THE MURDER AT PINEHURST

SEPTEMBER

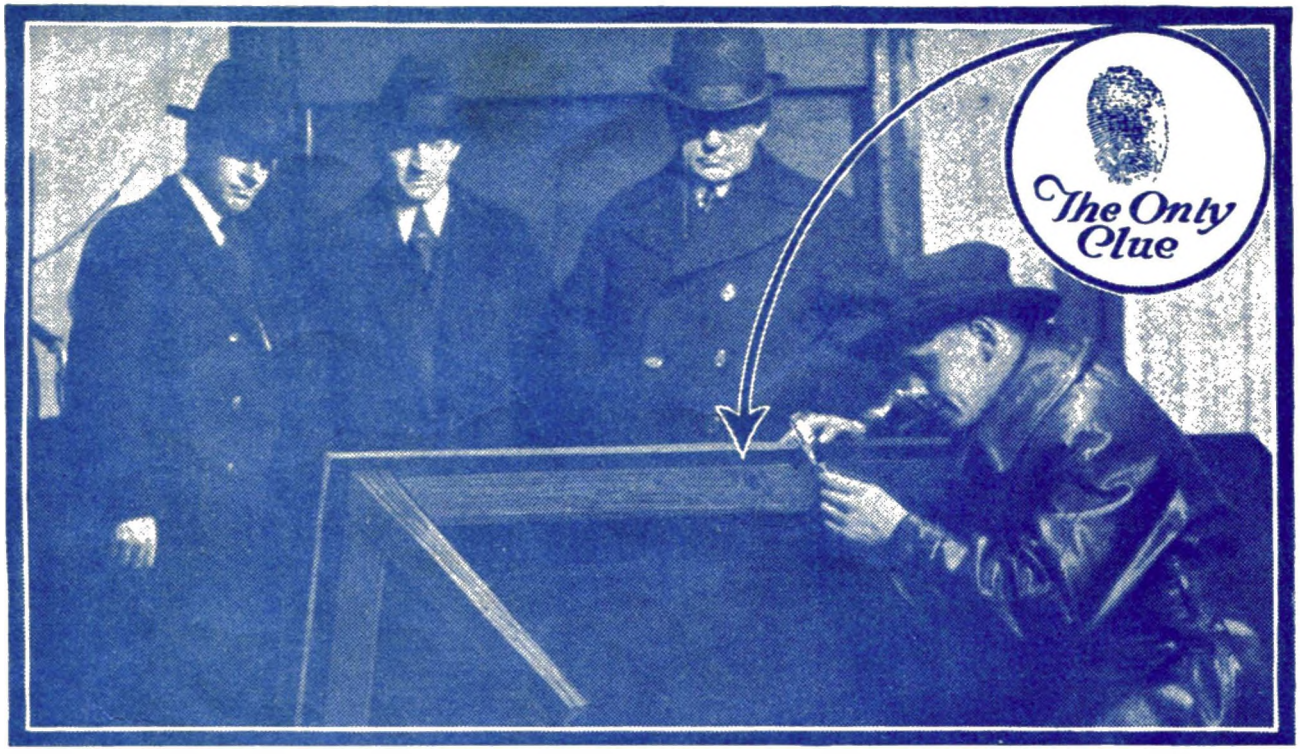
TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES

A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION 25 CENTS

"Night-Life Polly"

The Crime Without *a* Clue

What Happened *to* "Bubbles"?



$500 REWARD *for* TWO HOURS WORK

WARREN BIGELOW, the Finger Print Detective, was making his usual review in the morning newspapers.

He had just finished reading the press reports of the daring robbery of the offices of the T—O—Company when the telephone on his desk rang. Central Office was calling, asking him to come immediately to the scene of the robbery.

Although he drove his high powered roadster rapidly and arrived shortly at his destination, he had plenty of time to consider the main features of the case as reported by the press.

The job had undoubtedly been done by skilled cracksmen and robbers of uncommon nerve. Sixty-five hundred dollars in currency—the company pay-roll—were gone. Not a single, apparent clew had been found by the police.

Finger Print Expert Solves Mystery

On his arrival, Bigelow was greeted by Nick Austin, Chief of Detectives, who had gone over the ground thoroughly.

"Hello, Warren. Here's a job that has us stumped. I hope you can unravel it for us."

By this time, the district officers and the operatives from Central Offices had almost given up the investigation. After hours of fruitless efforts, their work was at a standstill. They were completely baffled.

