeding until he reached a room at the extreme end of the hall, he listened intently. No sound coming from within, he rapped smartly.

"*Voulez vous, madame?*" was the inquiry that followed.

"Open the door," he ordered curtly.

"One minute, *monsieur. Je suis deshabille.*"

Lawson waited patiently until the door was opened. Thrusting his foot into the aperture, he faced a young woman in a dressing gown.

Looking on past her, he saw a room trimly neat, the only evidence of disorder, a bureau drawer not quite closed.

"*Le deetecteef!*" exclaimed the maid, though to Lawson's trained eye her face registered no surprise.

Lawson nodded.

"*Que voulez vous?*"

"I want you to tell me exactly what happened when you and Mrs. Cleves were up here alone last night," replied Lawson, who understood French not at all, but who at times believed in direct methods.

"*La emeraude carre!*"

"Yes—about the emerald."

For ten or fifteen seconds she hesitated as if she did not quite understand.

"Mrs. Cleves's bracelet," insisted Lawson, giving her her cue.

The girl's face brightened, and she replied at once. But her answer did Lawson no good. It was a torrent of French, her hands moving with her lips and the recital accompanied by many shrugs of her well formed shoulders.

"Give it to me in English," Lawson ordered when he could break her flow of words. "I'm not getting any of that."

"*Je ne—*"

Lawson made a gesture of despair.

"I'll have to get an interpreter!" he exclaimed in exasperation. "I'm in away over my head."

"Will I do?"

Whirling, Lawson faced Bruce Thompson.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I'll explain that later. Just now the years and years I've had of French seem to be more important. I speak both French and A. E. F."

"Try your hand with her then," answered Lawson, dryly.

Before Thompson could frame a preliminary question the girl started again, going faster and faster, though he attempted to cause her to speak more slowly.

"That high speed and her accent make it hard for me, but I guess I'm getting most of it," the young man said to the detective as the girl paused for a breath. "She—"

Paula had started again, and Thompson did not interrupt. When she had concluded, his translation, though as he explained, was necessarily more than a little free, agreed in all essential details with the statement made by Mrs. Cleves.

Paula, according to her story, had stood with her back to the door; she had seen nothing and heard nothing. Her mistress was still in the room when she left.

"How does it sound to you?" asked Lawson.

"Straight enough as near as I can tell."

"She talks English; why did she break out in French?"

"Whenever a Frenchman gets into a jam, his English, no matter how good, leaves him *tout suite.* I found that out over there. The same thing often happens when he gets really interested in what he's talking about."

"What part of France did she come from?"

"Paris she says, but her accent—"

Paula interrupted, again speaking in French.

"She says that while she came to America from Paris, she was born and brought up in Cote d'Or. Sounds reasonable. During the war I spent some time at G. H. Q. in Chaumont and I could hardly understand the natives."

Lawson made no reply. He was busily

stowing away a card which, without being observed, he had removed from the open dresser drawer.

CHAPTER XIII

SHADOWED

THOMPSON'S explanation of his presence in the Cleves home, which he gave to Lawson as they descended the stairway, sounded plausible. Having noticed Mr. and Mrs. Cleves drive away from the house, he had dropped in to see Breen and not finding him in the garage, had gone upstairs to the chauffeur's room.

"Mrs. Cleves looks down on Breen because he drives her car," he continued, "but Ben and I've shared blankets and three or four times we squatted in the same shell hole while Fritz sent over his souvenirs. The war's done, but Ben and I still like to fight it. You know how it is with old soldiers."

Lawson nodded.

"But you and Breen didn't do much gassing this afternoon," he observed.

"No. He wasn't up there—he's run out on me."

"What makes you think that?" asked Lawson, his gaze apparently elsewhere but with the face of the youth under keen observation.

"Because—well, after all, I guess I don't know."

"You do know!"

Thompson's eyes flashed, but almost instantly he had himself under control.

"I get your viewpoint," he said, "but just the same, I don't choose to tell you."

"Don't be so positive, young man. You haven't any choice."

"How do you get that way, Lawson?"

"It's my business to get that way. I'm not here to pass away my time. I'm here to investigate a crime. You were on the second floor when Mrs. Cleves's bracelet disappeared from her room. When I asked you why you were there you pulled the same like as you did a minute ago."

"More suspicion?"

"I haven't said that you are under suspicion. I'm going to give you a third chance to refuse to answer a question."

"Fire away," returned Thompson nonchalantly.

"When Miss Cleves called for help last night, how did you happen to be so fast in getting there?"

"I'll answer that one right off," replied Thompson. "I was looking for Helena. Is she home now?"

"No. She hasn't been since morning."

"Where is she?"

Lawson purposely delayed his reply.

"She's at General Hospital with Robert Trent."

"Say, Lawson, I'm in a heluva hurry. If you have any more questions, fire fast."

"What's your rush?"

"I want to see how bad Trent is hurt."

"There's a phone right here in the hall."

"A telephone's—aw, the devil, Lawson, be human, can't you?"

"Sure. I'll relieve your worry. Trent's seriously injured—very seriously injured. But Miss Cleves is all right."

"I'd better get to the hospital right away. Trent and I aren't exactly buddies, but he might think it was funny if I didn't call—that is unless you intend to take me to the hoosegow."

"I think headquarters can get along without you for awhile at least," replied Lawson.

Not until Thompson was well down the street in his roadster did Lawson reënter the house. Going in through a rear door, he found the kitchen deserted and he met no one as he ascended the back stairway.

He passed Paula's door noiselessly, but a sound from within caused him to halt and to retrace his steps.

The girl was weeping, her sobs so violent that though she was apparently making an effort to stifle them, they were plainly audible. At that moment, Bill Lawson, his tenderness toward women and children in distress aroused, hated the business in which he was engaged.

His eyes dropped to his shoes and treading even more lightly than when he had first passed, he ascended the stairway that led to the third floor.

The rooms of the cook and the two maids

were empty, their doors ajar. That puzzled Lawson for a moment and then he remembered. It was Thursday afternoon. He was a bachelor, but his professional contact with domestic affairs had impressed on him the fact that Thursday was the "day out," the time of freedom for paid household toilers. He did not enter the maids' rooms, but he did go to Breen's.

The chauffeur's belongings were scattered about with the carelessness of a young man. But his uniform had been hung up neatly in his closet and below it were a pair of shoes—the ones he had worn the night before.

Bill Lawson was never mistaken about shoes. Picking them up, he looked them over and then as if a victim of habit, started to clean them. Recalling himself, he replaced the footwear in exactly the same position as found. Nor did he look at anything else in the place.

In the room of the dead butler, he spent much more time, no part of the place escaping his keen eye, a crack in the floor engaging his attention for several minutes. It was wasted effort, however, his prying bringing him no reward.

Rising stiffly, he consulted his watch and hastily brushed off his shoes. Mr. and Mrs. Cleves were liable to return at any minute.

Leaving the house, he went to the river bank, pausing at the hedge in the shadow of which he had been attacked. All traces of the struggle had vanished, the clay having been raked smooth. As he had observed Connolly, of the indentification bureau, enter the grounds with a camera, that clay bank was of no more importance.

At the spot where the body of Greening had lain, though he knew Halligan and Harper had combed it thoroughly, he poked about the grass for a few moments. From that point, he followed the same trail over which Helena, Thompson and Trent had run the night before, his movements brisk.

From the window of the butler's room, he had seen Trent's housekeeper depart from the house with a market basket, her age making her footsteps slow, and he had waited to be sure that she was out of sight.

The large and somewhat old-fashioned house stood in the midst of a two-acre plot which, because of land values in that vicinity meant that Robert Trent's taxes were extremely high. Looking into the garage, he saw that Trent kept two cars, both of expensive make. The wrecked speed boat had been equally expensive and the detective knew that Trent belonged to several costly clubs.

Evidently his inheritance had been sufficient to allow Robert Trent to live according to the Trent traditions.

Lawson did not go to the front of the house; his sole interest seemingly in the rear, especially in the driveway and in the pier which extended a considerable distance out into the river, much farther than other docks in that district.

Sylvester Trent, father of Robert, as Lawson knew, had been interested in boating and had been the owner of a steam yacht which he had sold a short time before his death.

When Lawson left the Trent grounds, his eyes were straight ahead of him and in no way did he reveal his knowledge of the fact that while he had been making his inspection, Ben Breen had been spying on him.

CHAPTER XIV

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

FOR forty-eight hours, Robert Trent hovered between life and death in General Hospital. In all that time, Helena Cleves did not leave the building. While Bill Lawson was combing the underworld, with Halligan, Harper, Laub and Weeks, keeping the Cleves home under constant surveillance, and other members of the detective bureau busy in various ways, Miss Cleves remained in General, hardly tasting the food that was brought to her and sleeping not at all, her pallor so increasing that her face seemed transparent.

Dresser, when next he saw Lawson, told the detective that it had seemed to him as if the girl were sacrificing herself as some sort of atonement; that by keeping a vigil at the bedside of Robert Trent, who could not possibly know of her presence, she was easing her conscience.

That statement was proof of Dresser's powers of observation and deduction. Helena Cleves was endeavoring to atone. In her mind was a belief that could not be banished, a belief that instead of dimming as the hours passed and Trent failed to rally from his coma, grew stronger and stronger until it became torture, especially in the midwatches of the night when all was silence save hushed footsteps of nurses and now and then moans and groans—evidence that the place was a hall of suffering.

And that belief was that should Robert Trent die, Helena Cleves would be his slayer!

Not for a moment could she free herself from that accusation. She had suggested the use of his boat; when he had hung back she had led him to the pier; she had forced him to go and on her was the responsibility, the full responsibility.

Spreading her little white hands out before her, she imagined their purity was stained with red—the red of human blood!

Then there was another thought with the power to torture, the full import coming to her at the beginning of the third day.

Robert Trent's reasons for showing reluctance to participate in the pursuit of those supposed to have taken her mother's jewel were a mystery to her, but why he had overcome that very apparent aversion sufficiently to make the start, was not veiled. The impelling motive had been more than the touch of her hand on his arm or her order.

On the afternoon of that disastrous day, he had invited her to accompany him on the river—a place where Bruce Thompson would not bob up unexpectedly.

But even as Trent had been about to cast off the lines, she had changed her mind about going, the conviction coming to her that should she accompany him, she would give him an opportunity he had been seeking—the opportunity to ask her a question which she did not want him to ask.

The clock on the mantelpiece showed two fifteen. Over her came an overpowering sensation of helplessness, of utter futility.

It was the hour of the morning when, as she had read often, vitality ebbs and harried souls flit. And there was nothing she could do to hold Robert Trent back from the brink. Slipping to her knees, she buried her face in her hands and prayed.

The night nurse passing Trent's bed stopped, gave him one look and summoned an interne. The young doctor did not delay but roused Dresser at once. The expert eyes of the superintendent told him that what he had feared was at hand. There was but one chance. If he could be saved, it would only be through an immediate operation.

Dresser gave the order and Trent was wheeled into the operating room. The superintendent had been aroused from the slumber of utter weariness, but always he was prepared and as soon as the anæsthesia was complete, he was delving into that most delicate and intricate of all machines—the human brain.

Helena Cleves, who had not been informed of the crisis, again had herself in hand. She had reached a decision. Should Robert Trent recover and ask her the question she had evaded by refusing to enter his boat and by giving him no opportunity to be alone with her at the party that evening, her answer would be in the affirmative.

Nevertheless, though making up her mind brought to her a certain peace, the relief was not as great as she had anticipated. Try as she would—and she endeavored to do so faithfully—she could not banish another face that kept coming into her mental vision nor still a voice that sounded in her ears.

Again she looked at the clock. Forty minutes had dragged by since she had glanced at the dial previously and three hours had elapsed since she had visited Trent's room. That knowledge made her feel guilty and she tiptoed along the corridor hastily.

The room was empty and her breath caught and the palms of her hands became moist—the taker of a life!

But she gripped herself and in a measure, regained her poise. Without a doubt, if he had died, she would have been notified. For some reason, he had merely been moved.

At the end of the corridor, under the green-shaded light, was the desk of the supervisor. She had but to wait her return to be informed. The sound of rubber-shod wheels caused her to turn. They were bringing Robert Trent back.

"Barring complications, he'll live," said Dr. Dresser. "And now, Miss Cleves, into bed with you instantly, or I'll have another patient."

She did not resist when a nurse, taking her by the hand, led her to an empty room, and she even obeyed the order to lie down. But she could not relax and her eyes would not close.

By force of will, she remained reclining and possibly did sleep in brief intervals, as at times there floated before her eyes a great, green jewel which flashed the color of the sea depths. But with it was a face with eyeless sockets.

With a shudder, she arose and went to Trent's room. And Dresser, pitying her, though the patient was not entirely recovered from the ether, allowed her to enter.

"Bob," she called softly, bending over the bed, her vision dim because of a tear mist, "Bob, oh, Bob, I'm here, right beside you."

The man muttered, and she bent still closer, so close that her shimmering gold hair touched the pillow, her cheek close to the bloodless lips that were forming words at first unintelligible, but at last so clear that they burned her very soul.

That understanding complete, she recoiled as if struck and a tremor shook her body—

Lawson, his shoes immaculate—he had spent three-quarters of an hour polishing them and mulling over certain facts he had uncovered—held a short conference with Parmer, then wandered down into the cell block and stopped before the steel crate that held Willie Deal and Johnny Brill.

The captured rum runners did not seem at all pleased with the visit. They were sour and defiant and when he would have conversed with them, they turned broad backs.

They had acknowledged the theft of the boat, but beyond that they would not go, their rancor increased because they had not been taken into court and admitted to bail.

"We're not talking," asserted Brill. "You can't hold us more'n a day longer and we're heeled; the judge can name any bail he wants and we'll put it up—in cash or Liberty Bonds."

"You're wastin' your time and our'n if you think you can get a squawk outta us," added Deal. "Whadda think we are, a coupla damned snitches?"

"I kinda thought you boys would help me out a little," answered Lawson gently and in low voice.

"How much?" whispered Brill eagerly. "You can have two grand inside of ten minutes if you'll listen to reason."

"Two thousand isn't quite enough," answered Lawson.

"Five," remarked Deal, holding up that number of fingers.

Lawson shook his head.

"Talk's a lot cheaper," he observed, "and maybe if you don't want to talk with me, you'll talk with the government."

"The government's got nothing on us," snapped Brill, "and we're not handin' anything out there. So there's nothin' to talk to the government about."

"No?" asked Lawson. "Seems like dope would interest the government a whole lot. The government seems to take the Harrison law a little more seriously than the Volstead act."

Brill and Deal exchanged looks full of significance.

"It's a trade," announced Brill, and with the announcement the pair become loquacious.

But in their revelations was no mention of the square emerald, and Lawson, unsatisfied with what he had learned, devoted the rest of the day to an investigation of the affairs of Robert Trent.

His findings, though again the square emerald had no visible part in them, were surprising. Trent's patrimony had vanished; he was heavily in debt; the homestead was mortgaged and there was even a chattel mortgage on the wrecked boat.

When Lawson renewed contact with headquarters, Parmer called him in and gave him some information he had received from

New York—information of such importance that Lawson's shoes went unbrushed that night.

CHAPTER XV

THOMPSON TALKS

HOUGH he had definite evidence in his possession, Lawson evinced no haste in bringing the affair to a culmination. His quarry could not escape and first he desired to clean up several minor angles of the case.

In so doing, he found Bruce Thompson of assistance, though Thompson had lost much of his former spirit and vivacity. He seemed to have aged, his usual directness having given place to apathy.

Helena Cleves was again in her home, but her proximity did not restore his cheerfulness.

Helena, in whose eyes was vastly more trouble than ever appeared in the eyes of her mother, immediately on her return, had shut herself in her room and refused to see any one. Possibly her action might have caused the change in Thompson. Lawson made no effort to ascertain the truth.

From the mind of the detective, romance was eliminated. His every thought was fixed on one thing—the square emerald. He believed he had found a principal in the robbery, but belief and evidence that would convince twelve men in a jury box were two different things.

It was Lawson's conviction that Bruce Thompson could impart information that might be illuminating and it was his purpose to obtain whatever facts Thompson might possess before making an arrest.

Thompson placed no difficulties in his way, the reticence he had shown in the past having evaporated completely. Right readily he gave his real reason for obtaining a place for Breen as the Cleves's chauffeur, but not until he had made a gesture with his hands as if he were surrendering.

"That damned emerald!" he exploded. "She would keep it in the house in a flimsy wall safe And every crook in the country knew who owned it! Breen and I, as you know, had been buddies over there. He's as game as they come, a dead shot and his eyes are wide open."

"So you got him the chauffeur's job so he could guard the emerald?"

"Not exactly."

"What then?"

"Helena!"

Lawson nodded.

"If there was a jam, I knew Ben could be depended on to look after her. I couldn't hang around all the time."

"But why did Breen try to beat it after the emerald was stolen?"

Thompson's woebegone expression lightened a trifle.

"That's a comedy angle," he replied. "Breen never had a love affair in his life till he met Barbara. Then he fell like a busted plane. He believed I'd think that because of Barbara, he'd neglected his job so he tried to sneak out quietly, but I caught him."

Lawson surveyed the young man keenly.

"Now, if that's all true—and I'm not saying it isn't—there's one thing I'd like to know."

"What's that?" asked Thompson, his eyes meeting those of the detective.

"Why he tried to break my back when those fellows were stealing your boat."

"That's news to me," averred Thompson, surprise in his voice. "And I don't think—no, it couldn't be possible."

"Anything is possible."

"But Breen was in the kitchen at that time."

"I saw him go in, but he had time to come out."

"He didn't leave the kitchen till after Helena called for help. I can swear to that, and so can Barbara. I was just leaving the kitchen when I heard Helena."

"I know you have the freedom of this house, but isn't it a bit odd you should be in the kitchen while the chauffeur is courting a maid?"

"It might seem so. But I deliberately hunted up Breen, and I thought the kitchen was the most likely place to find him."

"What did you want with him?"

"He was supposed to be keeping an eye on Bob Trent."

"Then that's why Breen was hiding in the shrubbery?"

"Exactly. Barbara was helping him, and when she gave him the signal Trent was in the house, he came in also."

"Why were you so interested in Trent?"

Again Thompson made that gesture of surrender.

"You're a detective," he began, with a weary note in his voice, "but I'm going to throw myself on your mercy. Trent wants to marry Helena. So do I—worse than anything else in the world.

"I made it my business to keep him from being alone with her. He made it his business to keep her from being alone with me. I had Breen to help me, but he had her mother, so it was about fifty-fifty.

"I wouldn't tell you why I was upstairs the night Mrs. Cleves lost her bracelet. I'll tell you now, because it doesn't make any difference. Helena had promised to meet me on the balcony as soon as she could get away. But instead of Helena, Trent came—he knows about that balcony.

"When I missed her after the party, I supposed she'd gone outside with Trent. That's why I was so damned anxious to locate him. But she thought I'd seen her leave and would—"

"Sure," said Lawson.

"But I didn't and she ran into the body of Greening."

Thompson stopped.

"Why did you stick a gun in my stomach?" asked Lawson, quickly.

"Because I was damn fool enough to think you were the thief. When I heard you coming, I saw myself as a hero. Hero! I fumbled! Now Trent's beat me to it.

"I've been shooping around here looking for the thief and keeping Breen on the watch; Trent gets himself smashed up on the river and he's the star and I'm out.

"Lawson, I'm not in the habit of telling my troubles, but I want you to know this much. You may think I'm whining, but I'm not. I want Helena Cleves, but I want her to be happy.

"If she wants Bob Trent more than she does me, I'll go to the wedding if I'm invited, wish her happiness, and congratulate him.

"I'm going to one wedding anyway, just as soon as this thing is cleared up. The Government has settled Breen's claim for partial disability, and he's got money enough to start housekeeping. After he and Barbara are married, I'm going to be a silent partner in a garage.

"Now I've come clean. I don't need to ask you to keep this confidential—I know you will. But there's just one thing I'd like to do though."

"What's that?" asked Lawson, without betraying that he knew the answer to the question in advance.

"Help get that emerald back to Mrs. Cleves."

Lawson, when they parted, shook hands with the young man. He couldn't help it, for not only did he like him, but there was also the appeal of romance. And when their hands met, though he spoke not a word, the detective gave the youth an assurance that he would have his full coöperation.

CHAPTER XVI

KEEPING A SECRET

HALLIGAN was in front of the Cleves house and Harper behind. Roaming about the grounds were Bruce Thompson and Ben Breen. A short distance down the street was a detail of plainclothes men.

Three fast launches, one of which carried a machine gun, under command of Sergeant Quinn were patrolling the river. Lawson was taking no chances—in bringing down one bird, he might possibly flush a covey.

He pressed the button at the front door, and Barbara admitted him. Mr. Cleves had gone out, she said, but she expected him back at any moment. Mrs. Cleves was upstairs with Paula.

Her neuritis had returned, and she had requested that she not be disturbed. Lawson said he would wait in the living room until Mr. Cleves returned.

Through the window he could glimpse the street, and in the shadow of one of the large trees he saw Halligan. That meant that everything was in readiness.

Light footsteps came down the hall, and he tensed himself.

It was Helena Cleves who entered—Helena Cleves, so white of face that she looked frail; Helena Cleves, so agitated that though her lips moved no words came from them.

"What is it?" he asked gently, though he regretted that she had come to him at the moment.

Her hand went to her throat and she swayed. Placing his arm about her slim waist, he led her to a davenport.

As he seated her, her body shook with sobs, silent sobs which fairly tore the tender soul of hard shelled old Bill Lawson.

"Don't, Miss Cleves," he begged. "Don't. Everything is all right; we'll get the square—"

"I don't care if I ever see it again," she whispered. "It's—"

She could not finish.

Perspiration stood on Lawson's bald head. It was the one situation which he dreaded, a situation almost certain to arise when women were involved, directly or indirectly, in a case. But his experience never did him any good.

Always he was clumsy, inefficient. Such scenes hurt him, but he could not end them. And Helena Cleves was the most beautiful girl with whom he had ever met professionally.

He tried to stroke the back of her hand as if by contact he would impart some of his own calm to her. Her fingers closed about his, and she clung to him. Then the tears came and with them a cessation of the storm, not of a sudden but with the passing of minutes.

He did not attempt to assist her in any way—he knew better. He had to wait for nature, and nature bided her time. Finally she began to talk so brokenly at first he could scarcely understand, and then, still holding his hand, she became her own sane self again.

She had heard him speak to Barbara in the hall. She was glad he had come, since she had been endeavoring to nerve herself to seek him.

"There's something—something I must tell you," she panted, and then stopped.

He didn't question her, but waited, her hand still in his.

Then, in a sentence, she disclosed the burden of her heart:

"Bob Trent killed Greening!"

Over Bill Lawson surged a mighty feeling of relief.

"No, Helena, he didn't," he asserted, almost gladly.

"He told me he did. When I leaned over him he whispered, 'I killed him.'"

"When was that?"

"Just after Dr. Dresser operated."

"Was it right after the operation?"

"They had just brought him back to his room."

"Helena, ether sometimes makes people say strange things. Bob Trent didn't kill your butler. Nobody did."

Then he told her the result of the autopsy, stopping abruptly, for the recollection had come to him that twice within the space of less than a minute he had called her by her first name!

Whether or not she took note of his blunder he did not know. Nor did he know whether or not Helena Cleves, once more her radiant self, kissed his cheek.

But the thought was a bright spot in the midst of a gloom he felt because he could not tell her all he knew of Robert Trent.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INSIDE STORY

CLEVES, who returned soon after the happy Helena had gone to her room, called Paula downstairs when Lawson explained the object of his visit to the house this time.

"You're under arrest," the detective remarked quietly to the girl who stood before him.

"Surely there is some mistake," she asserted, equally cool, though Lawson noted a twitching of her hands.

"No mistake at all," returned Lawson. "I have something here that may interest you."

Without relaxing his vigilance in the slightest, he took from his pocket the papers that had been received from the East,

Included were cards, each bearing two photographs, one profile and one front view, with blanks which had been filled in neatly, while on the reverse sides were black smudges.

Despite the rouge she was wearing, the paling of the girl was apparent. She did not shrink, however, but cast an appealing look to Cleves.

"*Monsieur*," she said, "it is unjust, a tragedy—"

"No, just justice," interrupted Lawson. "Here's a card I took from your dresser. Your finger-prints agree: the photographs are the same, though you've bobbed your hair and plucked your eyebrows. You're not Paula Renaud, but Ethel Goodall, born in London and not in France.

"When you were fifteen you ran away with Pierre Baptiste, a French thief. You served two terms—five years in all—in French prisons for stealing jewelry. No wonder you can handle the French language!

"You ought to have gone on the stage, Ethel, you're a good actress. But you overlook little things. When your accent bothered Thompson, I felt sure I was getting nearer.

"And then when you explained about your accent before Thompson translated—well, I don't know French, but that was out of character. You didn't come to this country from Paris—you don't dare go into Paris. You came here from London."

"What has that to do with *madame's* square emerald?" she demanded, almost insolently.

"Enough for me to send you to prison" —Lawson was clipping his words, a certain sign that he had no doubt as to her guilt. "You followed that emerald over from London. All the papers told of the sale to Mr. Cleves. You had no trouble in keeping track of it.