With lively interest and a feeling of relief they stepped back to await the result of the Finger Print Detective's findings. They were plainly awed at his quiet, assured manner. The adroit old Chief himself was manifestly impressed at the quick, sure way in which Bigelow made his investigation.

Thief Leaves Indisputable Evidence of His Identity

Almost immediately Bigelow turned his attention to a heavy table which had been tipped up on its side. Examination of the glossy mahogany showed an excellent set of finger prints. The thief might just as well have left his calling card.

To make a long story short his prints were photographed and taken to Central Office, where they were matched with those of "Big Joe" Moran, a safe blower well known to the police.

Moran was subsequently caught and convicted on Bigelow's testimony and finger-print proof. Most of the money was recovered. In the meantime the T—O—Company had offered a $500.00 reward, which was given to Bigelow; his pay for two hour's work

Wives of the younger generation

often hold a wrong view of feminine hygiene

THE young married woman enters in many cases a new world, an entirely new circle. The old background gradually fades away. In its place come new interests, new friends and new confidences.

Between woman and woman there is a bond which no man can understand. There is a helpfulness, a community of spirit, concerning the most delicate matters. Hygiene matters which bear heavily upon the health and happiness of every woman.

The pity of it is that so much of this confidential information is inaccurate. Because *wrong or misleading information* is often more damaging than no information at all. Many a woman has suffered because some friend does not have the simple womanly frankness to tell her the truth as it is known today.

No need to continue running these risks

Women of refinement have long understood the necessity for feminine hygiene. Physicians and nurses have endorsed the practice. It is a recognized regimen of health. The thing that has caused many women to hesitate is the *danger* lying in the use of poisonous antiseptics such as bichloride of mercury and carbolic acid preparations.

To all these women it can now be said, "There is no need to continue running these risks. There is no need to use these poisonous compounds." There is now available a product which puts an end to the skull-and-crossbones in the family medicine chest. Its name is *Zonite*, that remarkable form of antiseptic discovered during the World War and now made available in bottled form in practically every drugstore in the United States, no matter how small your town may be.

Zonite is *absolutely non-poisonous*, absolutely safe to use.

Compare the strength of Zonite with carbolic acid

Here are a few facts about Zonite. It will not injure nor harden the most delicate membranes. Its use will not result in areas of scar-tissue. It carries no danger of accidental poisoning. And yet, in effectiveness and strength, Zonite is just as remarkable as it is in its safety. As a matter of fact, Zonite is *far more powerful* than any dilution of *carbolic acid* that can be safely used on the body.

This free booklet gives all the facts frankly

There is not space here to go into this subject more deeply, but our Women's Bureau has developed a compact booklet which contains full information on this important subject. It is a booklet for one woman to give to another—for a mother to hand to her daughter. It is really a duty to read it, for it brings this whole matter down to plain terms in a refined, modern, scientific way. Send for a booklet by today's mail. Zonite Products Company, 250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Please send me free copy of the Zonite booklet or booklets checked below:

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☐ Use of Antiseptics in the Home

(*Please print name*)

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(In Canada: 165 Dufferin Street, Toronto)

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES

A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION

Vol. VII SEPTEMBER, 1927 No. 6

CONTENTS

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Cover Design painted by Jean Oldham, from a Macfadden Studio Photograph.

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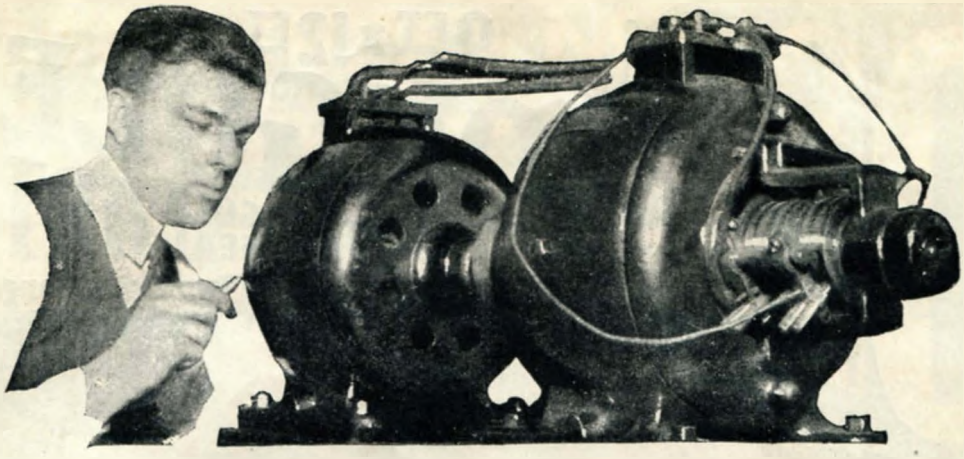

Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

Don't spend your life waiting for $5 raises in a dull, hopeless job. Now . . . and forever . . . say good-bye to 25 and 35 dollars a week. Let me show you how to qualify for jobs leading to salaries of $50, $60 and up, a week, in Electricity—NOT by correspondence, but by an amazing way to teach, that makes you an electrical expert in 90 days! Getting into Electricity is far easier than you imagine!

Learn Without Lessons in 90 DAYS

LACK of experience—age, or education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake — I don't expect you to! I don't care if you're 16 years old or 48—it makes no difference! Don't let lack of money stop you. Most of the men at Coyne have no more money than you have. That's why I have worked out my astonishing offers.

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I will allow your railroad fare to Chicago, and if you should need part-time work I'll assist you to it. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained . . . on the greatest outlay of electrical apparatus ever assembled . . . costing hundreds of thousands of dollars . . . real dynamos, engines, power plants, autos, switchboards, transmitting stations . . . everything from doorbells to farm power and lighting . . . full-sized . . . in full operation every day!

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No dull books, no baffling charts . . . all real actual work . . . building real batteries . . . winding real armatures, operating real motors, dynamos and generators, wiring houses, etc., etc. That's a glimpse of how we make you a master electrician in 90 days, teaching you far more than the average ordinary electrician ever knows and fitting you to step into jobs leading to big pay immediately after graduation. Here, in this world-famous *Parent school* —and nowhere else in the world—can you get such training!

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Radio Expert - $100 a Week

Jobs, Pay, Future

Don't worry about a job, Coyne training settles the job question for life. Demand for Coyne men often exceeds the supply. Our employment bureau gives you lifetime service. Two weeks after graduation, Clyde F. Hart got a position as electrician with the Great Western Railroad at over $100 a week. That's not unusual. We can point to many of Coyne men making up to $600 a month. $60 a week is only the beginning of your opportunity. You can go into radio, battery or automotive electrical business for yourself and make up to $15,000 a year.

Get the Facts

Coyne is your one great chance to get into electricity. Every obstacle is removed. This school is 28 years old—Coyne training is tested—proven beyond all doubt—endorsed by many large electrical concerns. You can find out everything absolutely free. Simply mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book of 150 photographs . . . facts . . . jobs . . . salaries . . . opportunities. Tells you how many earn expenses while training and how we assist our graduates in the field. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon.

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This is our new, fireproof, modern home wherein is installed thousands of dollars' worth of the newest and most modern Electrical Equipment of all kinds. We now have the largest amount of floor space devoted to the exclusive teaching of practical electricity in the world. Every comfort and convenience has been arranged to make you happy and contented during your training.

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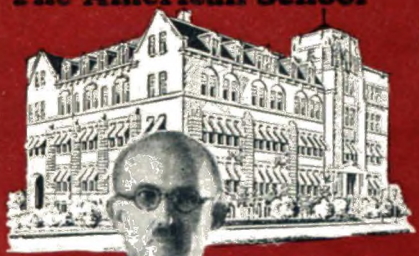
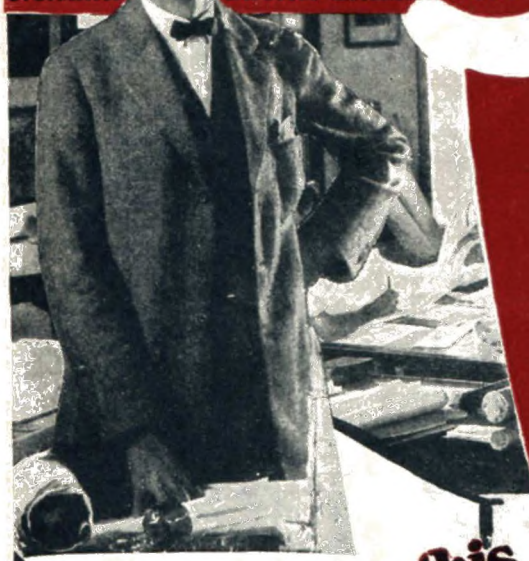


O. C. Miller Director Extension Work

3 Drafting



Draftsmen are a fine bunch of fellows, and you'll like them and the good-natured atmosphere of a Drafting room. The hours are short, the work is fascinating, the surroundings are pleasant. Best of all, they pay man-size salaries in Drafting.