"Your game is to work as lady's maid. You were in luck because Mrs. Cleves's Huldah had given notice. Guynon's didn't send you here. You came of your own accord after learning of the opening. That meant they had no record of you—I've checked up on that."

"*Madame* was with me when her emerald disappeared. How about that, M. Lawson?"

"So was Madame Sabarly when her diamonds disappeared. A French copper with a warrant for you is on his way—"

"You bloody bars—"

"Cut that out. Miss Cleves might hear you. You were Madame Sabarly's maid. You massaged her. One night while you were rubbing her head her diamonds disappeared. And so did you.

"That French officer is bringing a picture of you—several of them, some in prison uniform.

"Mrs. Cleves thought she was upstairs with you only a few minutes. My check up shows she was there more than half an hour. She napped, just as Mrs. Sabarly napped.

"While Mrs. Cleves's eyes were closed, you took her bracelet from the chifferobe."

"If I did, what did I do with it? You have searched my belongings."

"No. That would have been a waste of time. You dropped that emerald out of the open window. Greening was waiting below and—"

"Mr. Greening! What about him?"

"I'll supply that information for Mr. Cleves's benefit. His real name was Harry Jennings. He was a butler all right, but his references, like yours, were forgeries. He couldn't get any references because he'd served time."

"But I only knew Mr. Greening as a butler."

"In this house—yes. Another piece of acting. But he was your husband—the only one you've ever had. Do you want to see a copy of the record of your marriage?"

Her gray eyes stood wide open, her stare as fixed as if she were gazing on some apparition. Lawson reached for his cuffs.

He could handle her easily without them, but he intended to shackle her for the same reason that the various details were on duty about the house—he did not know how many might be in the gang, and he wanted to be sure of a principal at least.

"It's true—all true," she choked, drawing back from the shiny chain. "I've never confessed before. But he was struck

down. He was my husband. We'd never worked together before, though we knew all about one another. This was our last job. He had heart disease—and no recommendations.

"The doctors said he was liable to die at any time. With that bracelet we would have been rich. There was a place in Australia—and now he's dead."

"Where's the emerald?" demanded Lawson.

"If I knew I'd be glad to tell you, because nothing makes any difference now. Take me away before Mrs. Cleves sees me with darbies on."

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE SWAMP

AT headquarters Paula, completely broken, added to her confession. When she had learned of her husband's death she had endeavored to flee, but Breen had turned her back.

Mrs. Cleves told her the emerald had not been found on the body, which, despite her grief, was a relief, as it encouraged the hope that she would not be connected with the robbery.

"Why did Greening hang around the house after he got the bracelet?" asked Lawson.

"Bobbies in front of the mansion," choked the girl, "and Chauffeur Breen in the back—he seemed to be always watching. Harry hid the jewel, came back inside, served the refreshments and waited."

"How did he intend to make his getaway?"

"Mr. Thompson's boat was always at the quay. The family would think nothing of the noise because of the whisky runners. He planned to cross over to the Dominion, go up a few miles, and there take a train for New York, where I would meet him.

"Then you came. I heard Mr. Thompson say you were an officer. With a bobbie so near I became nervous. It was our biggest job. So I gave Harry the signal that—"

"You might as well keep your nerve."

The suggestion had the effect Lawson, a keen judge of human nature, intended. She shrugged her shoulders and raised her head.

"Proceed," she said.

"Who was in on this with you?"

"'In on this?' Oh, you mean our accomplices! We had none. We knew no one on this side of the Atlantic—we were quite strange in the States."

"How'd you get those credentials then?"

"Oh, they are quite easy to obtain in London if one knows one's way about."

"Take her downstairs," said the detective to the patrolman at the door.

Lawson was leaving headquarters when he encountered Bruce Thompson. The young man admitted that he had followed him and had been waiting for his reappearance.

"Where are you going now?" he asked.

The question irritated Lawson. It was an intrusion into police affairs. But his attitude changed quickly.

"Why do you ask me that?" demanded the detective.

"Because if you wouldn't think I was horning in, I'd like to go with you."

"You're liable to get into trouble. But if that's what you are looking for, I'm willing to use your car instead of one of the department's."

"Just tell me where to drive," replied Thompson, earnestly.

Lawson directed him to the great swamp just below the city. Convinced that Paula and Greening had had no accomplices—he believed her statement, in as much as the records of both showed that their activities had been confined entirely to Europe—the exhaust of the motor boat he had heard as he stood in Mrs. Cleve's room the night of the robbery took on a new importance. So did the presence of those two strange young men at the party.

It was entirely possible that after Greening had obtained possession of the jewel he had been hi-jacked.

Those two guests had not been traced, though Parmer had detailed several men to that duty, and photographs received by the Identification Bureau tallied very closely with their descriptions.

Nor had the Brill-Deal boat been found,

so that the premise that the missing ones were sheltered in the great swamp, with its maze of waterways and little islands, was not illogical.

Thompson handled his car as if he were a part of the machinery. Frequently he interrupted Lawson's reverie with quips about the condition of the road and the satisfaction it gave him to be free of the fear of being given a ticket by a motor cycle officer.

"Got a revolver?" asked Lawson when they reached the edge of the swamp.

"No—something better," replied Thompson, and in the hard starlight the detective saw a United States service pistol. "I'm more familiar with this."

"All right," said Lawson. "We park here."

Leaving the car, they walked several blocks, then left the highway.

"This is your station," announced the detective at length.

Thompson, obviously disappointed, expressed a desire to accompany the officer.

"This is your station," repeated Lawson, without, however, ordering him directly to remain there. He could not take the responsibility of allowing young Thompson to accompany him, but if he should follow—

Lawson knew that swamp as no one else in the department. As a man-hunter, he had covered it many times. The blind pathways were marked so well in his mind that he could travel them in semidarkness as well as daylight.

It had been that knowledge that had enabled him to break up the gang that used the place as headquarters for bringing in booze by airplane.

Confidently, he set out, every sense alert, since he did not know how soon he might encounter those he sought, though he judged that they would be deep within the morass since they had come there by boat.

Back and forth he worked, silently, with frequent pauses to listen. Sound travels far at night and as he listened within him was a sense of disappointment. Bruce Thompson was remaining where he had left him.

Of a sudden, he found that which he sought—a motor boat in a narrow water lane, the bushes a screen. Though the craft was apparently deserted, Lawson took no chances, drawing himself back into the shadows immediately on sighting it.

But experienced as he was, he did not see a dead limb directly in the way of his foot and it broke, snapping in the stillness like the report of a rifle.

Instantly, two figures detached themselves from the blackness near the boat and started to run in the direction of a shack which Lawson knew was in the vicinity.

"Halt or I'll shoot!" he called, taking aim.

The reply was bullets that slashed the bushes.

Shrinking back hastily, he made sure that his revolver was loaded and that extra ammunition was available. Then he waited, his nerves tense and his vision strained, but the hand that held the weapon was steady as a stone ledge.

CHAPTER XIX

WANTED FOR MURDER

IT was a short wait. He had hardly settled himself when his adversaries carried the attack to him. On they came, firing as they ran, the bullets spatting about him wickedly. And instead of two, they were four.

"Halt!" cried Lawson, raising his weapon.

The command was ignored and he fired—low, since his only desire was to stop them.

Then the mighty impact of a large caliber bullet against his right shoulder sent him to the earth, his revolver spinning out of his useless fingers. Even as he fell, he tried to pull himself back within a screen, but he failed and lay fully exposed in the starlight.

"We've got him," yelled one of the four. "Now we'll finish the dirty John Law."

Lawson saw the leader take aim. But he did not close his eyes, though the man was so near to him that he could not miss.

Then, out of the darkness behind him came the roar of an army forty-five!

For a second the gang, surprised, hesitated. Then with another yell, advanced again. Five times the army automatic spoke, and Lawson's heart gave a bound of gratitude. Bruce Thompson had not failed him. But after the fifth shot, silence reigned.

"We've got the other guy, too," cried some one. "Beat it for the boat."

But they did not reach that boat. On the left, another pistol began to speak and when it ceased, the quartet, disarmed and helpless, was on the ground. Ben Breen had lived up to the reputation given him by Bruce Thompson—had proved himself a pistol expert.

He, in turn, had disobeyed orders and had followed Thompson, using the Cleves car to tag him to the swamp and then trailing him by methods he had learned while crawling about No Man's Land in the darkness.

The prisoners secured, Lawson and Breen looked for Thompson. He lay unconscious a short distance from the spot where Lawson had taken to cover, blood flowing from a wound in his left temple. Lawson's heart was indeed heavy.

But Thompson was only stunned—"creased" as the old squirrel hunters used to say—and swamp water revived him promptly.

"Another fumble," he groaned, "and it was my big chance. No luck."

"No fumble, son," answered Lawson with a great tenderness in his voice. "If it hadn't been for you—"

At headquarters, Dr. Keeler, police surgeon, after sending Thompson home in care of Breen, ordered Lawson to General Hospital immediately.

Thompson's wound was only minor, but Lawson's was serious. The detective refused flatly—he had something more important to do. Nor could Keeler force him to obey.

The identification of the four captives, who had also received treatment for flesh wounds, was easy, since their pictures, finger-prints and records were on file in the identification bureau.

It was of that particular four—a jewelry mob—that Lawson had been thinking when he reached the conviction that the square emerald had not been taken to Canada.

Their records were a part of the department's files because of a crime in Toronto which had involved the taking of the life of a jeweler.

None of the four would make any admissions regarding Canada, as the Dominion has a habit of extracting payment at the end of a rope for the crime of murder.

But their confessions regarding their intent to steal the Cleves jewel were almost eager, which indicated a preference for prison in the States. The plot to steal the bracelet had been hatched as soon as they had read of the Cleves purchase.

They had surveyed the ground, picked out a boat to use in their flight and had decided to hide in the swamp until the chase died down into routine.

"Everything went along all right only we failed to obtain our prize," continued Dolly Moore, the thief who acted as spokesman.

"What's that?" demanded Lawson, a throb of pain making his question thick.

"We failed miserably," replied Moore, who prided himself on his use of English, a fact related in his record. "My friend and I"—he indicated the one with the sweep of a hand, well kept despite his swamp residence—"attended that party to make a further survey of the surroundings and to make absolutely certain that the lady was wearing that beautiful specimen of the art of the lapidary.

"Our plans were somewhat loosely connected, not in the sense of incompleteness, but rather in that they were flexible. It was our intent to obtain the jewel during the party if possible. If not, then Lefty and Joe were to come back after the hostess had retired and do a little second story work, but we failed to return."

"Why didn't you?" asked Lawson.

"Plans, no matter how well laid, as the eminent Scotch bard remarked, 'gang aft a-gley!' It was somewhat startling when engaged on an enterprise involving peculation to see a detective standing in the hallway—the reference is obviously to you.

"Lefty and Joe did not anticipate a

precipitous departure, but they, being resourceful young men, obtained a boat for us. Not the one, however, on which we had planned—Mr. Robert Trent's—but one considerably slower, which under the circumstances, was exasperating."

"Where did you get the dope on Trent's boat?"

"The information, if I may correct your diction, was obtained in a comparatively simple manner.

"Just as an excuse for hanging around, we engaged in the highly remunerative enterprise of bringing liquor from a foreign shore to the arid United States. The gentlemen who engaged us, Mr. Brill and Mr. Deal, landed at Mr. Trent's dock which has been their custom for some time.

"Whoever made the arrangement showed most excellent judgment, since none would respect the remaining scion of a first family of having any connection with the importation of whisky into a dry country.

"For him, it was a profitable business as he received a dollar a case for all of the goods that went over his dock, and he was safe as well as he was never present when it arrived."

"How much did Trent know of your game with the emerald?"

"Nothing whatsoever. We needed no additions to our little company. It was our intent to borrow his boat without his knowledge."

"But he saw you at Mrs. Cleves's?"

"Naturally. But how could he expose those who had been, in a way of speaking, his business associates? Referring to rum running, my hope is that we have not too seriously discommoded the owners of the craft which we so inadvertently removed from their possession."

"They are downstairs now," replied Lawson.

"The hell they are!" exclaimed Moore, the veneer of polish vanishing and the expression in his eyes that of a rat.

"And before you join them, you are going to tell me where that bracelet is."

"Though I regret it exceedingly," returned Moore, once more in his favorite character, "none of us is able to accede to that request. The last we saw of that wonderful bauble was when it was on the wrist of its rightful owner."

CHAPTER XX

WHERE WAS THE BRACELET?

HANDICAPPED by a useless right arm and a shoulder that pained whenever he moved too suddenly, Lawson picked up the shoe-brush and endeavored to brighten his footwear—an extremely awkward proceeding. Nevertheless, with rutlike corrugations in his usually smooth forehead, he persisted.

Neither the agony of his shoulder nor his clumsiness caused those furrows. At the moment, shining his shoes was a mere gesture, a mechanical operation that assisted his brain processes.

It was the square emerald that was wrinkling his brow. In a cell at headquarters was the confessed thief of the gem. In other well separated cells, were four men who had gone to the Cleves home with the intention of stealing it.

But where was that bracelet?

The lack of satisfactory answer to that question absorbed Lawson so completely that he disregarded the throbbing ache in his shoulder and it was the impelling force that kept the brush moving back and forth at a time when, wounded as he was, he should have been recuperating in General Hospital.

He had "run out" the seeming coincidence of the actual theft and the attempted theft had occurred the same night. Bruce Thompson had called the wall safe repository "flimsy."

In reality, it was one of the best of its kind, so strong that the maid and the butler had not dared to attempt to force it and had been compelled to bide their time until Paula could use the method she had employed successfully with Mrs. Sabarly.

Their wait had been long since Mrs. Cleves never took her ornament from the safe unless some one was with her. And the Moore gang had availed themselves of the social gathering for purposes of observation.

That which Moore had revealed of Rob-

ert Trent's illegal activities was merely confirmation of that which Deal and Brill had already told Lawson and of his own deduction that the Trent dock had been used for other than the landing place of pleasure craft.

Yet in Moore's statement was explanation of why Trent had sent his boat into those piles at the risk of his own and Lawson's life. Evidently he had believed it better to face death than to risk capturing the two men who had it in their power to ruin him by revealing his connection with an outlaw business. But that was leading away from instead of to the square emerald.

Greening might have thrown much light on the mystery, but Greening was dead. He had paid for his dishonesty with his life, since the extra exertion, excitement or fear, had been too much for his disease-weakened heart.

Fear? For an instant, Lawson held the brush in the air, then dropped it as if the handle were hot. Under such circumstances what would be a criminal's greatest fear? Obviously that some one who knew him well had witnessed his flight and would spread the alarm.

From his pocket, the detective took three small parcels which might have contained jewels, since they were wrapped carefully in tissue. The contents, however, were only particles of dried mud, yet he treated them with as much care as is used in handling diamonds—or emeralds.

Magnifying glass in hand, he studied each one of the samples with minute attention. Minutes of careful scrutiny convinced him without a doubt that each had come from the same place.

Then, with his forehead smooth once more, he searched a photograph made for him by the identification bureau. To the average man, the scene was highly uninteresting, since it merely showed a clay bank. But those three small heaps of clay had all originated in that place.

Lawson had scraped one of those three samples from his own shoes; the second he had taken from the spot where he had been attacked at the edge of the river and the third had come from the shoes of Ben Breen.

He forced himself to retire since he had accomplished all he could until daylight returned. But so eager was he to be about his task and so feverish from the wound in his shoulder that he tossed about until dawn.

Surgeon Keeler rated him severely for not having gone to the hospital the night before. Lawson's reply was a growled order to hurry in changing the dressing of the wound in his shoulder.

"It would serve you right if infection did develop," asserted the surgeon. "You couldn't shine your shoes if you had only one hand."

"I did last night," replied Lawson.

"I suppose you'll die of a broken heart if you don't shine your shoes, even if that shoulder doesn't kill you. But, Bill, be careful. We'd miss you just a little bit if you didn't loaf around headquarters any more."

"I'll attend a lot more line-ups if I don't die of old age while you're putting on that dressin'."

Keeler adjusted the sling and Lawson got into a department car, his order to the chauffeur being to drive to the Cleves home as rapidly as possible.

The silence and the drawn shades told him that the family had not yet arisen, but he observed that the gardener was again ministering to that broken rosebush. He was squatting beside it and though the autumn morning was cool, the large feet that projected from under his body, were bare.

That fact seemed to electrify Lawson as he darted into the garage. There he found where Breen had got clay on his shoes, bits still remaining on the concrete floor and the trail leading to the stairway.

Running up the steps, Lawson entered the gardener's room, his eyes roving about the place. Well under the bed, he found that which he sought, Sam's shoes.

Picking them up, he looked at them with an expression of disappointment on his face. They were almost new and, except for the dust, were as they had been when they came from the factory.

Diligent search failing to reveal another pair, the corrugations reappeared on Law-

son's forehead. Then his eyes fell to a crumpled-up rug and with a quick motion, he obtained a fifth sample of earth.

Apparently, his haste was at an end and he sauntered down the stairway like a man with an abundance of leisure.

The gardener was still squatting beside the rosebush and Lawson approached him casually.

"Get up, Sam," he ordered quietly.

The gardener turned uncomprehending eyes on him.

"Get up—I want you," the detective repeated, placing his hand on the man's arm.

The response was immediate. Up and up, the gardener rose, his stature increasing like the uncoiling of a spring. It was an uncanny thing—a metamorphosis of a dwarf into a giant.

His torso was short, but his legs were long, inordinately long, so long that when he was at last erect, he towered above the detective. His vacant expression had changed to a snarl, and his rolled sleeves exposed powerful arms covered with a growth of hair so thick it resembled wool.

"Come on," ordered Lawson, endeavoring to clutch one of those great arms.

With a throaty roar, the gardener was on him and once more Lawson was caught in a grip so mighty that it seemed to turn his spine to liquid so great the torture it inflicted on that wounded shoulder—a torture that drew from Lawson a cry of agony.

Across the trim lawn, the response came—a lovely figure in a pink negligee and little pink mules that seemed to fairly flit over the short grass.

"Sam!" she called. "Stop!"

The arms no longer crushed, but with the world black to his eyes, Lawson fell to the earth and did not arise.

CHAPTER XXI

FEELING FOOLISH

LAWSON was propped up in bed in a room that seemed to overflow with asters. He had been there ten days and this was the first time Dr. Dresser had permitted him to see visitors.

Some one was waiting—some one by no means a stranger to General Hospital. But on this occasion when the superintendent told her she could go upstairs, she did not stop at Robert Trent's room, though Trent's convalescence had reached a stage where there were no restrictions on those who wished to see him.

"I suppose you want all the details," she said, arranging still another bouquet. "Dr. Dresser says you've been so ill he hasn't even allowed Chief Parmer to see you."

"The chief telephoned after you did today," replied Lawson admiring the deftness of her slim fingers, "and I told him not to come up till"—the detective's bald spot pinked suddenly—"well, Miss Cleves, the chief's awfully busy at this time of the day."

"Sam saw Greening run toward the river," she continued apparently without noticing the veteran's confusion. "Greening was in such a hurry that he stepped on a rosebush and broke it.

"That bush happens to be Sam's special pet—a variety he has developed himself. Sam is simple-minded, practically an imbecile, but he loves flowers, and he chased Greening.

Just as he was catching up with him, Greening, who must have heard him coming, though he was barefooted—Sam hates shoes—threw something at him, but Sam was too enraged to stop.

"Just as he got to him, Greening fell. He had thrown mother's bracelet at Sam and he searched the dead man's pockets to see if he had taken anything else.

"Then he decided there was only one safe place for the emerald—the place from which the flowers come—the earth. So he buried it beside his rosebush.

"Ordinarily Sam would not harm any one. But he's loyal and when he saw you on the river bank, he thought you were another thief. When you took hold of him beside the rosebush, he thought you had come after the emerald."

"If he's as simple-minded as you say, how did he know that bracelet was your mother's?" asked Lawson, who despite the pleasure he was experiencing in the company of the girl, was still the copper.

" I can trust you," she whispered. " Poor Sam is my mother's brother."

Then so far as Bill Lawson was concerned, the case was closed.

" I suppose your mother is happy because she has her emerald back again?" he asked.

" She hasn't it. Mother has changed. When it was returned, she decided she didn't want it. Father sold it to Jim Thompson to-day. She feels very badly over what Robert Trent did."

" Who told you that?" demanded Lawson.

" Bob did—all of it. I was wrong when I thought he told me it was he who had killed the butler. It was you he thought he killed."

Lawson turned his head.

" Mr. Lawson," said Helena very softly, " I told you mother had changed."

" Yes," he said, looking at her again and seeing her blush.

" Bruce and I are going to be married as soon as the mark of that bullet goes away and we want you to be there—but not as a detective."

And Bill Lawson, feeling foolishly young, promised.

THE END

THE BLACK HOLE OF CALCUTTA

ALTHOUGH this horror is well known to Macaulay's "schoolboy" public, yet the details may not be familiar to all readers.

The following notes are derived from the study of " Lord Clive " by Alexander John Arbuthnot.

Calcutta was captured by the Nawab of Bengal. Aliverdi Khan, a just and strong ruler, died in 1756, and was succeeded by his grandson, Surajud Daulah, under twenty years of age, whose training had been of the worst description. This youth hated the English and had not been two months on the throne when he noted that in anticipation of difficulties with the French, they were strengthening Fort William.

He seized the English factory at Kasimbazar and attacked Calcutta. Women and children of the fort were removed aboard ship. The governor, Drake, and the military commandant, Captain Minchin, deserted their posts, and to their lasting disgrace likewise took to the ships. Holwell, member of the council, assumed command of the fort, which was captured.

All the Englishmen in the fort, one hundred and forty-six persons, were thrust at the point of the sword into a small room, the prison of the garrison, commonly known as the Black Hole, only twenty feet square. The Nawab promised to spare their lives, but went to sleep after a debauch. On getting over it, he allowed the door of the Black Hole to be opened. By that time, one hundred and twenty-three out of the one hundred and forty-six prisoners had miserably perished.

The survivors, among them the acting governor Holwell, were brought before the tyrant, insulted and reproached by him, and detained in custody in wretched sheds, and fed upon grain and water. An Englishwoman, one of the survivors, was placed in the Nawab's harem.

Posed as a jockey, I would rush out to whisper in his ear

BELIEVERS

By Alvin Harlow

BELIEVERS ARE BORN, NOT MADE. THEIR AFFLICTION IS NOT NECESSARILY CONTAGIOUS, BUT IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES IT IS INCURABLE

A Story of Fact

SOMEWHERE in Shakespeare there is a con man named *Autolycus*, who indulges in those soliloquies which are so uncommon in life—save on the streets of New York, where there are plenty of nuts who go around talking to themselves—and this chap had a little private laugh all alone to himself one day, the motif of his chortle being, "Ha! Ha! What a fool Honesty is!"

Now I admit that Honesty is sometimes pretty easy in the matter of loaning money, and often gets beautifully trimmed in a trade involving strictly all-wool clothing or absolutely fresh eggs; but I'd like to handle the affirmative side in a public debate with *Autolycus* on the proposition: "Resolved, That Honesty isn't one-tenth as big a boob as Dishonesty," and I'd want one bookmaker, one professional gambler and one confidence man on the committee of judges.

But when I set forth this great ethical truth, which I'm surprised that no one has even promulgated before, I'm not talking about professional dishonesty or dishonesty in the first degree. I'm not referring to such things as using your employer's money to play the stock market, or taking a bribe to throw a baseball game, or making crooked political deals; nor even to the rougher stuff, like robbing banks and sticking up jewelers' shops.

I'm not setting out to preach that Honesty is the Best Policy, nor that the Wages of Sin is Death. I'm talking about that little streak of roguery—call it cupidity if you like—in the majority of all human

beings which is constantly egging them on toward the endeavor to get something for nothing; the streak that tends to make of them what the world of graft calls "Believers."

What is a believer? Well, speaking in a general sort of way, it's a fellow who, in spite of all advice and all precedents to the contrary, is so bamboozled by his own ignorance, cocksureness and sapheadedness that he thinks he can beat the other man's game.

Believers are born, not made. Their affliction is not necessarily contagious; it is hereditary, and, in the majority of cases, incurable. Once a believer, always a believer, is the general rule, because cupidity is one thing that it's almost impossible to eradicate from the human system.

"Something for Nothing" Offer

Everybody loves fairy stories of one kind or another, and that is why 'most everybody loves the greatest of all fairy stories, "A Christmas Carol."

The marvelous change of old skinflint *Scrooge* into a generous, open-faced, all-round good fellow is pretty to read about, but nothing like it ever happens in life.

Say what you will, cupidity and dishonesty are pretty close kin. An avaricious man is never entirely on the square with his fellow human beings. Of course you'll point out that greed and shrewdness are often combined in the same man.

True enough, but let an avaricious man be as shrewd as they ever are, and there's always some weak joint in his armor: some game for which he will fall. His eagerness for gain weakens his judgment and makes him believe things which a less arduous man would be apt to reject.

Hordes of otherwise shrewd business men gamble and bet on the races and get caught in jams into which they walked with the fatuous belief that they were about to skin somebody else.