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ALBERT J. REICHERT, Boiler, Wyoming, writes: "My Studebaker Watch sure is a fine timekeeper. I would not take $100.00 for it. No other watch compares with Studebaker."

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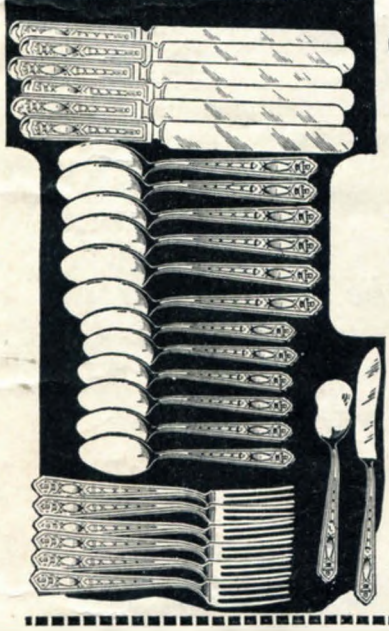
150 Pieces in All—$1.00 Down

7 Genuine Cut Glass Piece Set

26 Piece Silver Set



110-Piece Dinner Set

7-Piece PURE LINEN

FREE 7-Pieces Genuine Cut Glass

Extra special offer to those who hurry their order for the combination outfit shown here: —7 pieces GENUINE CUT GLASS: Pitcher of 2-qt. capacity and 6 tumblers of 9-oz. capacity. Each piece is pure, sparklingly clear, thin and dainty; **hand cut decorations** consisting of large floral design with appropriate foliage. A useful and handsome set. Only a limited number—so act quick.

Sent On Free Trial

$1.00 down

A sensational offer—only $1.00 with coupon below brings this 150-piece outfit (the 7-piece Genuine Cut Glass set is FREE if you send **at once**) to your home on free trial. Examine the value, the quality, the beauty of each piece. Compare our **easy payment prices** with local **cash prices.** After 30 days' trial and use, if you're not delighted with the bargain, send it back at our expense and we'll refund your dollar plus all transportation charges you paid. No obligation—not one penny of risk to you!

$2.70 a Month

If you decide to keep the outfit, start paying only $2.70 a month until you've paid our rock-bottom price—only $29.95 for the entire outfit with the 7-piece Cut Glass Set FREE. 150 pieces in all—only $29.95—and a year to pay! Where else can you find a bargain like that and such easy terms? **Send coupon Now!**

Complete Outfit Consists of the Following:

110 Piece Ivory Ware Dinner Set Complete service for 12 people. Popular Ivory Ware now the vogue in rich homes. Rich, creamy ivory color. Stamped with **Gold Leaf Decorations** as illustrated. Newest Gloria shape. Set consists of:—12 dinner plates, 9 in.; 12 breakfast plates, 7¼ in.; 12 coupe soups, 7⅛ in.; 12 fruit saucers, 5½ in.; 12 oatmeal dishes, 6¼ in.; 12 cups; 12 saucers; 12 bread and butter plates, 6 in.; 1 oval vegetable dish, 9 in.; 1 round vegetable dish, 8¾ in.; 1 sugar bowl and cover (2 pieces); 1 platter, 11 in.; 1 platter 13½ in.; 1 covered vegetable dish (2 pieces); 1 gravy boat; 1 gravy boat stand; 1 bowl, 1 pint; 1 cream pitcher; 1 pickle dish; 1 butter dish, 7¼ in.

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Sisters in Scandal

The Tale of Two Women Who Loved One Man and a Man Who Loved Two Women

THE lure of real stories of human lives—stories told by men and women who have wrestled with fate—who have played their rôles on the stage of life where the world is audience and conscience is prompter—is as natural as life itself.

Rooted deeply in the hearts of its nearly two-and-one-half-million readers, True Story, the magazine which outstandingly reflects life—its complexities, its shadows, its highlights—draws its stories directly from among the people who themselves read it. The tales they tell—stories from the byways of life as well as the highways—stronger than the most adroit fiction—come straight from the hearts and experiences of these men and women who have lived them or who intimately know the characters whom they describe.

Such a tale is "Sisters in Scandal" in the September issue—the tale of Margery and Helen Bradford and Foster Dale—two women who loved one man and a man who loved two women. It is the tragedy and glory of all life distilled into a handful of pages. The disappointments, the heartaches, the glorious successes of life are crowded into this chronicle of human frailty, struggle and strength in a way that will hold you spellbound. Only one who has actually lived such a crisis could adequately describe it. No master of fiction could so truly and deeply fathom the human emotions, could so accurately and convincingly set down the workings of destiny and its effect among this circle of humans as Margery Bradford, direct from the reality of her own experience, has set it down for you.

"Sisters in Scandal" will stir your emotions as they have seldom if ever been stirred. It will bring a lump to your throat and a tug at your heart strings. It is a living, breathing, human drama of souls whirled wildly between the wheels of primitive desires and the conventions of modern society. It is a story that you will probably never forget.

And "Sisters in Scandal" is but one of the sixteen revealing stories from life, each of which in its own manner discloses life as completely and amazingly, in the September issue of True Story. You will love it.

Partial Contents of the September Issue

Stranger Than Fiction
Home Problems Forum
$24,000.00 for True Stories
Laughs from Life
Mirror of Beauty
The Age of Love
Money Bags
The Girl Who Wanted Happiness
But I Was Married
Jealousy's Trap
The Gay Spenders
The Love Pirate
Understanding Men
The Unpardonable Sin
Daring the Devil
My Wild Ride
Sisters in Scandal
Are All Men Fickle?
Is Love Always Selfish?
Pride of the Hills
Youth Was My Rival
Quicksands of Bliss
True Story Clubs
Prize Silhouette Contest

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New ~~Ventilated~~ girdle reduces waist and hips

~two to four inches in TEN DAYS

FASHIONABLE women everywhere are praising to the skies the marvelous new Perfolastic Girdle that reduces fleshy hips and waist almost as if by magic and quickly gives you the slim, youthful figure you desire.

Perfolastic is entirely different from any other reducing girdle you have ever seen—lighter in weight, cooler, more comfortable, more slenderizing.

Cool---Comfortable---Slenderizing

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Perfolastic does not bind or constrict the figure in any way. Bend, twist, turn, exercise as vigorously as you choose, you will find that Perfolastic "gives" with every movement of your body. Made of finest quality pure plantation rubber, it combines wonderful elasticity with extraordinary strength. Perfolastic is a product of the famous Goodrich Rubber Co. and is guaranteed by us not to rip, tear or stretch out of shape.

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Long experience has shown that the safest, surest way to reduce is through massage, which breaks up the fat cells so that they can be absorbed and carried off by the circulation.

Perfolastic reduces through massage—*automatic massage.* It fits with glove-like smoothness, closely encircling waist, hips and thighs. The instant you put it on you *look* slimmer, for it gently straightens out fleshy curves, gives you length of line, helps you stand erect. And, better still, with every breath you draw, with every step you take, Perfolastic exerts a continuous, gentle massage that *takes off flesh.*

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Think of what this means! No more wearisome dieting, no more tiresome exercises, no more bitter self-denial in a vain attempt to get thin. For with Perfolastic you can now regain a slender, youthful figure without the slightest discomfort.

Free Booklet and Sample

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

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

DAN B. HOSMER, General Superintendent of the F. N. Burns Detective Agencies, with offices at Wichita, Kansas, has been in police and detective work for more than sixteen years.

In 1922 he resigned as Inspector of Police at Wichita to open a detective agency of his own, and in 1924 consolidated with the F. N. Burns Detective Agency, becoming their General Superintendent.

Since that time, this agency has been constantly expanding. The volume of work is such that it has been a problem to obtain operatives of the high standard required. In order to cope with this situation Mr. Hosmer has established an educational department and requires each employee to pass a series of examinations before he can become classed as an operative of the agency, and carry credentials as such.

This has proven to be very successful, and it is found that when an assignment is issued, it is more efficiently handled, and the reports are more complete and comprehensive.

The Murder at Pinehurst, Mr. Hosmer writes us, was one of his toughest cases. (See page 28, this issue.)

CY CALDWELL, we gather, is a man of varied accomplishments. We can get very little out of him, for he refuses to talk about himself, but he did admit to us that "Doctor Watson, Jr.," and "Sherlock Holmes," who wrestle so successfully with the diffi-

(*Continued on page* 14)

MONEY-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Absolutely different. "MOTORTEX" 3-piece suit. Good for dress or work. Well tailored. Fine, all-wool, extra heavy, warm, showerproof material. Will hold its shape. 37 extra features. Guaranteed to wear one year. Price $19.95, worth $35.00. Your commission $3.00 and $4.00. Show our handsome selling portfolio — every man will buy. Protected territory to producers. No matter what you are doing now write for free selling outfit. Harrison Bros., Inc., Dept. 556, 133 West 21st St., New York, N. Y. When writing please mention this magazine.