I ought to explain at the start that I don't wear a white necktie and mutton-chop whiskers, nor am I the chairman of any sort of anti-this or that. I'm a fellow who has lived off believers practically all his life.

I've given them every possible opportunity and means of exercising their credulity, from my bookmaker's blackboard—which I place at the top as theoretically least vicious and formerly even approved by the law—on down through the various con rackets to the lowest of them all, the shell game.

I haven't any fear of giving away my stuff or injuring the good will of my business. I know that many believers never read anything, others nothing beyond a dream book, a racing tip sheet, an oil stock circular, or the scandal news in the yellow journals, and those who read even more don't learn anything.

A true believer could read a volume of warning on the subject, and then go right out and fall for the first new con game or gambling device that was shown him, simply because it wasn't specifically described in the book. The old cupidity makes them blind and deaf—they're already dumb—as soon as the "something for nothing" offer is made.

That hoary old gag, "dropping the poke"—*i. e.*, the pocketbook found on the sidewalk—has been written up thousands of times; it does seem as if everybody in the world ought to have heard of it—and yet it can still be worked in every city, large and small, in these United States.

What the Chump Deserves

I can set up a little table to-morrow at any county fair or street carnival and begin moving three walnut shells and a pea to and fro on it, and inside of five minutes I'll have a crowd around it with popping eyes and dribbling chops, many of them ready to bet me that their stupid optic nerves and fungus brains are cleverer than my trained fingers.

In my own special code of ethics it is written that a chump who will go up against so ancient and flimsy a game as this isn't entitled to protection, any more than the nut who goes over Niagara Falls in a barrel or takes a header off the Brooklyn Bridge.

One of the funniest things I've ever heard of was the complaint made by certain citizens down at Atlantic City some time ago to the municipal authorities because auction rooms were selling them shoddy goods.

You know the sort of place they referred to—a storeroom full of flashy, plated silverware, phony jewelry, colored glass necklaces, gaudily tinted china, cheap manicure sets, and the like, and a blatant auctioneer whose mug and manner alone ought to be a warning to anybody with the brains of a good, bright rabbit.

I claim that in this age, when information is on tap everywhere, a grown-up person who buys anything in a place like that deserves the skinning he gets; and he cuts a mighty poor figure when he runs whimpering to papa and wails that the naughty man has cheated him.

"The Boy's a Fool!"

Laws against gambling, horse racing and stock speculation are and will be futile as long as the conditions revealed by our army mental tests prevail. Such things will never be eliminated until the human race grows up. As that will be—if ever—long after my time, I'm not worrying.

How many really great men are there in and around Wall Street? It wouldn't take more than one pocket adding machine to count them all; but they are the ones who are not believers. They deal with cold, hard facts.

The rest of the birds in that realm are decreasingly successful in inverse ratio to the strength of their belief in their ability to beat the market gambling game. Right at the bottom of the heap are the little twenty-five dollar a week clerks and hangers-on who would bet their last dime on a tip from a source which a sane person would laugh at.

I was plumb sorry when the Curb Market moved under a roof a year or two ago. Formerly, whenever I had had a streak of bad luck in my business, whenever a supposed sucker turned out to be brighter than suspected, and I had a tendency to get low in spirits and feel that the day of opportunity for an earnest young man striving toward success was past, I could go down there in Broad Street and watch those zanies waving their arms and wiggling their fingers and renew my faith. It made me feel that the lark was still on the wing and the hillside dew-pearled.

And, notwithstanding incessant propaganda against bucketeers, notwithstanding sensational exposures and scandalous bankruptcies of bucket shops, the public continues to support numbers of such places—yea, they fairly storm the doors and crowd money into the hands of the operators; and then, when the blow-off comes, refuse to prosecute or appear in the matter in any way, for fear of being advertised as saps.

They remind me of the old, old story of the farmer who had a boy whom he regarded as a hopeless dunce. He took the boy with him to town one day and left him alone in a public place for an hour or so while he attended to other business, cautioning the youngster not to talk to any one. "If you so much as open your mouth," said he, "they'll find out you're a fool."

So when some came by and asked the boy his name, he said nothing; and when they asked him where he lived and where his father was and other questions, he just looked at them and said nothing. "The boy's a fool!" they said to each other. "He's just a numbskull!" Wherefore, when his father came back the boy was in low spirits. "They found it out," he blubbered, "and I never said ary word!"

How It Is Worked

I wonder what your opinion of human intelligence would be if I should tell you how many smack hustlers are operating daily in New York and making money? Don't know what a smack hustler is? You've matched pennies, haven't you? Ever see a man slap a coin on the back of his left hand with his right when matching with another fellow? That gesture gave the name to the racket.

Smack hustlers always work in pairs and use the odds game. For the benefit of the uninitiated I may explain that when three persons lay down coins, there will usually be one head and two tails up, or one tail and two heads, and the odd man gets the pot. It was an old dodge years ago for two fellows to fleece another who had never seen the game by regularly alternating between tails and heads so that their two

coins would never be the same, and therefore one or the other of them would always be the odd man.

No such crude methods are used nowadays. Too many people are familiar with the old trick, and, besides, it's a surer bait to take the sap into partnership and let him think he is skinning somebody else. This is how it is worked:

The team searches for its prey around the cheaper hotels and other places where there are particularly apt to be fine, fresh specimens of the genus Boob with from fifty to a hundred dollars in pocket.

The Honest Man Is Safe

Hustler No. 1 now scrapes acquaintance with Mr. Sap and make himself very agreeable. Presently Hustler No. 2 butts in and proves to be a braggart and a generally obnoxious person. He steps away for a moment to get a cigar, and No. 1 says to Sap: "Don't that feller give you a pain? He's such a wise guy—let's take a fall out of him."

Mr. Sap is quite willing, and No. 1 outlines a scheme to draw the stranger into an odds game. Either they fix up a system of simple signals, or they agree to alternate regularly in putting down heads and tails, so that one of them will always be odd. Mr. Sap, being a true believer, takes it for granted that the stranger has never heard of the ancient odds game.

When the supposed outsider comes back, he is inveigled into the matching game, for half a dollar or dollar stakes, and he loses steadily. There are about seventeen ways of ending this game.

Occasionally—not often—the victim is given counterfeit money. Sometimes one of the others, after finding out approximately how much money Sap has, may propose a big stake on a single throw, at which time Sap's partner crosses him "accidentally," allowing the stranger to win.

Or, after they have been playing for some time, the stranger grows suspicious and angry and says: "See here, this looks like a frame-up to me. I believe you two fellas are a coupla crooks!" and is about to call a policeman, thus fairly frightening Mr. Sap out of his money.

Or the stranger may so manipulate his coin that it is nearly always the boob's partner who wins; and finally Mr. Sap—and the stranger as well—being cleaned out, No. 2, taking his loss good-naturedly, remains chatting for a few moments with the victim—who is impatiently awaiting the opportunity for the division of the spoil—while No. 1, still carrying the money, steals out for a moment to the lavatory or the cigar stand. He never comes back.

The stranger presently says his adieux, and Mr. Sap is left disconsolate. There are still other ways of ringing down the curtain on the farce.

Is this a popular game? Well, I know of at least fifty teams of smack hustlers who are operating in New York to-day.

Nine out of ten confidence games are based on this little dishonest streak I've described in human nature; and I'll put myself on record as asserting that no strictly honest man, no man who hasn't a drop or two of larceny in his veins, is ever caught by such a game.

You'll notice that crooks seldom try any of these get-rich-quick con rackets on a preacher, even a high-salaried or wealthy one; which is a frank admission that the minister is too honest to endeavor to get money by such tactics.

A Racket for Preachers

Of course not every clergyman is an incipient angel, but even if he should have the carnal streak in him, the ethics of his profession hold him to the straight and narrow so well that not one in a thousand would listen to a con racket unless he's so simple that he can be persuaded it's a perfectly ethical and legitimate transaction; and the average clergyman nowadays is getting a bit more sophisticated than that.

Some wise birds who know ancient history will doubtless pop out of his hutch right here and remind me of Canada Bill's alleged offer to a big railroad system several years ago of twenty-five thousand dollars royalty per annum for the privilege of practicing confidence games on their lines, with the sporting stipulation that he would work nobody but preachers.

Whether this last clause is correctly reported or not I don't know; but I do know that the rackets that Bill and other con men practice on the sky pilots are mostly sob stuff—the prodigal son, the poor man robbed of his life savings, the husband whose wife is dying for need of an operation, and about seventeen hundred other such fairy stories which bring tears to the eyes of bishops and other prosperous-looking parsons and money from their pockets without hope of profit.

Analyze the average con racket, and you will find that it is usually designed to make the victim think he is getting easy money by some unfair means.

The Monte Swindle

Such are the wire-tapping game and the fake bet on the races made by men who have inside information, thus taking advantage of the bookmakers and the general public. Such is the case with the pocketbook found on the sidewalk. There is never any suggestion that the supposed finders advertise the wallet or scan the Lost and Found columns in an effort to restore it to its rightful owner. The whole idea of the plot is, "Finders are keepers. Let's divide the loot."

Such also is three-card monte, Canada Bill's favorite game—for Bill, like many other good hustlers, was versatile and varied his racket from time to time. In his day he was the monte king.

Such was his slippery reputation that when his coffin was being lowered into the grave, one of the mourners who stood by offered, in a hoarse whisper, to bet the man at his elbow a thousand to five hundred that Bill wasn't in the box. The other man failed to take the bet, for the reason, as he said, that he "had known Bill to come through tighter squeezes than this."

Does any one fancy that the hoary-headed old monte swindle has gone out? If so, he'll have to guess again. There are still plenty of folks who have never heard of it.

In the vicinity of big racing meets, prize fights, county fairs, and other sap carnivals I can show you monte games going forward on a plank laid across the head of a barrel or other makeshift table and believers crowding around it, eager for a chance to give their money to the jolly gambler. Every boob who gets stung on the monte racket does so because he thinks he sees a chance to cheat. Here's why:

The game is a simple one. The spieler just throws three cards face downward on the table and invites the public to bet with him on which one is, say, the queen.

The outsiders, having only one chance in three to be right, would naturally be a little slow to wager; but now and then the spieler throws the cards down so carelessly that one or two of them slide off the table. A capper, standing directly in front, picks up the cards, glancing slyly at their faces as he does so, and, seeing that one is the queen, he bends the corner slightly.

He takes care that two or three of the come-ons who stand by him shall see the operation, as if by accident. When the spieler throws the cards down again the capper names the card with the bent corner and wins the money.

Two or three of the easy marks are now encouraged to bet on the next throw, but this time the spieler, with a dexterous twist of the finger, straightens out the bent corner of the queen and bends another card. The result is that the boob betters lose.

Chances to Be Taken

They have no comeback, no excuse for uttering a word of complaint. They tried to cheat and failed, and, of course, are ashamed to admit it; so they just sneak away silently, and other believers take their places and are stung in precisely the same way.

When I was a boy in my teens I was employed for a time by a gang of swindlers who were working one variety of the race-betting game. I posed as a jockey; dressed in my silks and full paraphernalia, with my saddle over my arm, I would rush up to the leader—he was called "Senator" Grady—who had the sap in town, just as they were entering the grounds, draw him aside and whisper in his ear. Then I would hurry off.

"See that?" Grady would whisper to his victim. "That's the jockey who's going to ride Thunder Bird in the third race. He

tells me that it's absolutely fixed for Thunder Bird to win." The sight of his mentor being tipped off by a real jockey was sufficient to land the victim: he would hand over his money to a supposed betting commissioner, and that was the last he ever saw of it.

The chances which these con artists seem to take are astounding to one who lacks their experience. In order to get the mug well within their clutches they will often permit him to win hundreds of their cash. But how well they know the mental habit of the believer!

The King of Plungers

They know that once his confidence in their ability to pick "winners" has been thus established, he couldn't be driven away from them with a club. They are bound in the end to get all the loose change he has.

They also know that a man, let him be considered ever so wise a bird in business, if he has even a tinge of the gambling propensity in his blood, is apt to be a believer.

Take John Jiggs, for example, who keeps a saloon or perhaps a billiard hall in a city of a hundred thousand population where a racing meet is just beginning. John deals with all sorts and conditions of men, and regards himself as being just about as silly as a fox.

A big, handsome, well-dressed stranger walks into Jiggs's place, buys a few drinks or shoots several games of pool, fills his pockets with cigars, and gets well acquainted with Mr. Jiggs, who learns that his name is Desmond. Next day he comes in again, and, making himself agreeable for a time, finally draws the proprietor aside and displays a roll of money.

"Listen, Mr. Jiggs," he says, "I wish you would put this in your safe for me for awhile. I'm apt to be kinder careless with money, especially when I get a few drinks aboard, and I want this little life raft to stay where I can get my hands on it if needed. Won't you take care of it for me for a few days?"

Mr. Jiggs obliges, as he has frequently done before for good fellows like this, and stows the money in his safe.

Either at this visit or one immediately before or afterward, another of Desmond's gang swings into action. He is a quiet, colorless chap, and little attention has been paid to him since he came in.

But immediately after Mr. Desmond goes out the newcomer slides along the counter and says in a low tone, "Mister, did that man tell you anything about the races?"

Jiggs, looking coldly upon this butting-in stranger, says, "Races? No."

The other's eyes search Jiggs's face eagerly to see whether he is telling the truth. "Don't you know who that man is?" he asks, in an awe-struck tone. "Say, look at this!"

He pulls a folded piece of newspaper from his pocket and opens it up. It is a single page, the racing page of a newspaper from, say, Cincinnati. And there in one column is a portrait of the man who has just gone out.

He is referred to as Robert J. Desmond, the new King of Plungers. The article relates how he hit the talent hard during the Latonia meet just closed, his winnings having been reported as being in the neighborhood of one hundred thousand dollars. Of course the newspaper is a faked affair, a careful imitation in typography of the Cincinnati paper, but printed in a job shop in New York or Chicago.

A Tip on the Races

"That man is a wiz!" says the stranger to Jiggs. "He knows more about the ponies than you or I will ever know about our own businesses. If he ever tells you anything, for God's sake give me a tip on it, mister. I'll remember you for it."

When Desmond comes in next day, Jiggs leads the conversation around to the races, and the visitor shows much familiarity with the sport, but is inclined at first to be reticent as to his own connection with it. Jiggs keeps pumping and hinting, however, and Desmond finally admits that he has a horse or two at the track.

"Do you ever go out to the races?" he asks politely.

"I went yesterday," Jiggs replies. He does not add that his interest had been

stimulated by learning the identity of his customer. "And I thought I might go out to-day. Maybe you'd give me a tip or two if I came out?"

Desmond looks a bit embarrassed but says, "Oh, yes! Certainly! Be glad to see you.

"By the way," he goes on, "I may need that little roll of mine to-morrow. If I haven't time to drop in during the forenoon, will you bring it out to me?" This is done to demonstrate his frank, unsuspicious nature and perfect confidence in Mr. Jiggs, which in turn breeds in Mr. Jiggs a confidence in Desmond.

Grateful for Tidbits

"You'll be apt to find me at my stable," says Desmond in parting, giving the number and location.

When Jiggs goes out to the track he heads toward that particular stable, and Desmond meets him on the way. Or it may be that the sharper stands in with some real horse owner—I've actually known such to be the case—and so is found loafing with a proprietorial air near the door of the stable.

He and Jiggs walk aside and have been talking but a few moments when a man hurries up to Desmond and thrusts a rumpled roll of bills into his hand, muttering, "Ten thousand, six hundred—first race." There is a yellow-back on the outside of the roll, and Mr. Jiggs, of course, has no means of knowing that the bills inside are all ones. Desmond thrusts the roll into his pocket without counting it, and says, "You know what to do on the next one, do you?" to which the man replies, "Yes," and hurries off.

"Mr. Desmond," says Jiggs, apologetically, "I'd certainly appreciate it if you'd let me in on some of these good things."

"H'm!" says Desmond, embarrassed.

"I've got a little money with me," says Jiggs.

"How much?"

"Five hundred."

In spite of himself, a slightly scornful expression appears on Mr. D's face. "You'll pardon me, Mr. Jiggs," he says, "but that isn't even pin-money around here. If you want to put up some real money, I might—" lowering his voice, "I might place it for you, though really I'm not supposed to do that sort of thing.

"You see, in this betting, I represent three or four wealthy friends, and I'm pledged not to let anybody else in on what I know. But you've been mighty decent to me, and—well, I'll bet that five hundred of yours to-day, and if you want to bring out some real money to-morrow, we'll see if we can't pick up a good thing for you."

He takes Mr. Jiggs's five hundred dollars and bets it on some horse which is practically a sure thing; if he can't find anything surer, he'll bet it on the favorite in some race "to show"—which means that he bets that the horse will run first, second or third. Of course Desmond and his pals have the very best of the inside dope, which they do not scruple to get, by bribery whenever necessary.

Perhaps Desmond wins another little bet for Jiggs that afternoon; the favors aren't very large ones, but Jiggs thinks that may be because of the disgracefully small sum of money he had, and he is properly grateful for the titbits granted him.

Impressed by An Oath

Next day Jiggs comes out with as large a roll as he can muster—anywhere from one thousand, five hundred dollars to five thousand dollars or more. Maybe he has borrowed some to add to it, or let two or three friends in on the good thing.

Desmond pretends to bet it for him on some thirty to one shot, which he knows hasn't a ghost of a chance of winning; but, making a great pretense of secrecy, he whispers to the gull that this horse has been held back in several races to lengthen the odds on him, and the owner is now ready to make a killing on him.

Desmond shows great anxiety when imparting this momentous secret, and begs Mr. Jiggs not to give it away. Jiggs, tremendously awed, makes a solemn promise. Believe it or not, I took a noted Kentucky statesman into an outbuilding at Latonia one day and made him hold up his hand and swear that he would not reveal

to any living soul the dark secret which I was about to impart to him and which he believed I had secured from stable employees at the risk of my life.

I think he was more impressed by that vow than when he took the oath of office as Senator.

"I'm betting ten thousand dollars on him myself," whispers Desmond, handing Jiggs's roll and another wad from his own pocket to his runner, who is supposed to place it with the bookies; but, as a matter of fact, he just ducks around a corner and stuffs it into his pocket, and the gang divides it later.

The Cincinnati Kid

When the horse loses, Desmond, with a lugubrious countenance, tells Jiggs that he was pocketed by a clique of other jockeys—or that he had a sudden slight attack of colic—or that he stepped in a hole in the track and strained a muscle—anything for an alibi.

"Just one of those unpreventable accidents that happen even to the best informed handicappers," he adds. If the long shot should unexpectedly win, Desmond and his pals would just have to vanish before Jiggs could lay hands on them; but they take care to pick a horse who has hardly a chance in the world.

I used to work this "point-out" game, as it is called, in a simpler way with only one partner; and I have worked it not only in America, but across the water at Ascot, Epsom, Goodwood, Doncaster, Longchamps and elsewhere.

The Cincinnati Kid and I turned it on a youthful scion of the house of Rothschild at Longchamps, and found him just as easy to fool as a grocery clerk; and he wasn't the only prominent one, either. I could mention two or three American names—but let that go.

The Kid and I are both able to look the part of thoroughbred gentlemen. He would plant himself near the prospect—whom he had previously studied as to his approachability, and, if a Frenchman, as to his knowledge of English—and would borrow a light for his cigarette.

This would lead to conversation with the stranger about racing. Presently out from the Kid's pocket comes a newspaper clipping with a portrait of me—we had hundreds of them printed in a job shop in New York—and news of how Mr. Egerton, believed to be a betting commissioner for a syndicate of wealthy Easterners, had recently made big killings at Hawthorne, Jamaica, Saratoga and elsewhere and was believed to have cleaned up more than half a million for his crowd during the current season.

They would talk about me for a few moments, and suddenly the Kid would nudge his companion and exclaim in an awe-struck whisper, "Look—there he is now!" And sure enough, there I would be, not six feet away, scribbling something on a racing program. At that moment my pencil point breaks; I feel in my pocket and find I have no knife. An exclamation of annoyance escapes me.

The Kid eagerly steps forward and proffers his pencil. I accept the loan with a gracious smile, and the Kid is encouraged to tell me, with boyish assurance, that he recognizes me. I grow chilly immediately and hint at presumption; but after some cross-fire I thaw a bit.

With An Electric Saddle

Thus runs the old familiar stuff; presently I am reluctantly agreeing to place a bet for Lord Soanso or the Hon. Mr. Whatzis. Some of those European victims don't yet know that they were trimmed.

The dropping-the-poke and point-out games are now being combined with great success. When the con men and the sap find the pocketbook they open it and discover not only a sum of money, but the owner's card, or perhaps his name gold-lettered on the leather. "Why, this belongs to A. T. Desmond, the big betting commissioner," exclaims the hustler as soon as he recovers the breath which has been knocked out of him by awe. "I know where he lives—at the Hotel Admiral. Let's take this around there together. Maybe he'll give us a tip on the races," *et cetera, et cetera.*

We used to use the electric saddle in some of our rackets; in fact, it's used yet. The

charged saddle, which sent little stinging shocks into the horse's body through the jockey's spurs, has sometimes been used by crooked owners on a lazy horse, causing him to run like a scared rabbit, but it isn't safe in general practice, because it would make some horses jump over the grand stand.

But I've shown the device to many a gull and whispered to him that it was going to be used on Madfire in the fourth race, and that the horse wearing an electric saddle never failed to run away from the field.

Seventy-five to One

What's the odds whether the race track believer falls into the hands of the swindler or not? He can lose his money with equal facility to the bookies or to the—theoretically—highly moral pari-mutuel machines, which are the elegant modern substitute for the uncouth bookmaker; but he loses just the same.

The percentage of probability is always against him. Nevertheless, you may see the believer in trolley cars, on suburban or subway trains, in hotel lobbies and on park benches, studying, with furrowed brow, a form sheet or tipster's circular or the racing page in the daily newspaper—perhaps cutting a section out of the latter and stowing it away in his pocket.

Notice his worried look. He may be beggaring his family and himself to indulge in the pastime. The tipster whom he patronizes may have a "sucker list" of four or five thousand names.

He may be one of those crooks who scatter the names of four or five of the most likely horses in a race among various groups of their patrons in order to be sure to win on some of them. Why, speaking of tips, some of us a few years ago used to put an ad like this is the New York papers now and then:

> JOCKEY will give inside information to interested party. Great caution necessary. Address Box 326.

Did we get replies? Scads of them! And then we wrote and demanded a nice little fee for the tip, of course. That game has been worked time and again.

It never seems to occur to the believer that the bookmaker's business isn't gambling. No bookmaker with the brains of a last year's bird's nest need ever have any worries. The odds which he gives are all figured out almost as carefully as an insurance company's dope on the probability of life; and the percentage is always very definitely in favor of the bookie.

There was a fellow who thought he had figured out a system to beat the bookies' percentage. He got all possible information on the horses, had a group of friends put up enough money to insure them all plenty of margin, employed an expert professional handicapper—and even then the system flopped! They always do.

When he dolefully wrote up his experience for a magazine, he figured that the percentage against him was seventy-five to one. I think he was too optimistic, at that; but if he, with all his dope and his experienced handicapper, had only one chance in seventy-five, what do you suppose are the odds against the ordinary poor dub who has nothing but tips and rumors to go on? I'd say about seventy-five thousand to one, as an average rate.

Bets on Barney B

There have been bookmakers who were inclined to be believers themselves, and who suffered some terrible wallops as a consequence. There used to be one named McCarty—not White Hat McCarty, but Move Up McCarty, so called because he so often rubbed out the odds on his blackboard and moved them up a peg.

McCarty was an eccentric bird, who had a habit of walking along the street talking to himself—usually telling himself how much smarter he was than those other mutts around the track, who weren't born with any brains, and then never grew up.

One day a friend of McCarty's had a horse—let's call him Barney B—entered in a certain race, and told McCarty not to take any long bets against him, giving Mac some definite information to prove that the horse was going to win. With intent to lead on the other bookies, Mac offered thirty to one against Barney B to win, ten to one to place, and five to one to show,

not expecting many bets, and intending to cover all that were given him by placing similar wagers of his own on Barney B through dummies with other bookmakers.

Now, the horse's owner also gave the tip to another friend, who was in the trucking business. This friend couldn't attend the races that afternoon, so—it being Saturday—he handed several of his drivers and helpers a hundred dollars each and told them to put it all on Barney B.

Sandwich or Dinner?

These fellows, some of them in overalls, got out to the track early, and, seeing the favorable odds offered by McCarty, they all began drifting his way. The first one placed seventy-five dollars on Barney B to win and twenty-five dollars to show. Mac called out to his sheet writer, "Seven hundred-fifty to twenty-five, first, and one hundred twenty-five to twenty-five third."

He was just on the point of sending a boy to place a bet with another bookie on Barney B when a tout came along and whispered to him that the favorite, Henry H, was a sure thing—couldn't lose.

Notwithstanding the inside dope which he had, McCarty at once lost his faith in Barney B and laid bets of two thousand dollars, all told, on the favorite, meanwhile taking numerous bets at long odds on Barney B from the supposed boobs in jumpers and old clothes.