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FREE! To honest men over 18: new patented cigarette lighter. Show your friends and make $90 weekly. Send 25c to cover mailing costs and mention name of this magazine. F. Z. Lite, Dept. 2-G, 15 Westminster Road, Brooklyn, N. Y.

$20 daily easy selling amazing rain-proof cape. Made-to-measure. Finest fabrics and styles. Big advance profits. Free outfit and free cap offer. Taylor Cap Manufacturers, Dept. R-7, Cincinnati, Ohio.

HIGH-SALARIED POSITIONS waiting for you in automobile, tractor and airplane work. I'll train you in eight short weeks so you can earn $45.00 to $75.00 a week — unlimited future for good men. Qualify as an expert and own your own garage or service station. Write me TODAY for big FREE AUTO BOOK. Your Railroad fare included in this big special offer. The opportunity of a life time — don't miss it by delay. J. H. McSweeny, The Auto Man, Address, Z300—654 E. McMillan, Cincinnati, or Z300 — 1815 E. 24th St., Cleveland, Ohio. Please mention this magazine.

Ladies, Here's Easy Extra Money. Every Woman loves to make dainty frocks and necessities for her home. Show her how and sell her the materials. Steady income, big repeat business. Sample outfit and instructions free. Write today. National Dress Goods Co., Dept. 711, 8 Beach Street, New York City. Mention this magazine.

$12 DAILY PAID IN ADVANCE BY BIG Chicago firm. Easy, dignified work; part or full time; experience unnecessary. Franklyn Products Corporation, 1038 Van Buren, Chicago.

BIG PAY EVERY DAY! Complete guaranteed line direct to wearer. Dress Shirts, Work Shirts, Flannels, Overalls, Pants, Leather Coats, Sweaters, Playsuits. $10-$25 daily! Experience unnecessary. Big Outfit FREE! Nimrod Co., Dept. 58, 4922-28 Lincoln Ave., Chicago.

Agents $240 month. Bonus besides. Sell finest line silk hosiery you ever saw. Auto furnished. Credit given. Write for samples. Wilknit Hosiery Co., Dept. 235, Greenfield, O.

AGENTS MAKE $3.00 HOUR TAKING orders for 40 fascinating "Handy Things" for Kitchen. Sell on sight! Write General Prod. Co., Dept. SM1, Newark, N. J.

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LADIES: TO EMBROIDER, ETC., AT home wanted immediately. Bonanfde proposition. Liberal pay guarantee. No canvassing. Particulars free. Viking Products Co., Dept. 50, Leipsic, Ohio.

Easily earn from $30.00 to $75.00 weekly. Exquisite, smart, exclusive Peggy O'Neil popular priced dresses are irresistible. Designed for women who appreciate style and quality at low prices. Free sample outfit starts you without investment. Write today. Give experience and reference. Peggy O'Neil Dressmakers, Inc., Dept. 9-C, 112 West 38th St., New York.

SCARY women buy new "LOOKOUT" invention on sight. See who is outside door without caller knowing it. A $1.50 seller that pays 85c profit! Sells to homes, private clubs, hardware stores. Sell 20 a day and earn $17. Send $1.00 for sample and particulars. Free Kit. New Invention Factories, 7M, Governor Place, Long Island City, New York.

Free! Three issues HOW TO SELL magazine. Keeps you posted on fast selling money making propositions. Thousands of opportunities. Send name and address HOW TO SELL, Department No. 1, Mt. Morris, Ill.

HOSIERY FREE and $12 daily. Sell nationally known Pure Silk hosiery. Amazing values. Free sample outfit mailed. PURE SILK HOSIERY CO., 208 W. Monroe, Dept. P-185, Chicago.

Why not sell us your spare time? $2.00 an hour, $19.70 daily easy full time. Introduce 12 months Guaranteed Hosiery —47 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 Hosiery Co., Road 9289, Cincinnati, O.

Make More Money!

Here are opportunities to make more money immediately — to earn and save enough for the better things of life.

Here responsible, nationally known, square deal firms seek the services of ambitious people. They offer dignified positions (full or spare time) which pay handsome incomes and lead to wonderful futures.

No experience required. Ambition is the only necessary qualification. Read these offers carefully. Then write for complete information about the ones that attract you most. Please do not write unless you mean business.

To the Public: These firms offer you merchandise values, a convenient service that you cannot duplicate elsewhere.

To Manufacturers: For advertising rates, address Publishers Classified Service, 9 East 46th St., New York.