The story of the race is soon told. Barney B ran away from the favorite like a jack rabbit from a terrapin, and McCarty came near being cleaned out. That evening he went down to the Hoffman House—for the race had been run at Guttenberg—and arranged with the head waiter to have a table all to himself.

Then he ordered an elaborate dinner, from soup to roquefort—a planked steak, a magnum of champagne and all the trimmings. When this was all placed on the table, he called for his bill and paid it. He then told the waiter to go out to the bar and bring him a sandwich of ordinary bar cheese and a glass of water.

"There, Mac, you blank-dashed fool," he growled to himself, "that"—indicating the sumptuous dinner—"is what you'd have et if you'd had any sense; but you made a double-dyed jackass of yourself, and now, dash-blank you, this"—biting into the cheese sandwich—"is what you get." And he didn't touch a morsel of that elegant dinner, either!

How much have conditions improved over the old days when bookies were permitted to operate openly at the tracks? Personally, I think they've backslid. Several States had spasms of virtue and drove the bookies away from the tracks. Some even stopped racing for a time.

But to-day there are more tracks than ever before. The mutuel machines, which the law regards as moral and harmless—though betters lose money through them just as they did to the old-fashioned bookmaker—have made race tracks an enormously profitable business.

The machines are operated by the track owners, who take only from three to five per cent of the money that passes through them, but on this small percentage make millions.

When Bets Are Too Big

But, at the same time, bookmakers are operating in theoretical secrecy by hundreds and thousands in all the larger cities. They have big central headquarters and agencies in cigar stores, pool rooms, and drug stores, to say nothing of salesmen in factories, large department stores and office buildings.

Other bookies lurk in and around the tracks and accept bets under cover. And all these under-the-rose bookmakers pay less than the track odds. Most handbook-makers will pay no more than fifteen to one, no matter if odds at the track have been fifty to one; but many a better doesn't find that out until after his horse has won.

These bookies get eighty per cent of their profits, not from the big sport, but from what they genially call the "dollar boob." They have a saying that "Our gravy is in the grind"—that is, in the two dollar, one dollar, half and quarter dollar bets made by poor dubs, who have to go without a meal—or deprive their families of one—to squeeze out the money.

Bookmakers are afraid of big bets, and frequently refuse them. When I was a

bookie and man came at me with a roll about as thick as a beer keg I side-stepped it. Either he had inside info or else he was likely to make trouble for me.

Having repented and given up bookmaking years ago to enter other lines of work more frankly and honestly illegal, I do not blush to quote Mr. Pierre Lorillard's remarks, made several years ago in listing his reasons for severing connection with the turf.

He declared that the bookmakers "rob the public and rob the owners of horses. A bookmaker could not live unless he bet against horses, and in the course of plying his trade he steals stable secrets and buys up jockeys and trainers.

Where Does It Come From?

"The bookmakers are, with few exceptions, rascals who would be fit subjects for the prison when their profitable trade of robbing the public on the race course is at an end."

But a British racing authority, James Runciman, came nearer putting the blame where it belongs when he said that "Bookmakers are simply shrewd, audacious tradesmen who know that most people are fools, and make profit out of that knowledge."

Under the present system the bookies are making more money than ever, and the mutuel machines have given racing its greatest boost. They make so much money for the tracks that the annual amount offered in purses is enormously greater than it was a few years ago.

A few races are paying the same that they did a decade or two back, some a little less; but many of them have increased prodigiously. Omitting the disturbed years of the war, here are a few startling increases:

Kentucky Derby in 1012 paid four thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars; in 1025 it paid fifty-two thousand nine hundred and fifty dollars.

Latonia Derby in 1010 paid two thousand nine hundred and twenty-five dollars; in 1025 it paid twenty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Preakness Stakes in 1012 paid one thousand four hundred and fifty dollars; in 1025 it paid fifty-two thousand seven hundred dollars.

Belmont Stakes in 1913 paid two thousand eight hundred and twenty-five dollars; in 1925 it paid thirty-eight thousand dollars.

Withers Stakes in 1913 paid two thousand three hundred and twenty-five dollars; in 1925 it paid nineteen thousand six hundred dollars.

Considerably more than ten million dollars is being paid out yearly in purses; millions are invested in racing plants, and more millions are spent yearly in maintaining them; millions are invested in horses, and millions are spent yearly in jockeys' and other salaries, in stable expenses, pasturage and transportation. And where does all this money come from?

Why, every cent of it comes out of the pockets of believers who bet on the races. But, you will object, the race tracks collect large sums in admissions, for score card privileges and so on.

Granted, but with mighty few exceptions, the people who pay admissions to race tracks and buy score cards are betters; they go there for that purpose. Not one person in five hundred is going to pay two or three dollars just to get into a park and see a lot of horses in which he has no interest gallop around a ring.

The Pockets of Believers

How is the better to know that all the jockeys in a race are straight? Many believers, no doubt, read periodicals devoted to racing, and in those very columns find numerous charges and hints at crooked riding and other dirty work; yet even that doesn't stop them from betting.

A prominent bookmaker and horse owner, in a volume of reminiscences which he wrote a few years ago, told what he thought was a very funny anecdote illustrating jockey characteristics. He asked a well-known jockey, "Say, Jack, on the level, did you ever pull a horse when you were riding?"

"Never—I swear it!" was the reply. "I've got left at the post on a few and may have gone a little wide on the turns in some places."

Many a jock—either at the instance of some one who has bribed him to cheat his

employer or by the order of the employer himself—has choked his mount or "taken him the longest way home"—*i. e.*, ridden wide at the turns to keep him from winning.

More than one jockey has been found to be the owner of race horses—an unsavory condition. And what person connected with the turf doesn't remember the scandal when "Little Pete," a well-to-do Chinese restauranteur and Jockey Club habitué of San Francisco, some years ago bought the services of four or five jockeys and cleaned up one hundred and fifty thousand dollars before his scheme was discovered.

All of that money came out of the pockets of believers who thought the races were being run on the square.

Tricks Darkly Hidden

But the jockey's personal obliquities don't hit the believer as hard as the strategy of the horse owner. One never knows what tricks are being worked. A horse may be run in ordinary shoes one day and in plates the next.

Bandages full of quicksilver may be attached to his legs. All sort of devices are employed to slow him up and prevent him from winning until the owner is ready to make a killing.

Sometimes he is worked so hard in his practice runs that he is tired when he comes to the post; or, if he is a horse who needs plenty of work to keep him in condition, he is not given enough. Finally, after he has lost several races and the odds against him lengthen to thirty or forty to one, the owner turns him loose, bets a roll on him, and cleans up.

I recall a case where the jockeys were changed almost at the moment of going to the post, and the horse won at twenty to one. The believers who aren't in on all these secrets are the ones who pay the bills.

A shrewd chap—let's call him X—came out of the West a few years ago with a clever idea. He had his own private jockeys and two or three cockroaches whom he entered in race after race. They never won anything, but he did.

He entered his plugs—usually two at a time—in none but the short races—half to three-quarter mile, and all his two jockeys had to do was to get near the favorite early in the race and either jostle or pocket him temporarily. They were experts in doing this in a seemingly natural way.

By the time the favorite had got into his stride or shaken off the hindrance, some other horses would have got too far ahead for him to catch them in the short distance.

X never bet on any particular horse; he simply bet *against* the favorite to win. As his own horses never finished in the money, no one suspected for a long time that he was playing a clever game—not until he had taken at least a hundred thousand—some say more than that—out of the pockets of believers who were betting the other way.

When he was finally thrown off the tracks he bought a string of motion picture theaters with his winnings.

If you were to suggest a bet on the races to him to-day, he would give you a loud, hoarse laugh.

"Not until I get another scheme as good as my last one," he may say, if he knows you well enough.

How many of the most famous races in history have been won by tricks darkly hidden from the poor fish who were doing the betting will never be known.

With Intent to Deceive

Take the Kentucky Derby of 1892, for example. I could tell of more recent ones, but ninety-two is so far back in the past that the story won't hurt anybody now.

There were only three horses in the Derby that year. Ed Corrigan, "the Master of Hawthorne," had two, Huron and Phil Dwyer, while the third was Azra, a Kentucky horse. Colored jockeys were predominant then, and three of the smartest in the business were on these horses—Monk Overton on Phil Dwyer, Jack Britton on Huron, and Al Clayton on Azra.

With intent to deceive the public and the bookmakers, Corrigan declared on Phil Dwyer to win. In a loud tone so that many could hear him, he ordered Britton to go out and set the pace with Huron so as to take the heart out of Azra early in the race. Overton was then to bring Phil Dwyer on and win in the stretch by a length.

Secretly his intentions were just the opposite. Huron was the better horse of his two and was scheduled to win, and Corrigan was slyly placing his bets accordingly. The bookies made his two entries prohibitive favorites. I don't think Azra won another race that year, and those Kentuckians who bet on him did so only out of State pride.

The race was on. Azra and Huron took the lead and seesawed on almost even terms through the first mile. The distance was then a mile and a half. Huron failed to shake off the little Kentucky horse as easily as expected. Azra could not have won, however, had it not been for smart work by his rider, Al Clayton.

The Other Man's Game

Making the last turn, Clayton glanced back and saw that Phil Dwyer was not overtaking them. Urging Azra to a final spurt, he drew alongside Huron and succeeded in getting a leg-lock on Jockey Britton—that is, hooked his leg over the other's so that the faster Huron went, the faster he would drag Azra with him, provided the two boys stayed in their saddles.

It must be remembered that jockeys in those days rode with much longer stirrups than now. Britton could do nothing. He dared not hit either Clayton or Clayton's mount for fear of being disqualified, and Clayton had him crowded against the rail so that he could not escape.

The trick could not have been seen save by some one directly in front of or directly behind the two horses. And thus Huron carried Azra with him under the wire, the latter winning by a whisker, amid the yells of the faithful Kentuckians who had bet on him.

Britton, as soon as he dismounted, was so eager to find Clayton and lick him that he failed to lodge a complaint in time, and the race went to Azra.

A complaint must be made immediately or it's too late to save the betters who lose by the crooked work: for as soon as the judges hang up the winning numbers the bookmakers pay off bets, and then it's too late to rectify matters.

One of the sappiest of all believers is the chap who plays games of chance with strangers, or who risks his money in a public gaming house. Here is the perfect example of trying to beat the other man's game. It is a mistake, by the way, to apply the term "gambling house" to a place where roulette, faro, baccarat, rouge et noir, and such-like indoor sports are offered for the public delectation.

The word gamble, according to the dictionaries, means "to risk or wager something of value on a game of chance." The proprietors of such a house risk nothing at all. Their business is the surest in the world.

The wheat crop may fail, boll weevil may ravage the cotton, tariff may hurt imports and exports, war may destroy certain foreign markets, but the crop of believers never fails, and the professional's profit on a gambling game is inevitable.

He sells nothing at cost, never has to put on a bargain sale. Even if a spasm of civic virtue should wipe him out after three or four years of business, he has by that time earned enough to retire, to buy a string of rum ships, or open up on a big scale somewhere else.

The only real gambling occurs in a game in which the participants are all believers and nobody is clever enough to stack the cards.

Guessing for a Living

Strange that the enormous prosperity of public gambling houses doesn't convey any warning to the mind of the poor moth who flutters around them. The person who goes into a great casino like that at Monte Carlo, whose profits support a whole principality, and tries to beat the game really ought to be examined by an alienist.

When the roulette ball in that casino stops at zero only one hundred and twenty times in a counted run of more than four thousand turns of the wheel, what chance has the better? Roulette is one game in which the house doesn't need to cheat.

Of all these games, faro would give the outsider the nearest a fair chance to win if it were played squarely, but it isn't. Often some believer has expressed to me his opinion that So-and-so's faro bank was on

the square, or asked me if I didn't think it was, and as I was a bit on the queer myself, it wasn't up to me to spoil sport, so I usually answered, "Certainly it is! So-and-so wouldn't think of running a crooked game."

Had I been sincere I would have sneered, "You poor boob, why is it that the faro dealers at So-and-so's and all other big gambling houses are among the highest paid men in the business? The mere mechanical part of their work is nothing. A fifteen year old boy could shuffle the cards and draw them out of the box. The truth of the matter is that a man with the craftiest brain and fingers to be found among a million is necessary in the dealer's chair to protect the money of the house. On the square? Ho-ho! and three loud Ha-ha's!"

There is a certain wealthy "Easterner," whom I knew in the Southwest a number of years back, when he was getting his start with a crooked faro box, electrically operated.

At that faro table he laid the foundation for his present fortune and social position, but I cannot recall the name of a single man who played across the table from him who now has money enough to wad a gun with.

Several years ago another man with an idea came out of the West and stood the Eastern gamblers on their heads. His racket was the vulgar, old-fashioned game of craps, and he played it in a seemingly foolish way.

He went around to the various gambling houses, laid down a thick, yellow-backed roll and said to the habitués, "Come on, boys, shoot at it! I'll make any kind of a bet with you, but, just as a little inducement to me to accept any bet you offer, you must pay me five cents on every dollar we bet. Now come on if you want some fun. All I want is the nickels."

He found plenty of willing believers. If they wagered fifty dollars with him, they must pay him a commission of two dollars and fifty cents; if one hundred dollars, his percentage was five dollars; but there were so many bets of two dollars, five dollars, and ten dollars, on which his commissions ran only from ten to fifty cents, that it seemed as if he were fooling with pin money.

A man accompanied him every night to carry away in a canvas bag the nickels, dimes, quarters, halves, and even larger money which he garnered. But what was the big idea? The other birds scratched their heads over it and couldn't make out.

He seemed to have no carefully thought-out system of betting, and sharp watching failed to disclose that he had any knack of or any desire for ringing in loaded dice. He was equally careful to see that nobody else did so. As a matter of fact, he seemed to lose about as often as he won. Was he just plumb foolish?

Some of the poor dumb-bells who played against him never would have fathomed his racket, but the gambling house proprietors saw that the man's helper was getting round-shouldered from toting away that heavy bag of silver and currency every evening, and they began to keep tabs on him.

Presently they discovered that his commissions sometimes amounted to three hundred or four hundred dollars in a night. It didn't matter whether he won or lost in the dice playing: that was a minor issue. The game would average itself up in the course of a year: but meanwhile that little five per cent commission was rapidly making him wealthy.

He was simply running a public gambling game in another man's quarters and letting the other fellow pay the rent and overhead. When they got this through their noodles, the boss gamblers became wrathy. Hitherto they had rather welcomed him as a drawing card; now they fired him out of their halls and calmly adopted his system themselves, charging five per cent commission thereafter on dice games.

But by that time Winn—for that was his highly ominous name—had cleaned up a competence, and had no need for worry.

Wherein lies the golden text: Take the cash and let the hazard go. A sure, steady five per cent in any business, but particularly if it be based upon the foolishness of believers, is worth all the possible capital prizes in the universe.

The man who guesses for a living, even on fifty-fifty chances, is apt to make a darned poor job of it.

"I've come for shelter—for protection—for counsel!"

MR. ECKS

By J. S. Fletcher

WHEN A DEALER IN DIAMONDS IS FOUND PIERCED, AS BY A RAPIER, THE MAGNET OF MYSTERY DRAWS TOGETHER A STRANGE ASSORTMENT

CHAPTER XXXVIII

NEAR THE CAFÉ

PERIVALE had been but half awake when he opened his door to admit Pelabos, but he was alert enough when the Frenchman's last word drove in on his consciousness, and his alertness showed itself in his action.

"Murdered!" he exclaimed, reaching for his nearest garments and beginning to divest himself of his night wear. "That's Spring! But—details?"

"I know little as yet, my friend," replied Pelabos, with a shrug of his shoulders. "As soon as I had assured myself of this lamentable fact, I hastened to you. But it is a fact! I have seen Delardier's remains. My friend—he has been assassinated in precisely the way in which Auberge was assassinated! He had been run through the heart from behind—a clean thrust through the back! That, in itself, is sufficient to show that the two murders are the work of one hand."

"But where did it take place?" demanded Perivale. "And when?"

"The facts, as I have learned them, are, briefly, these," said Pelabos. "You are, of course, well acquainted with the Champs Elysees? You are aware that at the west side of the Place de le Concorde there are trees, little plantations, shrubberies, gardens laid out, kiosks, between the Ave-

This story began in FLYNN'S WEEKLY for February 12

nue Gabriel and the Avenue de Champs Elysees? Well, my friend, at an early hour of this morning, a workman, passing through this public place, saw, lying near a seat in one of the alleys, the body of a man.

"He approached it; he bent over it; the man was dead! You conceive the situation! The workman hastens to find help; he encounters a policeman; they hasten to the spot; yes, indeed, the man is dead, and there is blood—he has been assassinated!

"And in cowardly fashion—stabbed from behind, when without doubt, he was unsuspecting! My friend, it is a repetition of the Folkestone affair! And the murderer—Ecks, or Spring!"

"Spring!" muttered Perivale. "Delardier was going to find Spring! He found him! He told Spring too much. We have made a mistake, Pelabos! We should not have allowed Delardier to go on that expedition. He has put Spring in possession of certain facts, and he himself has paid for it with his life, and we are in the position of knowing that Spring is acquainted with our designs on him! A big mistake!"

"To be repaired by instant action, my friend!" said Pelabos. "Already, early as it is, I have been able to do something. The description of Spring has been sent out in all directions, the railway stations are being watched—"

"Too late!" muttered Perivale, putting the finishing touches to his hasty toilet. "He has had many hours' start! Besides, he wouldn't trust to railways. But what else in that way?"

"A domiciliary visit has already been paid to his apartment," continued Pelabos. "It was, of course, fruitless—"

"It would be!" growled Perivale. "But—was nothing learned there?"

"This—that, according to the concierge, M. Spring, in keeping with his usual custom, left his apartment at five o'clock yesterday afternoon, no doubt for his favorite café. It was his custom to return between half past eleven and midnight. Last night he did not return."

"Naturally — knowing what he did know!" muttered Perivale. "Well—what did the medical men say? How long had Delardier been dead when found? For that's a highly important matter!"

"They are of opinion, from a first hasty examination, that he had been dead since between eleven and twelve o'clock last night," replied Pelabos.

"Well, look at that now!" exclaimed Perivale. "Hours and hours of a start! Of course, Spring'll be out of Paris long since!"

Pelabos displayed some signs of doubt.

"My friend!" he remarked. "It may not have been Spring! There is the mysterious person whom we know as Ecks!"

"No—it is Spring!" declared Perivale. "I feel it in my very bones that it is Spring!"

"Put it to yourself that it may have been Ecks, supplied with information by Spring," suggested Pelabos. "Ecks is, presumably, an individual who works secretly and in darkness!"

"There's a damned sight too much darkness about the whole thing to suit me!" growled Perivale. "Well, let's see if we can throw a bit of illumination on it. Give me time to swallow my coffee and eat a roll, and then let us do something—anything!"

"I, too, have not yet broken my fast!" remarked Pelabos mournfully. "The occasion was too eventful! I flew to action—I called on all my energies—my friend, I have had two hours of the most strenuous!"

"Then come down with me and break it," said Perivale. "No good working on an empty stomach! I'll rouse out the other two," he continued, as they left the room. "Lawson will be useful—he can identify Spring at sight."

"There is always the possibility of clever disguise," remarked Pelabos. "If it is Spring, he will have adopted unusual precautions. Still, courage!"

Perivale hastened to call Cripstone and Lawson. Presently they joined the two detectives over their coffee, and the four men began to discuss ways and means. Pelabos, despite his recent admonition to be courageous, was despondent.

"With the death of Delardier," he remarked, "we find ourselves in the position of the man deprived of his right hand!

Delardier was in possession of truths which now we cannot ascertain. There is, for example, the third man—Budini. We do not know where he lives!"

"It can be found out," said Perivale. "Budini must be found! It is possible that Budini knows something. Anyway, he can probably assist in the search for Spring. Decidedly, Budini must be unearthed, and quickly!"

Pelabos groaned—at the same time adding extra lumps of sugar to his coffee.

"That we may have light!" he ejaculated fervently. "Light—illumination—that is what we require, my friend! Light!"

"Have to do the lighting ourselves, I reckon!" remarked Cripstone. "And the spade work, too!"

Perivale said nothing. He was certain of this—that something would turn up in the course of the day; something that would help. Before noon the something came in the person of a taxicab driver who, after being shown the body of Delardier at his own request, affirmed positively that it was that of a man who engaged him the previous evening—oh, yes it was that man!

"Where did he engage you?" demanded Perivale.

"At the corner of the Rue Vignon, *monsieur,* the corner opening on the Rue des Capucines."

This was within a stone's throw—figuratively—of the Yellow Dog Café, in which Delardier had eaten with the two detectives. Perivale began to take courage.

"And at what hour was that?" he asked.

"At a quarter to ten, *monsieur*—to the minute!"

This again was promising. Delardier had parted from Perivale and Pelabos at twenty-five minutes to ten.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THREE DEPART

"WELL," continued Perivale "where did you take him after he had engaged you?"

"*Monsieur* is, naturally, acquainted with the Boulevard de Clichy?" replied the taxicab driver. "Well, *monsieur,* there—to the corner of the Rue Fontaine. Arrived at that corner, he bade me wait. He then disappeared—that is to say, *monsieur,* he walked some little way along and entered, it may have been a café. I waited."

"He returned, of course?"

"As *monsieur* says, he returned. But not alone. There was with him another. They enter my cab—"

"Hold! Before saying more, describe for us the other! His appearance, then?"

"*Monsieur,* without doubt, an Italian! Of an olive complexion, dark mustache, fine teeth—I saw him smiling as they came up. Oh, yes, an Italian!"

"Well, and what then?"

"The man whose dead body I have just seen—with regret, *monsieur,* for he was a generous one, *monsieur* understands—he bade me drive to the front of the Madeleine. I drove there. The two dismounted, the man now dead paid me, and they walked away rapidly."

"In what direction?"

"It seemed to me that they made for the Rue Royale, *monsieur.* But I had turned away before they had traversed many yards."

"And that, of course, was the last you saw of them?"

"Of the Italian, yes, *monsieur.* Of the other—until I saw what I have just seen, his dead body."

"That's Budini he described!" remarked Perivale. "Budini must be found! But can we find where Budini and Delardier went after they left the taxicab?

"Evidently, after leaving us, Delardier made up his mind to see Budini before he saw Spring. He found Budini and carried him off! I think they repaired to some place at which Spring was likely to be discovered, probably in the vicinity of the Rue Royale. Where is that place?"

"There are so many!" sighed Pelabos. "Still—courage!"

Perivale was a believer in the combing-out process. With a steady persistence which made his companion compliment him on his British qualities of thoroughness and perseverance, he went from one café to another in the quarter under suspicion, questioning, examining, suggesting.

And at the end of the afternoon he had his reward. In a small café in a side street a little north of the Champs Elysees he found a proprietor who was able to give him information about the three men, and all the more eager to give it after being shown a photograph of Delardier.

"I recognize it at once, *messieurs!*" he said. "Yes, he entered my establishment last night, poor fellow! The time—it would be about a quarter to eleven. Not alone, no! With him another, a tallish, dark-complexioned man, fine hair and teeth, a black mustache—not a Frenchman, *messieurs* will understand—Italian, perhaps, or Greek.

"They take seats—they refresh themselves—they smoke—always they talk, amicably, sometimes excitedly. The man whose portrait you showed me, it is he who is most excited; he appears to be explaining something; the other man, he seems to be incredulous, or doubtful. Eventually, he goes away."

"Goes away!" exclaimed Perivale. "The man you took to be an Italian?"

"The same, *monsieur!* He yawns, he seems as if no longer interested; in short, he goes! A friendly parting, *monsieur* understands—some mention of to-morrow. But the other man, this—he remains. Remains, *monsieur,* until it is a quarter to twelve; midnight. Then enters another! One, *monsieur,* whom the man who had remained was evidently expecting, for he immediately runs to meet him. They seat themselves—"

"Pardon!" interrupted Perivale. "This third man, the last who entered, is he known to you?"

"I know him, *monsieur!* He is one who has patronized my establishment occasionally, usually at a late hour. *Monsieur* will understand—for a little supper after the theaters have closed. Oh, yes—he is familiar to me, in that way. But I do not know his name. A tall, well built man, and, I think, an Englishman, of a certain age. Not elderly, but of a respectable middle age."

"Well?" inquired Perivale, certain that the man described was Spring. "These two sat down and I suppose talked?"

"Not for long, *monsieur!* The man who had just entered did not, on this occasion, pursue his usual custom and sup. He seemed about to give his order to the waiter, *monsieur*, then something that the other man said appeared to change his intention. He had a drink, instead. He spoke some word to his companion, and they left."

"In company?"

"In company, *monsieur.*"

"And that would be—what time?"

"Midnight, *monsieur!*"

"Do you know in which direction they turned?" inquired Perivale.

The proprietor answered with a decisive nod.

"I am able to assure *monsieur* on that point," he replied. "I happened to be standing at my door when they left. Toward the Champs Elysees, *monsieur!* But before they had well passed out, another man joined them."

Perivale contrived to nudge the elbow of Pelabos who was listening intently.

"Another man, eh?" he said.

"Another, *monsieur!* When I say joined them, I should say, rather, that he approached the man who had come last—the elderly man. They spoke—there was what I took to be an introduction—they all went away together."

"Can you describe the man who thus joined them outside?" asked Perivale.

"I noticed him but little, *monsieur.* Still, I have a good recollection of a face. He wore colored spectacles. A tallish, slightly built man."

Perivale presently led Pelabos away.

"That's Ecks!" he said. "Ecks and Spring are in combination! What the devil are we to do to get hold of them? Now then—did Ecks murder Delardier, or was it Spring?"

"My friend, I said this morning that I suspect Ecks!" remarked Pelabos. "We will rake Paris for Ecks!"

"Don't be too sure that either Ecks or Spring is in Paris!" retorted Perivale, skeptically. "I should say they're a long way out by this time. And where's Budini?"

He left Pelabos then, to join Cripstone and Lawson, and eat his much-needed dinner. But that was scarcely over when Pelabos appeared again—full of mystery.

"My friend!" he whispered. "Come with me! Those men of the society—they wish to see both of us!"

CHAPTER XL

SPRING IS SUMMER

IN his time Perivale, although still a young man, had experienced many strange adventures in which daring prefaced danger. But he felt a distinct thrill on hearing Pelabos's invitation. He knew already that the society which had been vaguely mentioned to him was, in real fact, one of those secret organizations which have for their object the undermining and overthrow of settled government.

Its officials, therefore, must necessarily be dark and desperate men, the sort that one associates in one's mind with bombs, daggers, automatic pistols, poison. He looked up at his French confrere with interest, not unmixed with that spice of possible danger which lends zest to an excursion into the unknown.

"Where are we to see them?" he asked. "And—need one go armed?"

He was thinking of a certain revolver which lay in his suit case upstairs; brought with him in case of need. But Pelabos smiled.

"Come!" he replied. "It is not a case of arming! You will see!"

Greatly to Perivale's surprise, Pelabos, instead of leading him from the hotel, conducted him to a quiet corner of one of its lounges. There, placidly smoking cigarettes, sat two men, in whose direction the Frenchman nodded sidently.

"Behold them, my friend!" he whispered. "There you see two individuals who, in all probability, are two of the most dangerous men in Europe, perhaps in the world! At any other time, eh? But they have given me their confidence, and I have pledged my word to them—I have also taken the liberty of pledging yours. They will, in consequence, speak to us freely—and we shall profit by it! Advance then—I shall present you!"

Perivale took careful stock of the two visitors as Pelabos led him toward their corner. Had he known nothing of them he would have set them down as two typical, inoffensive, peace-loving bourgeois, who, the business of the day over, had turned into that lounge to sip coffee and smoke tobacco.

Eminently respectable persons—the sort you would see, any time on Sundays, in company with mamma and the babies, throwing buns to the bears in the Jardin des Plantes or drinking something innocent outside a café. And as respectable as their appearance were their manners; quiet, courteous, easy.

They were charmed to have the honor of meeting one so eminent in his profession as M. Perivale, grateful to their good friend, M. Pelabos, for his kindness in affording them that opportunity; it was kind of Monsieur Perivale to take some interest in their affairs, their misfortune.

But perhaps it hinged on the affair with which M. Perivale—and M. Pelabos—were just then deeply interested. True—there were always wheels within wheels, and in this case— M. Perivale would comprehend? And, oh, yes, they spoke English.

Perivale, observing them closely, thought it quite possible that they spoke half a dozen other languages as well—since taking a nearer view of them he had decided that it would be impossible to say, precisely, what nationality these men belonged to. They were cosmopolitan. And seeing what he had to deal with, he spoke freely.

"Your affairs, gentlemen, seem to be very much mixed up with ours!" he observed. "To put matters plainly, you have lost a sum of fifty thousand pounds, the property of your society. It is a great loss! —and you are sure of your facts? You are sure that Auberge had this money on him when he left for England?"

"There is no doubt about that!" replied the elder of the two.

"Let me ask you a few questions, gentlemen," continued Perivale. "This money was in notes of the Bank of England?"

"Fifty of such notes—in denomination of a thousand pounds each."

"Did you take the precaution to make a memorandum of the numbers of the notes?"

"No! There were reasons."

"Perhaps that does not matter. If I knew where you procured the notes—"

The two men exchanged glances. It seemed to Perivale, watching them closely, that they could talk with their eyes, for the elder one almost immediately turned to him.

"They were procured for us, specially, by one of the great banks doing business with London. A special arrangement, you understand."

"The numbers will be there! It may be that it will be necessary for you, not for us, to get a memorandum of them. Well, gentlemen, you feel sure that Auberge had them on him when he reached England, and that he was murdered for them? That argues that somebody knew he was in possession of them. Don't you suspect anybody?"

Once more the two men exchanged glances. This time the younger man replied.

"No particular person. It may be that it was one of several persons who had knowledge of the commission entrusted to Auberge."

"In short, one of your society! A member, perhaps, of your committee? That would simplify matters, for the numbers, I suppose, are limited. And it also argues, gentlemen, that you have had a traitor among you! Can you not put your finger on him?"

"At present, no," replied the elder man. "Our object in seeing you is to learn if you can give us any information—in return for ours. In addition to the money which Auberge carried on him, he also carried, we are told, a particularly valuable diamond. That, like the money, is missing.

"Your task has been to find the diamond, ours is to recover our money—or, at any rate, to track and find the man who secured it. We think we may help you, we wish you to help us. For, *monsieur*, it seems to us that the man who stole your diamond from the dead body of Auberge stole our money at the same time! Who is he?"

"I agree with you," said Perivale, "and I am going to tell you a story—M. Pelabos here is already fully acquainted with it. It is a remarkable story, gentlemen, and you, probably, are the only people known to us who can answer certain questions arising out of it. Gentlemen—are you, both or either, acquainted with the town in England at which Auberge was murdered?"

"I know Folkestone," replied the elder man promptly.

"I have spent a month's holiday there," said the other. "I know it!"

"Very good—then you can follow me," continued Perivale. "Now, gentlemen, Auberge arrived at Folkestone about nine o'clock on Monday evening, October 23, and at half past seven next morning was found dead, murdered, on a path beneath the Leas.

"I have recently ascertained that on that same Monday evening there came to a small private hotel on the Leas a man who, for reasons which he gave, wished to stay the night there. He did stay the night, and he left next morning at an unusually early hour—seven-thirty. What did he do then?

"He chartered a passing taxicab, and, after making some inquiry of the driver, was taken in it to Newhaven, in time to catch the morning boat to Dieppe.

"Gentlemen—I have no doubt whatever that that man traveled from Paris to Folkestone on the Monday, and from Folkestone, by way of Newhaven and Dieppe, to Paris, on the Tuesday. I also do not doubt that he was, in some way, connected with the murder of Auberge! Now—do you suggest anything?"

The elder man spoke—two words:

"Describe him!"

"As well as I can," replied Perivale. "A tall, well built, somewhat portly man, middle-aged—inclining to elderly—English—quiet, reserved in some company, taciturn. Evidently a man of means—well dressed and so on. Looks like a well-to-do retired business man, of a type familiar enough in Continental tourist resorts. Not a very noticeable type, perhaps my description does not awaken any recollection in you?"

"It is a description of a very ordinary type! As you say, you could see many men of this sort—Englishmen—at any time at many places. Just an elderly Englishman—characteristically English!"

"Well, there is a fact about him which

may assist," said Perivale. "I have said that this man was well dressed. He also wore extremely good jewelry, though it was limited in quantity and unobtrusive. But one who noted him carefully at the small private hotel I told you of noticed a very curious thing about him.

"Dependant from his solid gold watch chain was a medal or charm—something of that sort—of common brass. An oval thing, in shape, having on it the figure of a sword, or dagger. Do you know anything of that, gentlemen?"

He was watching both men intently, hoping to catch some gleam of recognition in their faces. He caught nothing. The two faces remained as impassive as when Perivale first set eyes on them. But the elder man rose.

"I wish to consult with my colleague," he said quietly. "You will excuse us if we step aside, gentlemen?"

He moved to the middle of the room, the other man following him, and for a couple of minutes they stood whispering together. Then they returned and resumed their seats.

"Gentlemen," said the elder man, looking from one detective to the other, "you will continue to respect our confidence, I am sure! We are, after all, endeavoring, all four of us, to track down a particularly brutal murderer who is also a thief.

"Well, gentlemen, the man M. Perivale has described—we now know him! The description of the brass badge establishes his identity. He is—a traitor! In short, gentlemen, he is a man whom we had regarded as a particularly valuable and trusted member of our society, and who was one of the handful of men who knew that Auberge carried that money." He paused for a second, glancing at his colleague. His glance slipped to the two detectives, and he spoke again, more quietly.

"We have been betrayed!" he said. "Well, then, it is but one more instance."

"The name of this man?" asked Perivale. "In confidence!"

The elder man smiled, cynically.

"Doubtless he has many names," he replied. "We knew him as Summer—John Summer.

"At the private hotel in Folkestone," said Perivale, "he called himself Winter! And we may as well be candid—Pelabos and myself know him, here in Paris, as Spring. He was a member of the syndicate which employed Auberge to negotiate the sale of the valuable diamond which has been mentioned.

"So he knew of two matters worth knowing—one, that Auberge carried fifty thousand pounds in bank notes, the other that he carried a diamond worth at least two-thirds of that amount! Fine booty! But now we know—and we must get him!"

The two men exchanged glances; the elder turned quietly to Perivale.

"I do not think that you need fatigue yourselves in that pursuit, gentlemen!" he said in a peculiarly acid tone. "You see—we, too, also know!"

"You mean that you know where we can lay hands on him?" asked Perivale eagerly. "Ah!—If you do—"

CHAPTER XLI

"IN TERROR OF MY LIFE!"

"I MEAN, *monsieur*," interrupted the other, with more acidity, "that we know how to deal with a traitor to our cause. We shall deal with this one in our own way."

"Once—and for all," murmured the other. "Effectively!"

There was something so sinister in the utterances of both men that Perivale was at a loss for words. He saw Spring tried, condemned, executed in that last gently whispered phrase. He looked at Pelabos; Pelabos remained mute. The two men rose.

"We are deeply obliged, grateful to you, gentlemen, for the confidence with which you have treated us," said the other. "We shall respect yours. We will now—"

"Wait a moment, if you please," interrupted Perivale. "I want to have a word with my excellent colleague here, if you will excuse us. Listen," he continued, leading Pelabos aside. "Do you think we should tell them that Auberge was also a traitor and a spy—those cipher papers, you know?"

"At this stage, no!" replied Pelabos.

"Auberge is beyond their vengeance! No—I would let matters rest where they are, my friend—I flatter myself that we shall find Spring before they can lay hands on him! Yet there is one thing you might ask of them—do they know Ecks?"

"Good!" exclaimed Perivale. "I will—I hadn't thought of it. Gentlemen," he continued, going back to the others, "you have doubtless read of a man wanted in connection with the murder of M. Auberge who has been referred to in the papers as Mr. Ecks? Now, you doubtless know and have met many people—do you know him?"

"We read the papers—you refer to the article translated from a London evening journal," replied the elder man. "We do not know Ecks as thus described—a poor description—nor any man by that name. Can you describe this Ecks more fully?"

"He has an imperfect finger, a brown mole on his left cheek bone, and his left arm is elaborately tattooed," said Perivale. "A tallish, loosely-built man—"

The elder man, for the first time, suddenly showed signs of perturbation. He had risen in the act to go, now he dropped back in his seat and began to talk hurriedly in some language which neither of the detectives understood, to his companion, who appeared to be equally upset. After a minute or two of hasty talk, the elder man turned to the detectives, whispering.

"Gentlemen," he said. "Tell me, I beg of you—was all that was set forth in the newspaper article about this man and his stay at the Royal Pavilion Hotel absolutely correct? There is no doubt that he was there—in Folkestone—on the night of the murder of Auberge?"

"None whatever!" asserted Perivale.

"Do you know anything—have you heard anything—anything at all—that connects him while he was there with the other man who called himself Winter?"

"Well, yes," said Perivale. "I believe him to be the man who was seen in conversation with Winter outside the private hotel on the night of the murder. But—you appear, now, to know something of him! Who is he?"

"Another traitor!" replied the elder man. "A traveling agent of our society! I see it—he and the man who calls himself sometimes Spring, sometimes Summer, sometimes Winter, have been in conspiracy! And you know this man as Mr. Ecks!

"Ah—it is very good, that! X—the unknown quantity. Ah, well, gentlemen—we have learned much this evening. And as for this last man—Ecks—do not trouble. You have done much to find him—you cannot find him? Ah, *messieurs*—leave him also to us!"

With a look that made Perivale feel his blood turn cold, he bowed politely and turned away.

For a few moments after their visitors had left them the two detectives sat silently staring at the door by which they had gone softly away. What had reduced them to silence was the sinister suggestiveness of the final remark.

Leave him, also, to us!—there had been something in the tone in which that admonition was given that made Perivale shiver a little. He glanced round at Pelabos; Pelabos nodded.

"Yes, my friend!" he said sympathetically. "I know what you are thinking. That we shall hear of Spring with his throat cut, and Ecks with his brains blown out! Well, my friend, it is not impossible! These people are, perhaps, cleverer, as human ferrets, than we are!"

"It certainly looks as if they could do our job for us, if they get the chance!" admitted Perivale. "Or, rather, the hangman's job! But that won't suit me!"

"Why not, my friend?" asked Pelabos.

"I want to take the murderer of Auberge back to England!" replied Perivale, with a flash of his eye and a grim setting of his jaw. "That's where he's wanted!"

Pelabos shrugged his shoulders.

"I should like to arrest Ecks, and also Spring," he remarked. "But if these people assassinated both, I should bow my head in assent and say merely that they had rid society of two pests! But clever as those men are who have just relieved us of their presence, they are not cleverer than either of the men we want. There is room—much room—for us, my friend!

Courage! To-morrow we will renew the campaign, refreshed, reinvigorated!"

Perivale said no more. Presently, when Pelabos had gone away, he went to bed, and endeavoring to put everything out of his mind, tried to sleep. And he had just drifted into a first gentle slumber when a knock, hesitating and timid, sounded on the door of his bedroom. The next moment he had it open and was staring at a night porter, apologetic and doubtful, who, with a single gesture, indicated a shadowy figure standing at the farther end of the corridor.

"*Monsieur!*" he whispered. "There is a gentleman—he is persistent, *monsieur*—who desires to see you! *Monsieur* will pardon me, but—"

Perivale nodded his comprehension and took a step toward the man waiting in the distance. The man moved instinctively, and came under the light of an electric lamp. Budini!

"Tell the gentleman to come forward to my room," said Perivale. He himself drew back, holding the door open, and Budini, interpreting the gesture, advanced swiftly and entered. The next instant he had turned on the detective.

"M. Perivale!" he said in a trembling whisper. "I come to you for shelter—for protection—for counsel! *Monsieur!* I am in terror of my life."

CHAPTER XLII

HE IS FOUND

PERIVALE motioned his visitor to a seat and closed and bolted the door. Then he took a careful look at him. Budini was pale of hue and haggard of appearance; his eyes were those of a hunted thing; beads of perspiration were on his forehead, and beneath his dark mustache his lips were palpably quivering. And before saying a word the detective turned to his suit case and taking out a flask of brandy poured out and handed the frightened man a stiff drink of it.

"What is it?" he asked quietly. "You're safe here, Mr. Budini, anyway! And you can trust me!"

Budini swallowed the brandy with obvious relief. But the hand with which he set down the glass was still trembling when he turned to Perivale.

"You will pardon me?" he said. "Coming at this time, in this way? But I knew you were here, and that I should be safe if I could see you. Mr. Perivale—there is nowhere else in Paris where I could be safe—to-night! I am—yes, afraid of even a shadow!"

"But—why?" asked Perivale. "Here—smoke—it will do you good. And as I said just now, you're safe here. Till morning, if you like. You perceive there are two beds in this room. Take one of them. But," he continued, as he offered his visitor a cigarette, "I want to know what the trouble is. Tell me! Of what are you afraid? Of whom are you afraid?"

Budini took the cigarette, and after smoking a minute in silence heaved a deep sigh and shook his head.

"I scarcely know," he answered. "Murder, I think! And—of the man you know as Spring! All to-day, since hearing of what befell Delardier last night, I have gone about, here, there, anywhere, dreading what might happen to me at any minute. Ah—you do not know!"

"But I want to know!" exclaimed Perivale. "That's just what I do want! Can't you tell me, clearly, plainly?"

Budini remained silent a moment longer, evidently collecting his thoughts.

"It began last night," he said suddenly. "Last night—and since then, at least since an early hour this morning, I have lived in a nightmare, not knowing, you comprehend, if I should be the next. That murder of Delardier, you know—if Delardier, why not me? Because—we were in a secret!"

"What secret?" asked Perivale.

"I will try to explain. But pardon me if I seem—confused, eh? It is difficult to get things clear. Well, it is like this. Last night I was in a café which I visit regularly, near the Boulevard de Clichy, when Delardier came there—he knew where to find me. He was much upset, agitated.

"He told me that he had had a conversation with you and Pelabos, in the

course of which it had been told to him that Spring, the other member of our syndicate, had been in Folkestone on the night of the murder of Auberge, and that certain facts, now come to light, indicated that Spring had entered into a conspiracy with the man Ecks to murder Auberge and steal the diamond.

"If that were true, then, of course, Spring was deceiving us, and Delardier and I would lose the money we had invested in the diamond.

"There were other matters—something about money which had been entrusted to Auberge for some special purpose and was now missing. That we did not trouble about—it was not our affair; ours was the diamond. And we desired to see Spring at once!"

Budini paused, shaking his head as if at some recollection. He was smoking his cigarette quickly and threw it away and lighted another before he went on. The mere mention of Spring's name appeared to unnerve him.

"We knew where Spring might be found at that hour," he said at last. "We found him! The thought of him affects me—his—ah, I do not know what it is—his atmosphere of—something I cannot define! But—we found him at a certain café near the Rue Royale—I can indicate it to you.

"Delardier talked to him, diplomatically at first, plainly in the end. He told him that he had heard that he was in Folkestone on the night of Auberge's murder and invited an answer to the question—was he? Was it true?"

"And what did Spring say?" inquired Perivale.

"He insisted on knowing the source of Delardier's information," replied Budini.

"Did Delardier give it?"

"On pressure—yes."

"As being—what?"

"Yourself! Delardier told him—I felt he was telling too much, but Delardier was becoming excited—he told him that you had found out this, that you were here in Paris, primed with this knowledge, and that you had with you a young gentleman who could identify him as the man who had stayed at a small private hotel in Folkestone that particular night under the name of Winter."

"Then Delardier really put Spring in possession of all the facts against him?" suggested Perivale.

"Yes—as far as I am aware. He seemed to tell Spring all that you and Pelabos had told him. I would have checked Delardier, but it was useless. He was painfully anxious about the diamond."

"Did he mention—I mean did Delardier mention—the man named Ecks?"

"Yes—he told Spring that he was suspected of being in league with Ecks to obtain possession of the diamond and the money entrusted to Auberge."

"In short, Delardier gave everything away? A mistake—but you have not told me what Spring said in answer."

"He said nothing until he had heard everything! Then he became, or assumed an appearance of being, absolutely indifferent. He said that Delardier's story was quite correct as regards one fact. He was in Folkestone on the night in question."

"He admitted that?"

"Freely—he made no difficulty. He said that he had an interest—a financial interest—in some property at Folkestone, which had belonged to his family for many generations, and that early in the morning of the day he went there he received a telegram from the agent who deals with that property, asking him to go over at once to see him in respect to some transaction relating to it. And in proof of that he, there and then, produced from his pocketbook and showed to me and Delardier the telegram he spoke of, which he had preserved."

"You saw it?"

"I saw it, handled it, read it. It said 'Desirable that you should see me personally at once concerning matter in hand.' Oh, yes, it was genuine—I noted the postmark and the date."

"And he claimed to have gone over because of that telegram?"

"Certainly—all the rest, he said, was mere coincidence. He went at once to Folkestone, saw his agent, who, he added, was the man he was seen talking to outside the little hotel on the Leas, spent the night there, and next morning hastened

back to Paris by way of Newhaven and Dieppe."

"And—Ecks? Did he disclaim all knowledge of him?"

"Absolutely—and of anything relating to Auberge, the murder, the theft of the diamond, the theft of the money—of everything!"

"You believed him?"

"I did not know what to think—then! But I remembered something that seemed to be in his favor. When he, Delardier, and I were in Folkestone, at the Royal Pavilion Hotel, after hearing of the murder, Spring one morning excused himself to us, saying that he had some property in that town and wished to see the man who managed his interests there. That, of course, seemed to indicate that he was telling the truth."

"But Delardier? Did he believe him?"

Budini shook his head in a decided negative.

"He did not! Delardier was excited—furious about the diamond. He let Spring see that he still doubted him. He demanded more proof of Spring's innocence. Spring became cold—reserved—much too polite.

"I have heard it said—I do not know if it is true—that one should beware of an Englishman if, in a difference of opinion, or in a quarrel, he grows icily polite! Spring was like that! But Delardier grew more insistent. M. Perivale—he has paid for it! Within an hour or two, Delardier was dead!"

"You think Spring murdered him?"

Budini shivered as he spread out his hands. He gave the detective an odd glance.

"M. Perivale, I have ascertained certain facts about the murder of Delardier! He was killed in precisely the same way in which Auberge was killed—by one swift, carefully delivered thrust through the back, a thrust of some exceedingly powerful and sharp weapon that penetrated the heart.

"And now—now I think Spring was at Folkestone in pursuance of certain designs against Auberge, designs made in concert with Ecks. I think that one of those two, Ecks or Spring, and most probably Ecks, murdered Auberge.

"But of this I am sure, whoever it was that murdered Auberge murdered Delardier last night! And—I am not safe, *monsieur*—I know what Delardier knew!"

"You are safe here, M. Budini," said Perivale. "And to-morrow—well, we shall see that you are equally safe. But, as you have known him so very intimately, can't you give us some help in finding Spring? You know his habits, of course?"

"Not to the extent you think probable," replied Budini. "I have had one or two business dealings with him, but he has been to me, always, a man of more or less mystery. A man of little speech, of great reserve—you Englishmen, M. Perivale, are noted for your quality of reserve, but Spring is more reserved than any other Englishman I have known or met. He is a silent, watchful man—the sort that listens and says few words."

"And—clever?" suggested the detective.

"Ah!" exclaimed Budini. "It is as if you should ask—is the devil clever? Oh, yes, then, clever—and unscrupulous!"

"You believe, now, that Spring is in possession of that diamond?"

"Of the diamond, and of the money Delardier and I heard of, but which did not concern us. Oh, yes!—he, or he and Ecks, between them. This Ecks, then—whoever he may be—he has not yet been traced?"

"Not yet," replied Perivale. "But the police here are doing all they can."

Budini shook his head doubtfully.

"Ah!" he said. "I think it will be found that Ecks has gone, with the diamond and the money, and that by this time Spring has followed him. Yet—I am in terror at this minute that Spring should break in on us here, now! There is something about him that turns my blood to ice, *monsieur*, and that gives me—"

"Think no more of that to-night!" interrupted Perivale. "Sleep in that bed—confidently. In the morning—"

But before the morning came, and while Budini was still sleeping in his corner of the room, Perivale was roused by a knock at the door—the sort of knock which indicates business that may not be put off. He responded to it instantly, to find the night porter who had brought Budini to the room

there again, this time with an official-looking envelope.

"From M. Pelabos, to be delivered to *monsieur* immediately," he announced. "It came but a moment ago."

Perivale tore open the envelope and extracted a single sheet of paper on which a few words had been hastily scribbled in handwriting that he knew to be that of Pelabos:

COME HERE TO ME AT ONCE. I HAVE FOUND HIM!

CHAPTER XLIII

WHAT BOUGAUD SAW

THE indefinite nature of this communication caused Perivale to read it over two or three times. Found—him? But—who was it that Pelabos had found? Spring? Ecks? Somebody, anyway. He turned to the waiting porter.

"Who brought this?" he asked sharply.

"A gendarme, *monsieur*," replied the porter. "He waits below."

"Bring him here quickly," said Perivale. "And—you understand—quietly!"

The man bowed his comprehension and went off, and Perivale, closing the door, hurried on the necessary clothing. Budini still slept, and showed no sign of waking when a second knock came. But this time Perivale went outside the room. There, in the corridor, stood the porter and the gendarme—the gendarme stolid and official in contrast to the porter's evident curiosity.

"You can go," said Perivale to the porter. "I rely on your discretion, you understand?"

He turned to the gendarme.

"M. Pelabos sent this?" he suggested, producing the note. "Where is he?"

"At the Prefecture de Police, *monsieur*."

"He speaks here of having found somebody. Who is it?"

"That I do not know, *monsieur!* The letter was handed to me with instructions to hasten immediately with it to *monsieur's* hotel. But I learned that there had been an affray near the prefecture—an attack on some man, and that the man had been brought in there. An attempted assassination, I understood, *monsieur*."

"You did not see the man?"

"I saw nothing, *monsieur*."