SALESMAN SELLING TO MEN: We have side line for you that will sell along with any line you may now be handling and make more money for you, provided you are now selling to men. Get facts at once. Address, Salesmanager, 850 West Adams, Dept. 143, Chicago.

Earn $80 weekly taking orders for charming Fashion Frocks for women and children. Factory prices. Advance commissions. No experience necessary. Fashion Frocks, Inc., Dept. G-100, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Sell direct from maker to wearer, guaranteed boys' suits, overcoats; latest styles, popular prices. Experience unnecessary. Write for Free sample outfit. Craige-Wilson 10 Waverly Place, Dept. 4, New York.

Sell custom tailored shirts. Earn $20.00 a day. Men buy quick at factory prices. Beautiful fabrics free. Novo-Tex, 3rd & Sedgley Ave., Phila., Pa.

Make Big Money representing the ONLY firm which GUARANTEES shipment of genuine Tailored-To-Measure Clothing within 10 days after receipt of order. Complete four-price line. Liberal commissions. Opportunity of becoming District Manager in your territory. Write Max Schwab, P. O. Box 588, The Style-Center Tailoring Co., Dept. 400, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Windows washed in 10 seconds without pail, sponge or brush. A fast $1.95 seller. 95c profit. Demonstration sample $1.20. Satisfaction or money back. Wonder Washer, Dept. SM1, 33 East 10th St., New York.

MAKE BIG MONEY HANDING OUT MYSTIC "ZIPPO" Red Hot 50c Household Seller! New Amazing Discovery! Quick Demonstration Brings Immediate, Huge, Cash Profits for Agents! Write Quick. "ZIPPO" Company, Fort Wayne, Ind.

The greatest book on money making stunts that has ever been published will be mailed to you if you will send us 15c in cash or stamps. There are over 50 up-to-date workable plans. Address SPARETIME MONEY MAKING, 230 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

POLMET POLISHING CLOTH.—Cleans all metals, gets enthusiastic attention, sells fast at 25c; sample free. F. C. Gale Co., 99 Edinboro St., Boston, Mass.

U. S. Gov't wants men. $1,900—$2,700 at start. Railway Postal Clerk examination coming. Let our expert (former Government examiner) prepare you for this and other branches. Free booklet, Dept. 269, Patterson School, Rochester, N. Y.

Linenwhite Laundry Bluing Paddles Big Sellers, housewives, bazaars, fairs, carnivals. Send dime for sample and money making proposition. A. Ada Products, Buffalo, New York.

Girls—Women—Physical Charm is a real asset today. A Beautiful Bust lends attraction. Booklet by Dr. C. S. Carr, "How To Develop The Bust," sent free, sealed postage. Olive Co., Dept. 9, Clarinda, Iowa.

WANT $500 SOON? SELL BEAUTIFUL Dresses, Coats, Scarfs, Sweaters. Amazing low prices. We deliver. No experience necessary. Get complete outfit free! Write Hirshey Knitting Mills, 2003 South California Avenue, Chicago.

DISTRICT SALESMAN — All wool, Union Made suits, overcoats, $23.50. Liberal advance commission, bonus. Write for large FREE outfit. K. J. Harvey, Box 00, Chicago.

Salesmen: Tremendous Money-Making Sensation. Combination fountain pen and check protector. No competition. Protected by patents. Wholesale sample pen and selling outfit, $3.75. Write Security Pen Corp., 906 Jackson, Chicago.

GO INTO THE CRISPETTE BUSI-NESS. Everybody likes them. You can make a lot of money. Gordon, New Jersey, reports $4,000 profits in two months. We start you. Write for facts. Long-Eakins, 787 High St., Springfield, Ohio.

500 Men Wanted to earn $90 Weekly. Wonderful new line men's suits. Amazing values $9.95 up. Risaldi averages $4 hourly. We train you. No experience or capital needed. Write Comer Mfg. Co., Dept. TS-2, Dayton, Ohio.

New lines just out. Everything in hosiery, underwear and Rayon lingerie for men, women, children. Beautiful, irresistible Catalog and Samples now ready. New special big money plans. Cash bonus, service awards, rapid promotion. No capital needed. Choice territories going. Rush reply to World's Star Knitting Co., 781 Lake St., Bay City, Mich.

WOMEN: $2.15 AN HOUR FOR FULL or spare time, distributing famous Royce household goods. Flavoring Extracts, Toilet Goods, Rare Perfumes, etc.—225 Preparations. Quality guaranteed. Write Abner Royce Co., Established 1879, Dept. 966, Cleveland, Ohio.