"Go downstairs," said Perivale. "Get a cab—wait for me."

As the gendarme went off along the silent corridor, Perivale turned back into his room, and gently waking Budini bade him secure himself until his return. Then he hurried off to the rooms of Cripstone and Lawson, and bidding them dress and follow him to the prefecture as quickly as possible, ran down to the entrance hall and joined the gendarme, who by that time had secured a vehicle. He glanced at his watch as they drove off. Half past five o'clock.

"At what hour did this affair happen?" he asked his companion.

"I was informed—but *monsieur* understands that I know scarcely anything—at four o'clock this morning," replied the gendarme. "An affray in the street—in the neighborhood of the prefecture. The man—that is to say, a badly wounded man, was carried in there. Something—I do not know what—induced the police to send for M. Pelabos. M. Pelabos, on arriving and after seeing the man, sent for *monsieur*."

It must be Spring, thought Perivale—it must, at any rate, be either Spring or Ecks. He was impatient to know; he wished the cab would move more quickly. Then a sudden anxiety came over him.

"You say the man was wounded?" he asked. "Did you ascertain—how seriously?"

"I heard nothing as to that, *monsieur*. Wounded—that was all I heard. Except—ah, yes, *monsieur*, I recollect this. Stabbed—a case of the knife, *monsieur* comprehends."

Stabbed! Auberge had been stabbed—Delardier had been stabbed! Was this—but it was idle to speculate. He sat, excited and impatient until the cab set him and his companion down at the prefecture, where he followed the gendarme through corridors and passages to a small, ill-lighted room in which he found Pelabos, eagerly conversing with two or three more or less sleepy-looking officials.

Pelabos detached himself. The eagerness

faded from his face, however, as he turned to Perivale, and the shake of his head was mournful and expressive of intense disappointment.

"My friend," he said solemnly, "I had believed we had come to the great opportunity and it has escaped us! He is dead!"

"Who is dead?" demanded Perivale. "Of whom are you talking?"

Pelabos stared incredulously.

"Of whom? Of Ecks!" he exclaimed. "My hurried message to you—did I not say the name? Ah, I was so excited! But Ecks—yes! And—gone! And, my friend, without a word! He never regained consciousness."

Perivale heaved a sigh of disappointment. He had been reckoning on the possibilities of the wounded man being Ecks. An admission, a confession, a statement.

"I want to know," he said. "The messenger you sent to the hotel could tell me nothing but that there had been an affray. What happened—how came Ecks in this neighborhood? Why should he be near the prefecture?"

"That is just what I should like to know myself!" exclaimed Pelabos. "And it is, perhaps, what we shall never know, though I have already indulged in theories. What would appear to be a reasonable theory, for example—"

"Pardon!" interrupted Perivale. "I'm not in the theorizing mood! I want to know facts. What did happen?"

"My friend, there is but one person in the world—other than the criminal himself—who can give us first hand testimony as to what happened," replied Pelabos. "And as he has just departed, after having had his testimony taken down, I can only repeat it to you—or, better, read his statement to you. You will then know as much as I do—and I am desolated that we know no more."

He turned to an official who was busy at a desk and after a moment's parley with him, came back to Perivale with a document, which, after bidding him to attend closely, he proceeded to read:

My name is Louis Jean Bougaud. I am aged forty-seven. I am a night watchman, employed at the warehouse of Crendoliere Freres on the Quai St. Michel. I reside in the St. Lazare district. As regards this particular night, I arranged, my wife being ill, that a friend of mine should, my employer being agreeable, relieve me of my duties at four o'clock in the morning.

My friend arrived at the warehouse at twenty minutes before that hour. I left it in his charge at ten minutes to four and set out on my way—that is by the Pont St. Michel, and so northward to the Boulevard de Strasbourg. This, of course, took me past the prefecture of police.

I had just crossed the Pont St. Michel and was approaching the prefecture when I heard, across the street, a scream which froze the blood in my veins. It was one cry—a fearful one! At the same instant, as it seemed, I heard a fall, a crash. It was a dark morning, the lamps threw little light. But I then saw a man, a tall and, I think, a heavily built man, running away with what appeared to me incredible speed along the Quai des Orfevres, in the direction of the Pont Neuf.

He ran so rapidly that in a second or two he was gone—I think he may have turned into the Place Dauphin, or, perhaps concealed himself. All then was silent. I hastened across the space to the corner of the prefecture, it was thence, it seemed to me, that the scream had come. I there found a man stretched across the pavement.

He was moaning very faintly, and when I touched his shoulder he made no response. I then hurried to the prefecture and, having succeeded in gaining attention at a side entrance, informed the officials of what I had seen and heard. They accompanied me to the place at which the man lay, and he was removed within the building. I cannot describe the man who disappeared further.

All I can positively assert is that in the uncertain light he seemed to be a very tall, heavily built man, and that, considering his size, I was amazed at the extraordinary swiftness with which he ran away from the scene of his crime.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FATAL TWO

"HAT is all that Louis Jean Bougaud can tell," concluded Pelabos. "I resume from the point at which he finishes. The wounded man was brought in here and the doctor summoned. My friend—the man had been run through the back! Precisely as Auberge was, and as Delardier was. But—with a difference. In those two cases the work

had been done more cleanly—they, presumably, had both died almost instantaneously.

"But in this—perhaps a sudden movement on the part of the victim, perhaps a slight miscalculation on the part of the assassin—at any rate, while Delardier and Auberge died, we believe, at once, this man, Ecks, lingered for an hour!"

"Look here!" said Perivale. "Are you sure this man is Ecks?"

"I shall be greatly astonished if he is not," exclaimed Pelabos. "You will remember, my friend, that our police here—and, indeed, all over France—have been furnished with the description of Ecks supplied by yourself and your excellent colleague, the amiable Cripstone?

"Well, then, our officials here, when this man was carried in, recognized him from those descriptions! But, to make sure, they sent for me, Pelabos! And I—I have no doubt. You shall see for yourself—come with me!"

"Wait," said Perivale. "Cripstone will be here in a few minutes. I want to know if Ecks—if it is the man who presented himself at Folkestone as Ecks—is the man Cripstone knew. But now—the man whom Bougaud saw running away? That, of course, is Spring!"

"Naturally, my friend, it is Spring! Ah, if Bougaud had but resembled him in the faculty of swiftness! But Bougaud, you must be informed, is a heavily-built, fleshy fellow, inclined to corpulence—Bougaud could not run after a snail! And so—Spring is at large. Still—courage! We shall have him!"

"I wish to Heaven we'd got him!" growled Perivale. "But—why were these men in the neighborhood of the prefecture at that hour of the morning?"

Pelabos smiled knowingly, and wagged a forefinger.

"Ah—ah!" he said. "Why? But I—Pelabos—I have a theory. Spring feared that Ecks was about to betray him! He knew that Ecks would approach the authorities under cover of the night—he watched him, tracked him! Yes, my friend, you smile at theory, but theory—"

Cripstone, explaining that Lawson would follow, came hurrying in just then, and at Pelabos's suggestion accompanied him and Perivale to see the dead man's body. It lay where it had been temporarily placed while awaiting removal, and Perivale gazed on it with curiosity mingled with wonder. But Cripstone, after taking one look, went straight to the point.

"This is the man I knew!" he said, almost instantly. "There are the tattoo marks! Oh, yes—there's no doubt about it. And there," he added, turning to Perivale, "there are the marks we heard of from the young lady and the porter at the Folkestone hotel—the mutilated finger and the brown mole on the left cheek.

"That's the man! Well—" he paused, glancing inquiringly at his companions. "Tell anything before the end came?" he asked.

Perivale shook his head dismally.

"Never recovered consciousness, so Pelabos tells me!" he answered. "Dying when they brought him in here! No—not a word!"

"How was it?" asked Cripstone. "Murder?"

"Precisely same thing that happened to Auberge and to Delardier," replied Perivale. "Run through the heart from behind! In this case, he lingered awhile—longer than they did, anyway." He paused, looking thoughtfully at the dead man. "There's a feature of these cases that I'd like to know more about," he said presently. "Of minor importance, perhaps—but I'd just like to know, to have it solved, you understand."

"What's that?" asked Cripstone.

"Perhaps a mere bit of inquisitiveness on my part," replied Perivale. "But just this—what weapon did this man use? According to the doctors who examined Auberge and those who saw Delardier it's a weapon of extraordinary fineness—an unusual weapon.

"The wound in each of those cases was precisely similar, from what the medical men in Folkestone and here in Paris told me—caused, they said, by a rapier or stiletto having thin edges, each of which was ground to the keenness of a first-class razor. A terrible weapon in the hand of a man deter-

mined on killing! But—how did he carry it?"

Neither Pelabos nor Cripstone could offer any solution to that question. They were all three retiring from the room when Lawson came in. At his first glance at the dead man he started, letting out a hushed exclamation.

"By Jove!" he said in an awed whisper. "I saw that man last night!"

The others turned sharply on him.

"Where?" demanded Perivale.

"In a small, obscure café—one of the poorer sort—in the Montmartre district," replied Lawson. "I can't remember its name, but I can take you to it. I was dodging about that part, don't you know, in and out of lots of places, looking for Winter. I distinctly remember this man, his clothes, hat, everything!

"He sat near me, in conversation with an old man who had a gray beard, an unusually long gray beard, and a hunched back—or perhaps he was very much bent with age. There's no doubt about it—I remember this man, but I never suspected he was Ecks, of course."

"But, look here!" exclaimed Perivale. "You'd heard the description of Ecks! How was it you didn't recognize that brown mole on his left cheek?"

"I never saw his left cheek!" replied Lawson. "He sat at a table not far from mine, on the same side of the café, with his right side to me. He never turned his full face in my direction. And I wasn't there so long—I'd merely poked my nose in to see—well, what I could see!

"But that is the man—I particularly noted those clothes and the cloth deerstalker hat, both as being somewhat old-fashioned and anything but Parisian. I took him and his companion for a couple of artists—as a matter of fact they were examining some pictures—water colors, I think—which this man had in a small portfolio."

Perivale looked at his two detective companions.

"Let us get out of this!" he said, moving toward the door. "Mr. Lawson will give us a fuller description of the old man who was with Ecks at this café! Because I think that that old man is Spring, alias Winter!"

CHAPTER XLV

LEAVE HIM ALSO TO US

THIS declaration on the part of Perivale caused Cripstone to turn on him with an incredulous smile and shake of the head.

"Surely not!" he exclaimed. "Come, now—from what you told me, Mr. Lawson here is thoroughly acquainted with Spring, or, as he called himself at Folkestone, Winter. Therefore, Spring would recognize him last night. And he'd have been a clever actor indeed if he didn't show some sign of it which Mr. Lawson could hardly fail to perceive, unless he's singularly unobservant—which," he added, with a sly smile at Lawson, "he isn't—in my opinion."

"I feel confident the old man was not Spring," said Lawson. "I can't believe that any man could possibly disguise himself so effectually. He was a thoroughly patriarchal-looking old chap—a long, gray beard which covered most of his face, right up to his cheek bones, much wrinkled about his eyes, and with longish hair grayer than his beard.

"Genuine enough, in my opinion! It never crossed my mind for a second that he might be Spring. Besides, if he wasn't a hunchback, he was so bowed with age that he looked like one."

"You said he was a tall man," remarked Perivale. "Who ever saw a tall hunchback?"

"Then it was age," asserted Lawson, "He was a very, very old man!"

Perivale gave Lawson an indulgent smile.

"Did you look at his hands?" he asked.

"No—can't say that I did," replied Lawson. "Why?"

"Next time you're looking at a man—under similar circumstances—look at his hands," said Perivale. "You'll soon tell if he's really old, or elderly, or middle-aged, or young! I'm still of opinion that this old man was Srping, alias Winter, alias Summer! Anyhow, he was with Ecks. Therefore he will know something about

Ecks. Accordingly, we must find him. Probably he is a regular customer at that café. You can find the café again?"

"I can find it again, certainly," replied Lawson. "It had a name—usual sort of thing in that quarter—but I can't remember it. Still, I can go to it."

"To-night then," said Perivale. "We must arrange a careful visit. What time was it when you were in there last night?"

"All about nine o'clock—from that to half past, anyway."

"The same time to-night then," repeated Perivale. "It is, at any rate, a chance." He turned to Pelabos. "We can arrange matters?"

Pelabos showed no signs of belief in the proposed arrangement. He inclined his head toward the room they had just left.

"The news of that will be spread before the morning is much older!" he remarked. "It cannot be kept back. And Spring will hear it, and if—which I, too, greatly doubt—the old man described by M. Lawson really is Spring, then Spring will not be seen at that café, my friend!"

"You're forgetting that Spring may feel absolutely safe in his make-up as a time-worn patriarch!" said Perivale. "I shall try the café, anyhow."

He went back to the hotel after that, and to Budini. The Italian stared questioningly at him as Perivale closed the door and went to the side of his bed.

"Budini!" said Perivale. "There has been another murder! This time—Ecks! It is getting wholesale. We shall have to get that man, somehow. Now listen!"

Budini listened as if fascinated. He grew pale under his olive skin.

"It is as I told you!" he muttered. "He will stop at nothing! Whoever knows his secret is not safe! But—yes, there may be some safety now! I do not know, though, if there is safety for me—I know!"

"He must know that there are others than you who know his secret," said Perivale. "But come—let us be practical. Do you know anything of this café that Lawson speaks of—I mean as being a resort of Spring's?"

"Nothing! But then I don't know how it is called. Still I never knew Spring to frequent any of the places in the Montmartre district."

"Precisely why he should frequent them now!" remarked Perivale. "But I am amazed that he remains here in Paris at all! Why doesn't he clear out with his spoils?"

"Because, in all probability, he never got hold of the spoils, at any rate, of the diamond, until during this last night," replied Budini. "And the diamond is, of course, the most easily realizable property! As far as I am aware, it is not easy to get rid—I mean, to convert into more convenient form—your Bank of England notes of a thousand pounds each. But a diamond—ah, that is another matter!"

"And you think that Ecks got and held the diamond until last night?" suggested Perivale.

"I should say so—if your suspicion that the old man of the café is Spring is correct," replied Budini. "Still, it is a mystery—and there is a conclusion, *monsieur,* to which, with due respect to your superior knowledge, I think you have jumped rather hastily!"

"Yes? What?" demanded Perivale.

"I do not feel at all certain that the man who knifed Ecks and who was seen by the night watchman, Bougaud, to run away with such extraordinary swiftness really was Spring," replied Budini. "To my thinking that does not at all follow! The old man with the gray beard may have been Spring, made up, disguised, but I do not see that the man seen by Bougaud was Spring!"

"Can you think of any other person that it might have been then?" asked the detective.

Budini made a significant gesture.

"According to what Delardier, poor fellow, told me when he sought me that night," he said, "the officials of some secret society were as anxious to find Ecks as they were resolved on finding Spring!

"Ecks, like Spring, was a traitor—a double dealing person. And those secret societies—ah, I know them and how they work and what they can do. This affair of Ecks may have been what the society in question would call an execution of justice! Do you not see?"

"I think it was the same hand that struck down Auberge at Folkestone and Delardier here in Paris," replied Perivale. "The wounds in all three cases appear to have been caused by the same weapon—an unusual weapon, I should say."

"I think you will find that this secret society is at work," said Budini. "Such people, if betrayed or deceived, are implacable!"

Perivale said no more. Remarking that they would have their coffee brought up there, he rang the bell, and after giving his order, turned to his toilet preparations. But he was thinking. He had not forgotten the last words of the secret society official on quitting Pelabos and himself, the words that applied to Ecks:

"*Leave him, also, to us, monsieur—leave him, also, to us!*"

CHAPTER XLVI

BETTER A TIGER'S LAIR

HAD these people wreaked their vengeance on Ecks? Was the big man that Bougaud saw running away so swiftly, not Spring, but some emissary of the society? And was some equally determined and vengeful agent tracking and dogging Spring?

If so, and Spring knew of it, or guessed it, would not that knowledge of suspicion cause Spring to live the life of a mole, until he could emerge from beneath the surface and get a chance to escape?

But that was all conjecture; the practical thing was to do something. During the whole of that day the police, under direction of Pelabos, were unusually busy and pertinacious, but when night fell Spring had not materialized, nor had any further information come to hand regarding him or Ecks.

Nobody came forward with particulars as to the murdered man; it was a puzzle as to where Ecks had lived, where he had hid himself during the time that had elapsed between his arrival in Paris from Boulogne and his murder outside the prefecture.

And when nine o'clock came that evening Perivale, in company with his two English companions, Pelabos, and a couple of French detectives, repaired to the café Lawson had spoken of, feeling that if something did not eventuate there the search for Spring was destined to be more difficult than ever.

Something had already eventuated before they reached the place to which Lawson conducted them. The street was a short and narrow one; halfway down its length an excited crowd was gathered, talking, vociferating, gesticulating. It was a crowd of civilians, old and young, but here and there was a uniform; over everything, from the people staring out of upper windows to those on the pavement, was an air of mystery. And in the doorway of a small café stood its proprietor, his hands busy, his shoulders eloquent, haranguing two or three policemen, one of whom wrote in a notebook.

"That's the place!" exclaimed Lawson. "The Café de la Loup Gris! That's its boss at the door. I remember him. But what's the row?"

Pelabos murmured an admonition to follow him closely, and pushing his way through the crowd, advanced to the group at the door with an air of unmistakable authority. The policemen recognized him and fell back, resigning their job into his superior hands, and Pelabos motioned the excited proprietor to retire within his establishment.

"Let us go inside, my friend!" he said gently. "You shall narrate to us what has happened. Speak freely then—you perceive that I am in authority. What, then, makes itself here—an outrage?"

The proprietor drew his shoulders up to his ears and spread both hands wide.

"An outrage of the most abominable, *monsieur!*" he exclaimed. "Incredible—shameful. And in my establishment, too, the prevalent tone and atmosphere of which, as all who know it will testify, is of the highest respectability—a temple of the muses, *monsieur*, by which I would convey to *monsieur* that it is the resort of those who practice the arts!

"Oh, yes, indeed, an outrage such as I would not have conceived it possible I could

ever witness beneath this so peaceful roof —ah, *monsieur,* I rage, I tremble at present, but I could weep—"

"Doubtless!" interrupted Pelabos. "But one weeps at leisure; at present the thing is to be stern! This outrage then?"

"*Monsieur* shall be told the story!" answered the proprietor, making a determined effort to nerve himself. "*Monsieur* shall judge for himself! Figure to yourself then, *monsieur,* the peaceful atmosphere of my establishment at the hour of nine—or a little earlier—this evening.

"Not many patrons present, *monsieur,* a few, well known to me. Among them an old one—a venerable, whose gray hairs should have been his protection! He has dined, *monsieur*—a delicate taste is his, in food and wine—and now he sits, calm, benign, peaceful, enjoying his coffee, his *petit verre,* his cigarette.

"It makes good the heart to behold him in the winter of his days, taking his ease after the exquisite refection his own taste and the skill of my accomplished chef—a veritable *cordon bleu,* did *monsieur* but know it—has caused to be served to him. But then, *monsieur,* truly a thunderbolt!

"The door of my establishment is suddenly and indecently thrust open, flung wide! To my horror and that of my patrons there rushes in a posse of men, all of whom, *monsieur,* wear masks of black cloth across the upper part of their faces, which are, doubtless, of the most villainous.

"Without a word, *monsieur,* they leap upon and seize my venerable patron; they pinion him by the arm, the leg; they offer him unbelievable indignities; they force, bear, carry, thrust him out of the door. They fling him into a car, a capacious car, which is without. Some fling themselves after him, some leap upon the car—they are off, *monsieur,* as swiftly as they arrive, their unfortunate victim at their mercy.

"And we others, we are stupefied, we gasp, we tremble, we gaze at one another, horror-stricken—we ask ourselves if we dream, if it is real, if we live in an age of civilization, if—"

"It is indeed an outrage worthy the times of the Huns," agreed Pelabos. "But we will steel ourselves once more! This elderly gentleman—he is a regular patron of yours?"

"Since some little time ago, *monsieur.*"

"And his name?"

"Ah, *monsieur,* I cannot tell you! Yet it runs in my poor head that I have heard him called M. Blanc."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"No, *monsieur,* I do not know that. It is, perhaps, a period of two, or three months, since he began to patronize my establishment. I gathered—one keeps one's eyes open, *monsieur,* and, to a certain extent, one's ears—that he was a patron of the arts.

"I have here, *monsieur,* a small clientele of young artists—those, *monsieur* comprehends, who have not yet arrived, who are, as it were, climbing the hill. This good old gentleman bought many sketches, pictures, from these promising young men; he was, evidently, one of those who carry money in the purse—ah, yes, a well provided one, without doubt! Generous, too, I am assured—which makes this outrage all the more abominable as *monsieur* will admit."

"I admit it freely," agreed Pelabos. "An outrage of the most reprehensible! But this gang of miscreants—in which direction did their car proceed?"

But the proprietor did not know. Nor could any of the people in the street tell more than that the car, driven away at a high speed, turned the first corner and disappeared immediately.

"An affair of a moment, *monsieur* comprehends?" said a man outside who had witnessed the occurrence. "From the inception to the development, *monsieur,* an affair of seconds—literally!"

Pelabos and his companions went away. Pelabos drew Perivale aside when they were once outside the narrow street.

"We may draw our own conclusions about this, my friend," he whispered. "Spring is in the hands of the society we know of! Well, then, we shall never know what has happened to him! But he had better have entered the lair of a tiger!"

"I agree," said Perivale.

He went back to his hotel, and eventually to his room, feeling that Spring was now

out of his reach. But he had removed no more than his coat when a porter appeared at the door and handed him a crumpled, much-folded scrap of paper.

CHAPTER XLVII

JUSTICE

HE porter turned away as he placed the note in Perivale's hand, signifying thereby that no answer was expected. But the detective had noticed a look on his face which suggested mystery, and he hastened to call him back.

"Who gave you this?" he asked. "And when?"

"But a moment ago, *monsieur*—as one would say. He was—yes, one of those two persons with whom *monsieur* was in conversation the other evening. *Monsieur* will recollect?"

"Where is he? Waiting?"

"No, *monsieur*. He did but enter, with a request that this should be brought to *monsieur* at once, and then retired."

Perivale nodded, and as the man went away, turned back into his room and before untwisting the folded note, the outer flap of which was secured by a wafer, glanced at his watch. Half an hour after midnight—a strange time to receive any communication! But this—what was it? Standing beneath the electric light, he unfolded the scrap of paper and read a line, evidently written hastily, in pencil:

> M. Perivale, I await you outside the hotel at the left-hand corner.

Perivale wasted no time in hesitation. Tearing the crumpled paper into fragments and slipping his revolver into his hip-pocket, he left the room forthwith and hurrying downstairs passed out into the street and turned to the left.

There, at the corner indicated he saw a man waiting, and advancing quickly toward him, recognized him at once as the elder of the two secret society men who had conversed with him and Pelabos; he saw, too, that his visitor was alone.

"You sent for me, *monsieur!*" he said quietly as he walked up. "I am here!"

The man made a polite bow.

"A thousand apologies for intruding on you at this hour, *monsieur!*" he answered. "But I feel assured that you will pardon me when I tell you that it is my desire, and the desire of those whom I represent, to place you in possession of certain information.

"I lay stress on that word *you*, M. Perivale! What I propose to tell you is for your private information, for your ears only. It is not for Pelabos—it is for you, representing the English police. You are an honorable man—you will respect my confidence?

"Very well, then, *monsieur*, you are, I know—for we are people who know everything about anything that concerns our affairs—you are acquainted with a certain event which took place at the Café de la Loup Gris some five hours ago? Precisely! And you would like to know what followed upon it, as far as the captured man was concerned?"

"I should certainly like to know that!" replied Perivale. "You will tell me?"

"I am here to tell you everything, M. Perivale—in strict confidence and privacy! Walk with me a little in this direction—there is a café I know of close by, where we can converse, a safe place, too. Indeed, all is safe—I shall discharge my task of telling you what I have to tell, and then—well, *monsieur*, you can then reutrn to England satisfied!"

There was a strange tone of finality in that last word that made Perivale experience once more the curious sensation of ice-cold shivering that had come over him once before in this man's company. But he made no remark, and followed his companion along the street to a café wherein there were still many customers.

His guide sought out a quiet corner and bade a somewhat sleepy waiter bring coffee. Not until they had been left to themselves did he speak again.

"M. Perivale, from what I have seen of you," he said, "you are not a slow one—you can put together two and two as well as another!"

"I hope so," replied Perivale. "And that means—eh?"

"That you guessed that the venerable man who was seized at the Loup Gris this evening was the person you knew as Spring, alias Winter."

"To be plain, I did guess that."

"You guessed rightly, *monsieur*. And you doubtless guessed further that the persons who arrested Spring and carried him away successfully, were officials of the society which I represent?"

"I guessed that, too. But I don't think there was much guessing about it. I felt sure of it. Just as sure as I feel sure of something now!"

"And what is that, M. Perivale?"

"Why, that you've got Spring in safe keeping. Just that."

The man smiled enigmatically.

"There you are wrong!" he answered. "Spring is now certainly in safe keeping, *monsieur*, but not in our keeping!" He leaned nearer to Perivale's side and lowered his voice to a whisper. "*Monsieur*, I came to tell you the truth! You need not search for Spring any longer! He is dead!"

Perivale started, in spite of a determination to keep cool. He twisted sharply round on his companion with a questioning stare. But the man, who was calmly rolling a cigarette, only nodded nonchalantly, and repeated his last word:

"Dead!" he said. "In fine—executed!"

Perivale's mouth suddenly felt curiously dry. He gulped once or twice.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean that—"

"I mean that the man was a traitor, and that after due trial he was put to a traitor's death, M. Perivale. He was shot through the heart at a quarter to twelve o'clock—and by this time he is safely buried."

CHAPTER XLVIII

FOR M. PELABOS

PERIVALE relapsed into silence. He had the feelings of a man who suddenly realizes that he is confronted with a secret power working in darkness. His companion evidently gauged his feelings and nodded sympathetically.

"You do not understand, *monsieur*," he said. "You, with your official training, your cut-and-dried methods, you would call what I have just spoken of by an ugly name—murder! No—it is not even judicial murder. It is—justice! The man was a human tiger—he died red with blood!"

"You had something to tell me?" said Perivale.

"And I shall proceed to tell it," replied the other. "Well, then, convinced, after the conversation which took place between Pelabos and yourself and my colleague and myself, that the man Spring was a traitor and a spy, and probably guilty of the murder of Auberge and the theft of our money and of the diamond at Folkestone, and of the subsequent murder of Delardier here, we used all our energies as a society to track him. We also expended our energy in tracing the man Ecks, whom we suspected as being Spring's accomplice. In this—"

"Pardon," interrupted Perivale. "A question. You know, of course, that Ecks was murdered near the prefecture some twenty-four hours ago?"

"We know, of course! There is nothing, M. Perivale, that we do not know in connection with this affair."

"Well—who murdered Ecks?" asked Perivale bluntly.

"Spring! Because he had discovered that Ecks was about to—what is your English term?—to give him away! Ecks had grown alarmed, and was about to save his skin by confession to the authorities. Oh, yes, Spring!"

"Continue," said Perivale.

"Yes—but from a certain point, to avoid being tedious," said the other. "I need not worry you with the story of our doings—it is sufficient to say that by eight o'clock last night we knew where Spring was to be found—at the Loup Gris, cleverly disguised as a venerable old man; he was a past master, Spring, at that sort of thing!

"Well, we made our arrangements. At nine o'clock, a party of our society descended upon the Loup Gris, seized Spring, and carried him safely away to a place of retreat which not all the police in Paris could discover, M. Perivale—no, nor any

of your Scotland Yard men, either. There he was immediately brought before our tribunal.

"His disguise was stripped off—very ingenious it was, even to his hunched back—and he was left, not naked, certainly, but in his true form as Spring, or Winter, or Summer, or whatever his real name was—a matter which will never be known.

"Then, being formally accused, he was warned that nothing but a full and complete disclosure would avail him—he must tell all! *Monsieur*—he began with a lie, a vile lie!"

"What?" asked Perivale eagerly.

"That all he had done had been done in the interests of the society. Now, there he made a great mistake, for before we laid hands on him, we knew he was guilty—we had already secured proofs, never mind how, that if we had not captured him, he would, before noon to-day, have been safely out of Paris.

"So all we were concerned with was to make ourselves acquainted with his doings, and he narrated them freely and with great plausibility, being under the impression—he was, like all criminals, a man of great vanity and conceit—that he could succeed in justifying himself to us. I shall now tell you his story."

"That's what I want," said Perivale still more eagerly. "If it clears certain things up—"

"You will see," continued the official. "According to Spring, he made the discovery that Auberge was a traitor, and not merely that, but an agent of your English police, and that instead of handing over our fifty thousand pounds to the English bank to which he had been entrusted to carry it, he was about to place it, with a full disclosure of our plans, in the keeping of some high-placed English politician or official.

"Spring accordingly entered into an arrangement with Ecks, and into another with Auberge. The arrangement with Ecks was that he should follow Auberge to Folkestone, and should there act under his, Spring's, directions.

"Spring himself, in accordance with his arrangement with Auberge, was also to go to Folkestone. He had told Auberge that he had some private business in that town on the Monday evening, and, just to know that Auberge had arrived there with the diamond in safety, had appointed a brief meeting with Auberge near the hotel on the Leas at which Spring meant to stay.

"Now, all that is Spring's story—whether he and Auberge were in collusion about the diamond and the fifty thousand pounds no one will ever know! All that we can know is what Spring told in the hope that we, his judges, would accept it as a proof of his loyalty to our society. And that amounts to this:

"Spring arrived in Folkestone early in the evening of Monday, October 23. He engaged a room at a small private hotel on the Leas. He dined there. He had arranged to meet Auberge—they both knew that town very well—at half past nine. Spring left his hotel to keep that appointment. Auberge was a little late, but they met.

"They walked about awhile; Spring, in his character of anxious part-proprietor, asked Auberge where the diamond was. Auberge told him that, for safety, he had secreted it in his bedroom at the Royal Pavilion Hotel, and where in the bedroom—in the left-hand side brass knob of the rail at the foot of the bed.

"Armed with this knowledge, and knowing, as he protested to us, that Auberge was about to betray the society on arriving in London, he lured Auberge to a path leading down the cliff, there—as he phrased it—removed him, and having extracted from Auberge's pocket the wallet containing the bank notes, returned to the Leas."

Perivale was listening eagerly and beginning to understand matters. The connection between Spring and Ecks was now becoming plain.

"Yes—yes!" he said. "And—afterward?"

"On the Leas, near the little hotel, Spring, according to arrangement, met Ecks. He told Ecks—who had secreted himself somewhere since the arrival of the boat from Boulogne—to go down to the Royal Pavilion and to engage a room for the night.

"He also told him where he, Ecks, would find the diamond in Auberge's room, and he furnished him with a skeleton key which would open the door—neither he nor Ecks knew, then, that Auberge had left his key in the door. Ecks went off at once to do his part; Spring turned into his hotel.

"Next morning, at a very early hour, Spring left for Paris by way of Newhaven and Dieppe, Ecks left by way of Dover. They met in Paris that night, and Ecks, who, of course, had secured it without difficulty during his night's stay at the Royal Pavilion Hotel, handed over the diamond to Spring, who, as you know, already had our fifty thousand pounds' worth of English bank notes in his possession.

"So far, good—from their standpoint. But now came the hue and cry after Ecks. Followed on that Delardier's revelation to Spring and threat of exposure. Delardier had to be removed; Spring removed him.

"Then Spring suspected Ecks, and twenty-four hours ago, dogged Ecks from a lodging to the neighborhood of the prefecture, where, certain that Ecks was about to denounce him, he removed him, also. He was frank, very frank, about these removals, but, M. Perivale, it was—eh—all in the service and interests of our society! Oh, entirely! A most specious, plausible man, this Spring!"

"Your tribunal did not believe him?"

"Would you believe a cat whose whiskers are white with cream? We listened—incredulous! Not that we showed that. But—we knew! Knew all—before we listened to him. Nor did it profit him when he handed over to us what he had on him—carefully concealed—the money and the diamond!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Perivale. "You secured them—both?"

"Both! It was his—what would you call it—his last straw!"

"And it availed him nothing?"

"Nothing!"

Perivale glanced inquisitively at his companion.

"I am curious!" he said. "What happened?"

"It was the ordinary procedure in such cases," said the other coolly. "Everything was strictly *en regle*. He was informed that he had been proved inimical to the interests of the society and must die. He saw there was no mercy for him, and accepted his fate—calmly. He was given permission to smoke a cigarette while lots were drawn."

"Lots!" exclaimed Perivale. "As to—"

"As to who should perform the office of executioner," replied the other. "A necessity!"

"And—then?" asked Perivale.

"Then—why, then, he was shot!"

"You saw it?"

His companion looked up from his task of making another cigarette.

"It was I who shot him!" he replied. "He died—instantaneously! Bah—let us talk of something else! M. Perivale, you will return to your country in the morning, is it not so? By the midday train from the Gare du Nord? Well, before you leave your hotel, you will receive a parcel from me. And here is another, a small thing, that I have for you—take my advice and hand it to Pelabos. Well—that is all! Turn from me a moment—open your little packet!"

Perivale did as he was bidden, and turning in his seat, unrolled various wrappings of paper until he came to a wad of cotton wool. In that nestled a diamond—a thing of fire.

He twisted sharply toward his companion. But the man of the secret society was vanishing through the door, and Perivale made no effort to stop him.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE UMBRELLA

PERIVALE found it difficult to sleep that night; he had, indeed, known little of sleep when morning came. But he had made up his mind what to do about the diamond.

Budini was still in the hotel, and to Budini, in the presence of Pelabos, he handed the diamond over, telling them that it had been placed in his hands for the purpose, and that he washed those same hands of all further connection with the affair. In

his opinion, he said, Spring would never be heard of again.

"There is no need to inquire further, my friend!" said Pelabos. "I comprehend more than you think! That society that we know of, eh—it has dealt with Spring—and it delivers up what is not its property to you! Well—did I not say that those others would do our work? And—you know nothing? Well again, then—one has liberty to guess!"

Perivale had no inclination for more guesswork; he wanted to get away—the taste of his midnight interview was still nasty in his mouth. But as he made his preparations for departure and hurried Cripstone and Lawson in theirs, the parcel which the secret society official had spoken of was brought to him—an affair in brown paper, a yard long, a few inches round.

"What on earth can this be?" he asked of Lawson, who was in his room, as he stripped off the wrappings. "Good Lord! An umbrella!"

"Jolly good one, too!" said Lawson. "But there's a note fallen out."

Perivale picked up the note and read:

> You may like to preserve as a souvenir the weapon with which the man you know of killed his victims.

He turned, staring, at Lawson.

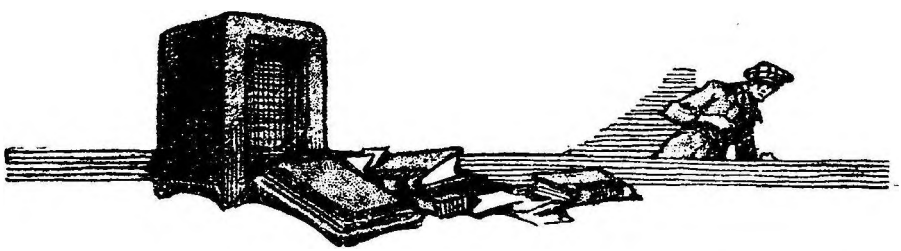
"Weapon!" he exclaimed wonderingly. "What weapon! It's an umbrella—an ordinary silk umbrella! Yet—read that note!"

Lawson read—exclaimed—picked up the umbrella—stared at it from top to bottom.

"By gad, though, I see it!" he shouted suddenly. "Look here, Perivale—do you notice that? The ferrule end of the umbrella is unusually long—eight inches long at least! And it's unusually thick—see, it screws off! And—now look there!"

And as Perivale watched, Lawson screwed off the false covering of the ferrule and revealed inside a three-cornered stiletto, every edge of which was sharp as a Sheffield blade.

THE END



"Look!" said the girl. "They're coming up!"

AN UP-TO-DATE CAVALIER

By Joseph Harrington

RIGHT IN THE BEDROOM OF HIS OWN APARTMENT JIMMY VAN BEUREN STUMBLED INTO A CERTAIN OPPORTUNITY HE COULDN'T OVERLOOK

YAWNING mightily, Jimmy Van Beuren unlocked the door of his bachelor apartment and stepped inside. His jaws suddenly came together with a click as the door slid noiselessly shut, leaving him in inky darkness. Instinctively he had sensed that he was not alone in the apartment.

Standing stock-still in the velvety darkness, Jimmy debated with himself whether or not to open the door, dash into the corridor of the apartment hotel and call for help. That would be safest.

But, he reasoned, he would be the laughing stock of the place if it turned out to be a false alarm and no one was found in the apartment.

Besides, Jimmy was by no means sure there *was* some one there. No sound reached his ears as he stood motionless. It might be sheer nervousness, he decided; perhaps a recurrence of the shell-shock he suffered in the war.

The more he thought of it, the more ridiculous it seemed to Jimmy for him to go tearing into the corridor, screaming for help, at two o'clock in the morning.

With a quick, decisive motion, Jimmy reached for the switch and pressed the pearl button. Instantly the apartment was flooded with light, which revealed nothing extraordinary. Jimmy laughed and threw his stick, hat and gloves on the table.

"What the deuce!" he muttered, sinking into a deep, leather-covered chair. "Guess I'm turning out to be a regular ninny."

He picked up an unfinished novel and started to read. But try as he did, Jimmy could not rid himself of a queer feeling that he was not alone. The type became blurred and the words unintelligible. Presently, disgusted, he threw the book down and got up.

"I suppose I'll have to look around to make myself feel perfectly safe," he growled, annoyed by his own seemingly groundless fears.

He walked around the living room, looked under the table, passed into the dining room and then threw open the door of his bedroom.

He glanced aimlessly about and then, suddenly, he caught his breath as his eyes rested on the closet door. That door, Jimmy recalled, he had opened it to get out his tuxedo a few hours before. And he had been in such haste to reach Mrs. Grandon-Smythe's ball that he had neglected to close it. Now it was shut!

Again Jimmy fought down an inclination to call for help. Perhaps a chambermaid had closed the door, he thought.

"Well, there's only one thing to do," he decided. A few long strides carried him across the floor. With unnecessary violence he jerked the door open.

Jimmy's jaw dropped in amazement at the sight that met his eyes. Inside the closet, half concealed by hanging clothes, was a girl—a pale, beautiful girl who looked at him with supplicating blue eyes.

Jimmy recovered his breath.

"Well, well," he murmured, half to himself. "A girl crook, eh?"

"No! No!" A blush stained the girl's soft cheeks, as she stepped out of the closet. "You mustn't think that. Oh!"

She placed a white, smooth hand appealingly on Jimmy's sleeve, only to have it promptly shaken off.

"See here," said Jimmy brusquely. "Don't expect me to fall for that. Stand there a minute while I see if you've taken anything."

Watching the girl through the corner of his eye, Jimmy walked to the bed. He removed a picture from the wall, revealing a small wall safe.

He spun the dial expertly, and in a moment the little door swung open. Inside there was a small brown case. Jimmy raised the cover and the Van Beuren jewels, a glittering mass of diamonds, emeralds and pearls, sparkled radiantly.

Satisfied, Jimmy shut the door and spun the dial again. Replacing the picture he turned back to his visitor. She had dropped into an armchair, buried her face in her hands and was sobbing softly.

Nonplused, Jimmy hurried to her side.

"Here, here," he said, awkwardly patting her shoulder. "I'm sorry if I made a mistake. What's wrong?"

The girl raised a tear-stained face to his.

"Everything," she choked. "Chiefly that I'm taken for a jewel thief."

"Well—" Jimmy stammered, and then recalled conditions. "But what in the world are you doing here at two o'clock in the morning?"

The girl blushed again.

"I can explain that," she said softly.

Her voice was well modulated, indicating good breeding, and Jimmy noted for the first time that she was attractively clad in a businesslike beige suit, dainty patent leather pumps, above which showed a modest length of trim ankle, enhanced by sheer, gunmetal silk stockings.

Jimmy dropped into a chair and waited for her to explain. She dabbed at her eyes with a tiny lace handkerchief before she began to speak.

"My name," she said, "is Patricia Hanley. I am Mrs. Franklin Maxwell's private secretary."

Jimmy nodded. He knew Mrs. Maxwell, a social leader, who lived in the West Nineties.

"Mrs. Maxwell," the girl continued, "is now at her country place near Huntington and I was in charge of her town house on Ninety-Fifth Street.

"At nearly one o'clock this morning, Mrs. Maxwell telephoned me to bring her her jewels, which she had left in the safe in the town house, to her at Huntington."

"Yes?" prompted Jimmy when the girl hesitated for a moment.

"Before hanging up, Mrs. Maxwell told me that several attempts had been made to steal the gems, and warned me to be

very careful. That naturally made me nervous, so I ordered Harry, the Maxwell chauffeur, to take me to the station.

"I planned to catch the one thirty train out of Pennsylvania Station, and Harry was waiting for me with the car in front of the house at one fifteen o'clock. As I got into the machine I noticed another car, a black roadster, with two men in it, parked across the street.

"I paid no attention to the roadster and its passengers until we started off down Riverside Drive. Then I happened to glance through the rear window and discovered the roadster was trailing a hundred yards in the rear.

"That frightened me a bit, and I leaned forward and ordered Harry to make more speed. He did—for a few blocks. Then a tire blew out! We stopped, and so did the roadster.

"By this time I was in a frenzy of fear. Riverside Drive was altogether deserted, save for a few cars. Not a policeman in sight.

"I kept looking back, while Harry got out and started to jack up the car, preparing to change tires.

"While he was doing this, I saw the two men get out of the speedster and saunter slowly toward us. Their hands were in their pockets and I divined why.

"There was nothing for me to do except to place the jewel case inside my coat, open the door of the car and run.

"After taking a few strides, I looked over my shoulder and saw that the two men also had broken into a run and were headed for me.

"I was too horrified to scream. All I could think of was to run. I dashed into Eighty-Third Street and headed east. Frequent glances backward told me the men were gaining. I was breathless; my lungs seemed about to burst, and the lights of Broadway, where I could expect help, seemed a mile away.

"Then, beside this house, I saw a little alley. By some chance the fire ladder was down. That seemed my one way to possible safety and I took it.

"I ran into the alley and started up the ladder. The men turned in after me and, in the alley, they stopped in amazement. Apparently they hadn't foreseen any such move on my part, and they were puzzled.

"But they didn't go away. They stood there, talking excitedly. I continued upward, not knowing just where I was going to end. At the fourth floor, I found your bedroom window open and jumped in.

"I—I couldn't find the light, so I stumbled around until I came upon the closet. That seemed to be the best place to hide, and I stayed in there until you found me."

Jimmy was silent for a moment, digesting this astounding tale.

"Didn't you hear me come in?" he asked presently. Receiving an affirmative nod, he snapped: "Then why did you stay in the closet?"

"Because," the girl explained, "I thought you were one of the bandits. It is quite possible that one of them could come up here through the hall, you know."

Somewhat crestfallen, Jimmy agreed. But he was still a bit skeptical.

"Are the Maxwell jewels safe?" he queried.

The girl hesitated for a moment. Then she slipped her hand under her coat and drew out a flat morocco case. She pressed a hidden spring and the top flew open, revealing a mass of gems that rivaled Jimmy's own.

The last vestige of Jimmy's doubt vanished. For, on top of the scintillating mass of jewels, he saw a magnificent diamond necklace. Many times, at social functions, he had seen that magnificent bauble encircling the withered neck of old Mrs. Maxwell.

II

"WELL, let's see," said Jimmy, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "It's too late to catch that train now, of course. About all I can do is to take you to the station and see that you get safely aboard the next train. There ought to be a milk train about four o'clock."

"I'm awfully grateful to you," the girl said impulsively. She seemed about to say more, but changed her mind and remained silent.

Jimmy started for the living room to don his coat.

A sudden frightened cry from the girl brought him back to her side.

She was standing at the window, gazing fascinated into the dimly lighted street.

"Look!" she whispered tensely.

Jimmy peered downward. The reason for Patricia's shock was apparent.

Across the street was a dark roadster, and below, on the sidewalk, were two men! Their heads were together, and occasionally one turned slightly and glanced upward. Startled, Jimmy realized they were looking at his window!

Jimmy became aware that the girl at his side was sobbing with fright.

"It's them," she managed between sobs. "And they know I'm here!"

Jimmy touched her hand encouragingly.

"Don't worry," he murmured.

"But what will I do?" The girl wrung her hands in despair.

"I'll telephone for the police," Jimmy declared, and started for the telephone.

"Wait, look!" Patricia pointed through the window. "They're coming up!"

Jimmy's eyes followed her finger. It was true. The two men were walking toward the entrance of the house, glancing upward now and then and striving to appear nonchalant.

"It's too late to telephone for help now," Jimmy whispered. "But I can take care of them."

Jimmy thrilled as the girl's wide eyes met his.

"But you shouldn't," she murmured, veiling her eyes. "Let me out of the apartment and I'll take my chances again. If you interfere you may be hurt. They're desperate, you know."

Jimmy paid no attention to her warning. He was deep in thought, planning a mode of defense.

"You stay in this room, Pat—Miss Hanley," he said. "I'm going to receive 'em in the living room."

He walked into the outer room, carefully shut the door and locked it, grimly deciding that if the thugs should overpower him the door would prove at least a slight obstacle between them and their helpless quarry.

Then he pressed the switch, plunging the living room into blackness. Moving confidently about in the darkness, he found his desk, opened a drawer and took out a .45 caliber army revolver, the same weapon that had stood by him so well in Belleau Wood.

Holding this formidable weapon in his right hand, he stationed himself beside the door and waited.

The seconds dragged interminably, each bringing a pleasurable thrill to Jimmy's spine. This was the first excitement he had had since his return from France, and he enjoyed it to the fullest.

Presently he found his mind straying from his self-appointed task of dealing with two dangerous bandits and wandering to a certain fair-haired girl whose name suggested boyishness and good-fellowship.

Those pleasant dreams vanished with stealthy footsteps in the hall. They ceased in front of his door and a faint whisper reached Jimmy's straining ears.

"This is the place, Sam," were the words the listener heard.

There was a fumbling and then a jangling of keys. One was inserted in the lock, withdrawn and another tried. This performance was repeated a dozen times or more. Presently one key fitted and the door was swung cautiously open.

Jimmy pressed himself against the wall, behind the door. He was altogether concealed from the two pairs of sharp eyes that peered suspiciously about the dark room.

With a catlike tread, the strangers entered, pushing the door shut behind them. As the lock snapped, Jimmy reached over and pressed the switch. Instantly the gloom was dissipated with a brilliance that dazzled the eyes of the intruders.

When, with angry exclamations, they recovered the use of their eyes they found themselves looking into the muzzle of an ominous revolver, held by a smiling, muscular young man in evening clothes.

"Please be seated," invited Jimmy with mock hospitality. "Sorry I didn't expect this call or I'd have had my man here to take your hats. Or would you prefer to keep them on? Whoa—there! Keep your hands away from your pockets! Put 'em up. Now, that's better."

One of the pair had started to reach for his hip pocket, but Jimmy's sharp order induced him to change his mind. His hands and those of his companion rose ceiling-ward.

"Just sit on that bench there and make yourselves at home," directed Jimmy.

"See here," blustered the taller of his prisoners, a thick-set individual whose freshly shaven jowels and chin were blue with beard that showed through the skin. "You can't—"

Jimmy waved for silence. "Pardon me, for a moment while I telephone," he interrupted.

Jimmy placed the receiver to his ear.

"Spring 3-1-0-0, please," he ordered.

The two prisoners half rose from their seats.

"Careful!" barked Jimmy. "This isn't a glass pistol, you know."

The pair sank back, their faces distorted with rage.

"Say, Buddy—" one began, with an apparent attempt at friendliness.

"Hello, police headquarters?" Jimmy interrupted. "This is Mr. Van Beuren, of No. — West Eighty-Third Street. I've just caught two burglars in my apartment. You'll send some one over from the West Sixty-Eighth Street station? Fine!"

Jimmy hung up the receiver and turned back to his prisoners. They were almost strangling with pent-up emotions.

"It's all right, Miss Hanley," Jimmy called, ensconcing himself in an easy-chair from where he could keep his gun trained on the prisoners. "You can come out now."

Nearly a full minute passed before the girl answered in a faint voice, which indicated she was on the verge of collapse as a result of her experiences.

"Have you any smelling salts?" she queried through the door.

"Yes," Jimmy replied. "You'll find them in the medicine chest in the bathroom off the bedroom."

He heard Patricia walking away from the door toward the bathroom. "Can't blame her for being upset after all this," he thought, and scowled at the girl's persecutors.

The two were plainly fuming, but the gun in Jimmy's hands deterred them from action. They remained in their strange postures—seated and with uplifted hands—for five—ten—twelve minutes, when Jimmy became worried about Patricia. Perhaps she had fallen in a faint.

A vigorous knock at the door broke up his thought in that direction.

III

"COME in," called Jimmy, and two burly bluecoats entered.

Both policemen blinked with amazement at the sight that met their eyes.

"Casey—Bronson—what's up?" demanded one, the first to recover from his amazement.

The gun in Jimmy's hand wavered uncertainly.

"Aren't they burglars?" he asked, dumfounded.

"Burglars!" snorted the blue-chinned prisoner, who answered to the name of Casey. "Tell this fool"—indicating Jimmy—"who we are, Perkins."

The uniformed man grinned.

"I wouldn't call 'em burglars," he said to Jimmy. "They're Casey and Bronson of Inspector McIntyre's staff."

"Let's not waste any more time," Casey snapped. "The girl's in there."

Without waiting for Jimmy to produce the key for which he was fumbling, the four policemen dashed for the door and burst it inward. The light was on—and the room was empty!

Jimmy followed the men into the room.

"How'd she get out?" Casey queried of no one in particular, after satisfying himself that she was neither under the bed or in the closet.

Jimmy answered by pointing to a window concealed by draperies. Casey thrust the covering aside and discovered the open window led onto the fire escape—the same one by which the girl had entered Jimmy's apartment.

"Not a sight of her," Casey reported, in a disgruntled tone.

Jimmy found his voice.

"Tell me what it's all about," he pleaded.

Casey sent a withering glance in his direction, but deigned to answer.

"That was Pat the Piper. She got that name because she could 'pipe' up a story every time she got into a pinch, and the story was so good she usually got out.

"Anyway, she's one of the cleverest jewel thieves in New York. We'd been on her trail for a week, and to-night we almost got her as she was leaving the home of Mrs. Franklin Maxwell."

"Mrs. Franklin Maxwell!" This information stunned Jimmy. "Why she told me she was Mrs. Maxwell's secretary and was taking her jewels to her."

"She was taking the jewels all right," Casey said grimly. "But not to Mrs. Maxwell. Not her!"

"We saw her running down the steps with a package under her arm," the detective continued, "and we started for her. She had a car waiting, and off she went in it down the Drive. We followed.

"Nearly got her, too, but just as we got within twenty-five yards of her she jumped out of the car, which was driven by a man, ran into the alley beside this house, and went up the fire escape. I guess you know the rest.

"But, say," he concluded, "what tale did she give you?"

Jimmy shrugged, ashamed of his gullibility.

"She said two jewel thieves, supposed to be you, were pursuing her, and she ran up my fire escape. I fell for it, too."

"Huh," snorted Casey. "Well, after talking to her, you'd better make sure the fillings are still in your teeth."

Jimmy grinned mirthlessly.

"The fillings are all right, but the Van Beuren jewels aren't."

"What do you mean?" Casey asked.

Jimmy pointed to the open door of his little wall safe, which the policemen had failed to notice. The jewel case, which had reposed inside, was gone!

The policemen exclaimed sympathetically.

"Well, the little cuss!" Casey ejaculated. "While you were saving her from us, she went and took you over, did she?"

Jimmy nodded.

"What were they worth?" Casey asked.

"A hundred thousand or thereabouts. I had just taken 'em from the safe deposit vault for a day or two, intending to have them appraised."

"Whew! That's tough," Casey sympathized. "Make us up a list and description of the pieces and we'll do our best to get 'em back for you, but I can't promise much."

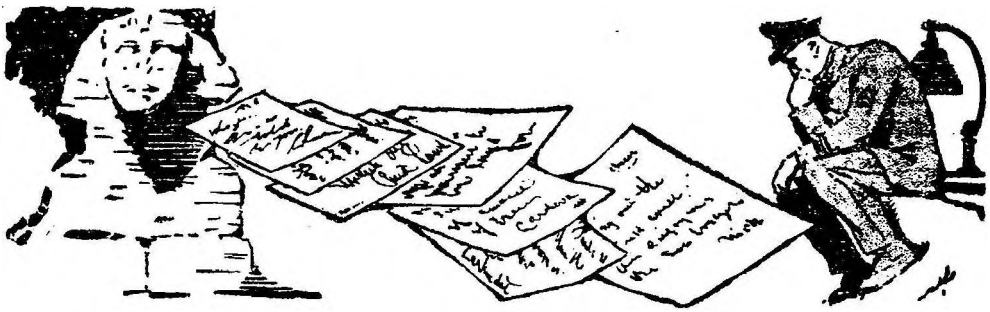
"Thank you," said Jimmy, and bowed his visitors out.

Closing the door behind them, a bitter smile came to his lips. So that was her gratitude. And all his fond dreams of a friendship that might follow the rescue. Well, he'd know better the next time.

So thinking, he walked to the safe and was about to close the door when a slip of paper lying on the floor of the strong box caught his eye. He picked it up and read:

> My dear Twentieth Century Cavalier:
>
> What a foolish boy you were to open the safe while I was looking on, thereby showing me the combination. It was so easy that I couldn't resist opening it again while you were entertaining my two dear friends.
>
> But then I didn't have the heart to take your jewels. You'll find them beneath the pillow. *Au Revoir*—with many thanks. Try not to think so harshly of me. Pat P.

In a daze Jimmy walked to his bed and flipped back the pillow. The Van Beuren gems sparkled brilliantly at him.



SOLVING CIPHER SECRETS

Edited by M. E. Ohaver

SHORT AND SNAPPY! THAT'S IT! GOOD POINTS AND INTERESTING CIPHERS. WHOOP IT UP, LADIES AND GENTS! IT'S GONNA BE GOOD!

HERE it is, fans!

Meaning, of course, the first installment of the much heralded weekly cipher department.

Henceforth, if this plan is well received, you will only have to wait one week for the explanation of a particularly fascinating cryptogram. Reader ciphers, too, can now be discussed in more detail than has heretofore been easily practicable.

Representative historical ciphers, with methods of analysis, will continue to be published at intervals, as before. But an extensive program of short items has at the same time been planned for the weekly series.

This adventure in a weekly department is due to the suggestions of our readers, and we would like to see its contents conform to their wishes. How does the idea strike you? We would appreciate your opinion.

To start things off with a bang, try your hand at cipher No. 1, for the first correct solution of which Mr. Davidson is offering a free year's subscription to FLYNN'S WEEKLY.

Your answer should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the cipher and your method of solution, and must be mailed not later than two weeks from the date of this issue.

Should two or more contestants be tied for first place, the year's subscription will be awarded to the entry accompanied by the best explanation and solution. Address all answers to Solving Cipher Secrets, FLYNN'S WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York City, New York.

Mr. Davidson's cipher is entirely practicable in use, and is well worth knowing. A full explanation will be published four weeks hence, and any solvers will be listed as soon thereafter as practicable.

Here's the cipher, fans. Who wins?

CIPHER No. 1 (Kenneth Davidson, Montreal, Quebec, Canada).

UXVIZ	BTDNE	PPRDK	ASIAF
EVSZX	LDTSR	ZDHEW	ERZIX
ESOIJ	FAIHA	SEIPI	VFIKT
HEIPA	UELQN	ZBIDR	BANDR
RNUTE	UUSIC	ESLDB	ETHSG
RMIQX	TSQKA	VF.	

Now that our ship is fairly launched, and before offering another cryptogram, it may be well to speak briefly of the real purpose of cryptography.

Of course, it affords instruction and entertainment of a high order in the construction and resolution of intricate problems. But also, as you may well know, cryptography is an important subject with a legitimate excuse for its existence.

Without it, organizations and individuals would have to search out other means of securing the real or supposed inviolability of their communications. And diplomatic,

military, political, business, and personal messages in cipher, which probably aggregate thousands daily throughout the world, would demand expression through other channels.

The number of ciphers that have been devised for these various purposes is, of course, practically unlimited. But some of these ciphers are better than others. Which brings up the question of what actually constitutes a good cipher.

Quite naturally, cryptographers have been trying to decide this for centuries. For example, it was in 1605 in his "Advancement of Learning" that Sir Francis Bacon pronounced his much quoted three virtues of a good cipher. To these three Edgar Allan Poe added a fourth in 1841.

In 1883 August Kerckhoffs in "La Cryptographie Militaire" announced his famous six properties of military ciphers. To these six requisites H. Josse, French captain and author of a work on ciphers, added a seventh in 1885. And F. Delastelle followed in 1893 with an eighth.

Another French writer on the subject, E. Myskowski, published in 1902 in his "Cryptographie Indechiffrable" eight properties, for the greater part a review of what had gone before.

To assist our readers in the improvement of their own ciphers, and to better appreciate the work of others, we have coördinated these and other sets of regulations, restating some, eliminating duplicates, and throwing in a few other self-evident propositions for good measure.

The first of these rules and regulations will appear, with a short discussion, in next week's cipher department. Others will be published at intervals in our weekly series.

Now for cipher No. 2, for which we have prepared an example in the *stroke cipher* of Charles I.

The alphabet of this system, found at the British Museum among the royal manuscripts, is somewhat suggestive of shorthand, and is to be found engraved in Clive's Linear Shorthand, published in 1830.

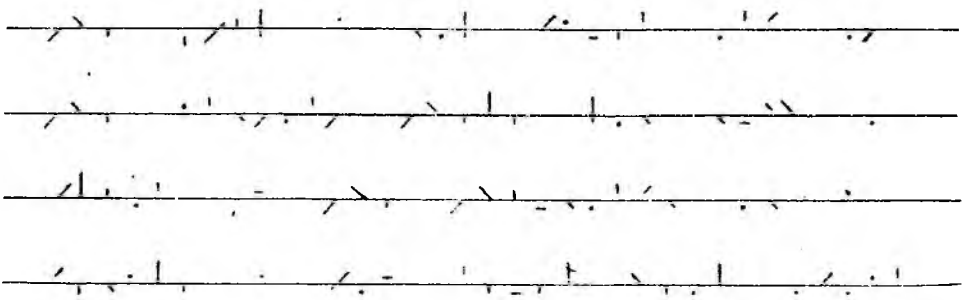
This cipher seems to have been a favorite with Charles I, it being of especial interest from having been used in his letter of April 5, 1646, to the Earl of Glamorgan—afterward Marquis of Worcester—in which the king made certain concessions to the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

The cipher employs a simple substitution alphabet, each symbol fixedly signifying a certain letter, and a given letter always being represented by one certain symbol.

The text of the present cryptogram is taken from a statement by an eyewitness of the execution of Charles I.

Can you decipher it?

CIPHER No. 2 (in Charles I *stroke cipher*).



Send in your solutions to this week's ciphers, and look for the answer to No. 2, along with the complete alphabet, in the next issue of this magazine.

Have you a cipher of your own brewing that you would like to try on your fellow readers? If so, send it along, too; preferably with the solution.

Next week's installment, besides the first of the cipher rules and regulations, will also contain some interesting reader ciphers.

Don't fail to see them.

That readers of FLYNN'S WEEKLY have proved the vulnerability of the key phrase cipher, described in the January 22 issue, is clearly demonstrated by the list of solvers of these ciphers that is now accumulating, and which will be published in a later issue.

The key phrases and translations of these two ciphers follow:

CIPHER No. 1 (Key phrase in Old French: "*Dieu, le roy, et le foy du Vaughn.*") Message: In some curious examination of the carved woodwork above the library at Cragness, I hit accidentally upon a secret spring, distant six inches in a right line from the spear head of the knight in heraldic device there blazoned. Within the crypt, disclosed by the movement of this spring, I found the secret which, having driven my father to his grave, then turned back to fasten upon me, and will, as I am certain, never release me until I die beside him.

CIPHER No. 2 (Key phrase: Tell not your secret to an enemy.) Message: If one of my sons shall discover the secret place where is hidden this pistol and the confession of his father's follies and crimes, I counsel [*Irnoons* should have read *Irncons*] him to lay the latter upon the fire, and to discharge the first into his own head. So best shall he shield the memory of his ancestors, and spare himself their inheritance.

The above messages are both quotations from a little known novel, "Cipher," an early work of the American author, Jane Goodwin Austin (1831-1894). This story was published serially in the *Galaxy* from October, 1868, to April, 1869, inclusive; and, as far as we have been able to learn, was never issued in book form.

The first message is an excerpt from a lengthy document that figures in the story. This document is given in English, but it is supposed to have been written in cipher, and to have been deciphered by an accidental discovery of the Old French key phrase already given.

The only actual cryptograms in the whole novel, however, are the two short specimens, "*Edaolu oe oludluv*," and "*Ruyllye aol oludlu*," which our readers can decipher, if they choose, by means of the Old French key phrase. As used by Austin, however, this key was applied only to the first twenty-four letters of the English alphabet, *y* and *z* being left to take care of themselves without any symbols.

Austin's use of the key phrase cipher may have been due to the influence of Poe, who had already described it in *Graham's Magazine*, and had set the pace for fiction writers, in this respect, by using a cryptogram in the *Gold Bug*.

Turning now to our November 13 list of solvers, no one succeeded in deciphering the photographic formula code, No. 7, and not without good reason. But all the rest fell swiftly before the attack.

Charles P. Winsor, Boston, Massachusetts (1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9).

Fredrik Pilstrand, Brooklyn, New York (1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9).

Richard Miller, Indianapolis, Indiana (1-2-3-4-5-6-8).

J. K. Manning, Morrisonville, Illinois (1-2-3-4-5-6-8).

Arthur Bellamy, Boston, Massachusetts (1-2-3-4-5-6-8).

E. H. Barber, Lieutenant Commander (SC), United States Navy, Cavite, Philippine Islands (1-2-3-4-5-6-8).

Charles C. Fulton, Omaha, Nebraska (1-2-4).

Paul Ringel, Toledo, Ohio (8-9).

Paul A. Napier, Louisville, Kentucky (8).

December 18 ciphers seemed to offer a more stubborn resistance. Nevertheless, a number of fans succeeded in solving Nos. 1 and 2 of the "Castle Radio Contest" type, including Mr. Castle himself, who managed to get away with both of them.

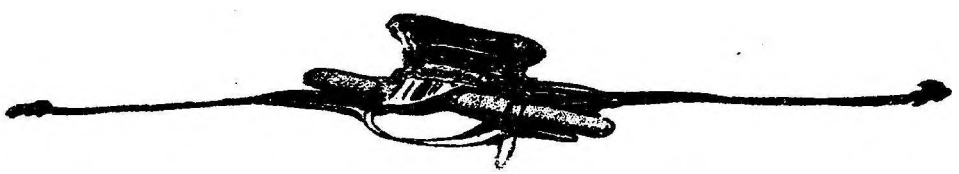
Arthur Bellamy, Boston, Massachusetts (1-2-5).

C. A. Castle, Waterloo, Iowa (1-2).

Paul A. Napier, Louisville, Kentucky (1).

Basil J. Condon, Durham, North Carolina (1).

The January 22 list will be published later.



Stop Using a Truss

Reduced Fac-Simile Gold Medal

Reduced Fac-Simile Grand Prix

STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS are different from the truss, being mechanico-chemico applicators made self-adhesive purposely to hold the distended muscles securely in place. No straps, buckles or spring attached—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work—most obstinate cases conquered. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no further use for trusses. We prove it by sending Trial of Plapao absolutely FREE. Write name on Coupon and send TODAY.

Plapao Co., 633 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Name.....

Address.....

Return mail will bring Free Trial Plapao

$20 a Day for You

with our Great Introductory Offer

My! How They Sell!

You get the attention with the FREE Shears. Walter Harris sold 800 boxes in 6 weeks—Profit over $600. You can do this too. A baby could sell Lucky 11.

Act Now! Don't wait a minute. Save time by sending $1.75 for complete outfit including display case sent **postpaid, or better yet send $10 for 10 boxes,** 10 shears and Display Case Free. At least send for Illust'd Circulars, Inside Prices and **Unique Sales Plans** on our 250 products. **Send today.**

E. M. DAVIS CO., Dept. 1251, CHICAGO, ILL.

I PAY MEN $100 a week

Make $100.00 a week and up selling our **fine made-to-measure, all-wool suits, direct to wearer. Biggest values—positively sell on sight. Biggest commissions paid in advance. We attend to delivery and collections. 6 x 9 swatch samples—over 100 styles all one price—furnished FREE. Part or full time men write at once.**

W.Z. GIBSON, Inc., 161 W. Harrison St., Dept. C-403, Chicago

10 DAYS FREE TRIAL - MONEY BACK IF NOT SATISFIED

THE NEW IMPROVED **INKOGRAPH** SELF FILLER GREATEST VALUE EVER OFFERED

The Perfect Writing Instrument $1.50

Writes with ink easy as a lead pencil. Won't skip, blot, scratch, leak or soil hands. Its steady uniform flow of ink improves hand-writing

Makes three carbon copies with original in ink. Guaranteed—*Send No Money.* Pay postman $1.50 plus postage.

INKOGRAPH, CO., Inc.
195-23 Centre St., New York City

DEALERS Send for Catalog

The Writing Hemisphere

The INKOGRAPH ACCOMPLISHMENT

A hard, round, smooth ball-like 14-kt. Gold Point.

AGENTS Send for Inkograph or write for Sales plan booklet which tells how to make big money

PIMPLES

Cleared up—often in 24 hours. To prove you can be rid of Pimples, Blackheads, Acne Eruptions on the face or body, Barbers' Itch, Eczema, Enlarged Pores, Oily or Shiny Skin, simply send me your name and address today—no cost—no obligation. **CLEAR-TONE** tried and tested in over 100,000 cases—used like toilet water—is simply magical in prompt results. You can repay the favor by telling your friends; if not, the loss is mine. WRITE TODAY.

E. S. GIVENS, 413 Chemical Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

Must Men Fear 40?

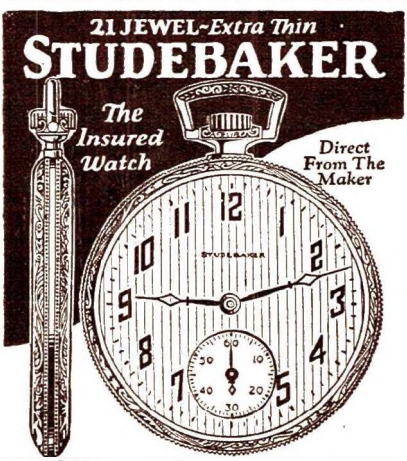
⅔ of all men past middle age, authorities say, have prostate gland disorder. Here is the known cause of frequent nightly goings, aches in the back and legs, sciatica, weakness and lack of vitality. Now a new scientific, painless hygiene usually restores this gland to normal functioning without medicine or electric rays. 20,000 men have found quick relief and grateful recovery. Send name for FREE book. Address Electro Thermal Company, 30-7 Main St., Steubenville, Ohio. Western address: Suite 30-K, 703 Van Nuys Bldg., Los Angeles, California.

21 JEWEL-Extra Thin

STUDEBAKER

The Insured Watch

Direct From The Maker



Sent for $1.00 DOWN

Just $1.00! The balance in easy monthly payments. You get the famous Studebaker 21 Jewel Watch direct from factory at a saving of 30 to 50 per cent.

Your choice of 80 new Art Beauty cases and dials. Latest designs in white gold, yellow gold and green gold effects. 8 adjustments including heat, cold, isochronism and five positions. Insured for a lifetime.

Ladies' Bracelet Watches, Men's Strap Watches, Diamonds and Jewelry, too. All sold on easy monthly payments. Your credit is good! Write today for free book of Advance Watch Styles or Jewelry Catalog.

Watch Chain FREE!

For a limited time we are offering a beautiful Watch Chain free. This special offer will be sent to everyone who writes at once. Don't delay! Get this free chain offer today—while it lasts.

STUDEBAKER WATCH COMPANY

Directed by the Studebaker Family—known for three-quarters of a century as fair dealing.

Dept. J-723, South Bend, Indiana

Canadian Address: Windsor, Ont.

Biggest RUG Bargain of All!

Full Room Size 9 Ft. x 12 Ft.

Seamless Brussels Rug
Regular Value $30
SALE PRICE $19.95

Sending for this rug on approval places you under no more obligation to buy than calling at our store to look at it.

A YEAR To Pay
30 Days Free Home Trial

lew rooms for old—cheery rooms; not dreary ooms. A new rug will do it. And this is the ig . . . a genuine 9 ft. x 12 ft. Seamless Tapes- y Brussels Rug—all worsted face—an exclu- ve design adapted from an imported Chinese attern. A regular $30 rug for $19.95. This is 927—prosperity year—the year of bargains. And e's the bargain of the year. Yes, here's sound, sensible thrift—a down-right value if ever there was one. Use it as your own for 30 days—FREE. Just $1 with order is all you need. If you're completely satisfied, take a year to pay. If it doesn't delight you, or if you change your mind, return it. No bother, no delay, no red tape. We will at once refund the $1 and transportation charges both ways.

$1 WITH ORDER

Here's how we can offer you this beautiful rug at such a bargain. Our buyer struck a large mill at an opportune time. This mill was anxious to secure business at actual manufacturing cost to keep going through dull months. We placed a huge order at the lowest price in years. Result: you make a clear 35% saving. The pattern and colorings show the Chinese influence. Mauve, Old Rose, Cream, Brown and Black mingle gloriously in striking contrast to the two-tone taupe Jaspe back-ground with its rich figures in all their wealth of harmonizing detail. Brilliant flowers stand out against the beautiful wide blue border with rich black edge. The fine corner motifs of Old Rose, Ashes of Roses, Green, White, Yellow and Black add the final touch of distinction. This is not only a rug of exquisite beauty, but also a good wearing rug, woven of selected worsted yarns, guaranteed to retain their color. There isn't a single seam in the rug.

This rug will be sent you on 30 days FREE trial. If you are not completely satisfied, return it and we will refund every cent you have paid, including transportation charges both ways.

Order No. WA 5040, sale price only $19.95; terms $1 with order, $2 monthly.

President

Spear & Co. **Pittsburgh, Pa.**
Dept. M 53

Home Furnishers to the People of America

Send for this Big FREE Book

...ook is filled from cover to er with household treasures argains all of them—all sold on easy payments—sent on 30 days FREE trial—every purchase is backed by a gold bond guarantee. There are wonderful bargains in furniture, rugs, curtains, stoves and everything for the home. Sent to you without obligation to buy. Mail coupon today.

SPEAR CO., Dept. M 53, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Send me at once the 9 ft. x 12 ft. Rug as described above. Enclosed is $1.00 first payment. It is understood that if, at the end of 30 days' trial, I am satisfied, I will send you $2 monthly. Order No. WA 5040. Price $19.95. Title remains with you until paid in full.

Name .....

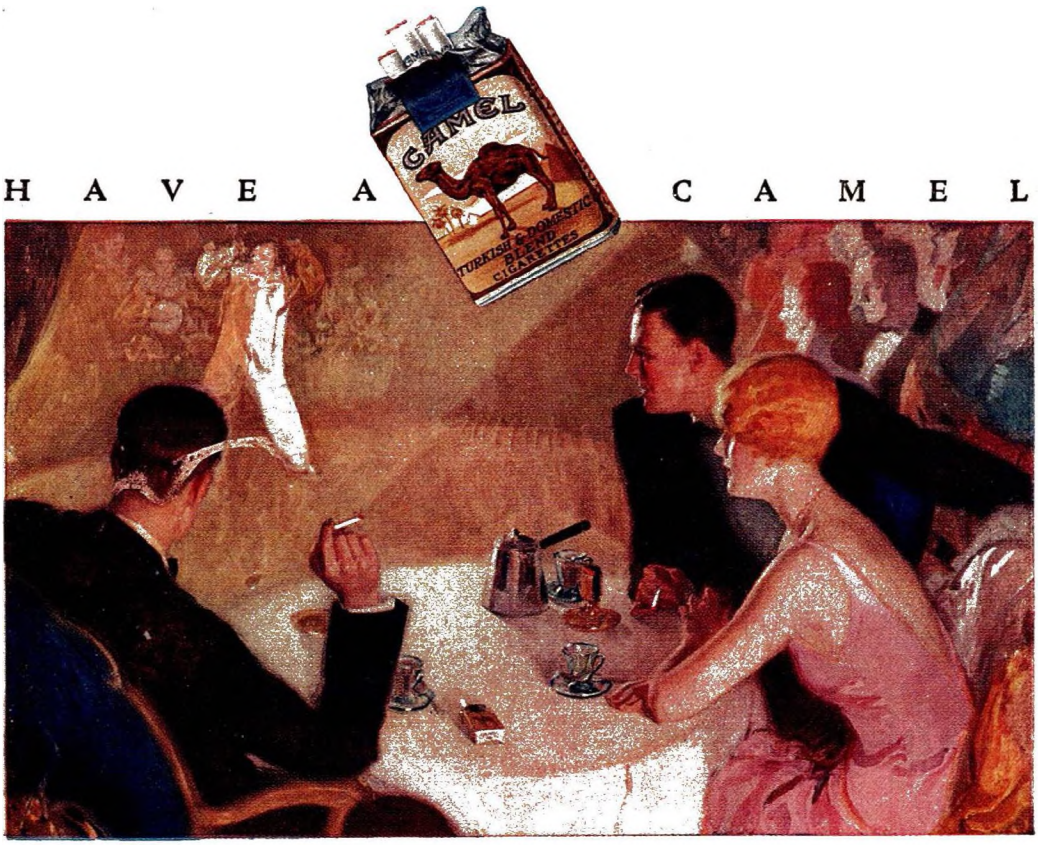
R.F.D. Box No. or Street and No. .....

Post Office ..... State .....
If your shipping point is different from your post office fill in line below

Send Shipment to .....

FREE CATALOG (If you want the Free Catalog only, send no money, put an X here and write your name)

H A V E A C A M E L



Camels add to the joy of living

SMOKING is one of the keen pleasures of life.

The choice of a cigarette deserves your most careful judgment because it determines the degree of enjoyment you will have.

Camels welcome comparison on every count. Compare their goodness in every way. Each successive Camel brings a fresh pleasure no matter how constantly you smoke.

Such mellow mildness can come only from the world's choicest tobaccos, supremely blended, with the sole purpose of giving you, the smoker, a cigarette which you can enjoy to the fullest.

The verdict of the experienced smoker is—

"Have a Camel!"

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.