Men—Women, $1.80 an hour—No less. Large mfg. co. established 30 years. Starting new medallion dept. Amazing, new sales plan. First 22 agents average $1.80 an hour steady. Only 1 agent wanted in locality. Your OWN PHOTO FREE as sample. Art Medallion Co., Chicago, Ill., Campbell at Jaxon Ave.

LADIES: 62-PIECE ROSE AND GOLD Dinner Set FREE. Furniture, Rugs, Silverware, GIVEN. Furnish whole house by few hours' pleasant work right around home. Write TODAY for Big Gift Book. The Perry G. Mason Co., Dept. 996, Cincinnati, Ohio.

FREE: SEND FOR NEW AUTO BOOK. Write today! Learn how I train you right in your own home, for Electrical-Mechanical AUTO EXPERT'S Job, paying up to $150 A WEEK. Big opportunities in Auto Business. Common Schooling all you need. Start for Raise in Pay, Spare-Time Money, or your own Business. Experience not necessary. Employment Service — Consultation Service, 4 Repair and Testing Outfits, Free of Extra Cost. Get my book, "Auto Facts." Free! Write: B. W. Cooke, D. E., Dept. 603, 1916 Sunnyside Ave., Chicago.

Will you wear a pair of genuine tailor-made shoes at my expense? Will you show them to your friends and take their orders? I will ALSO send you FREE our big selling Outfit showing 70 shoe styles and 60 actual leather samples. I pay my agents $8.00 daily. Write quick. Tailor-Made Shoe System, 932 Wrightwood, Dept. A., Chicago, Ill.

Great neckwear line now free! Features finest quality neckwear at factory prices. Collect big commissions daily. Write for FREE tie offer and FREE outfit. Nawco Neckwear, Desk 9-ZA, Covington, Ky.

Send 25 Cents for a $1.00 Pocket Cigar Lighter and learn how to make $10.00 a day Easy. Sells on sight. Particulars FREE. Rapid Manufacturing Co., 799C Broadway, New York.

TAILORING SALESMEN make real money selling Davis virgin wool, made-to-measure suits. Low-priced, perfect-fitting, guaranteed. Beautiful fabrics. New merchandising plan doubles sales. Liberal bonuses, cash prizes. Write now. P. H. Davis Tailoring Co., Station 30, Cincinnati, Ohio.

$100 WEEKLY REPRESENTING LARGE SHIRT company—direct to wearer—wonderful opportunity for financial independence. Big commissions—easy to take orders—we start you with a sales-compelling outfit free. Write at once. Supreme Shirt Co., Desk ML, 276 Fifth Ave., New York.

New Selling plan makes $375.00 to $850.00 a month for producing tailoring salesmen. Two prices—$23.75 and $34.50—wonderful workmanship and 150 beautiful patterns interest every man. Commissions $4.00 to $7.60 with liberal bonus. Complete details and selling equipment FREE. State age, experience, exclusive territory desired and all other necessary information. We do the rest. Wright & Company, 2228 Wabansia, Chicago, Ill.

Agents: Amazing new 3-in-1 lingerie combination for women making sensational hit. $15.00 daily easy. Spare or full time. Free Outfit. French Fashion Company, 9 North Franklin, Chicago, Ill.

Make $100 weekly selling better-quality all-wool made-to-measure suits and overcoats. Highest commissions. Extra bonus for producers. Large swatch samples free. W. Z. Gibson, Inc., 157 W. Harrison, Chicago.

Agents: Brand new patented idea makes $75.00 weekly. Easy seller. Half million sales single year. Write quick. Free sample outfit. TRUE FIT OPTICAL COMPANY, 1445 W. Jackson Blvd., Department MF1, Chicago.

MAKE MONEY WEARING SOLIDSILK HOSIERY. SPLENDID side line. Big profits for full time. Everyone a prospect. Get your own at factory prices. Solidsilk Hosiery Co., 317 4th Ave., New York, N. Y.

Become Our District Manager. Make Real Money organizing your territory for the wonderful "Health" Cooker. Every Woman a good prospect. Write now for details. Health Cooker Co., Dept. 1, Massilon, Ohio.

All Men, Women, 18-50, Wanting To qualify for Forest Ranger, Railway Mail Clerk, Special Agent, and other Govt. Positions, $140-$250 month, home or elsewhere, write Mr. Ozment, Dept. 137, St. Louis, Mo.

$100 WEEKLY IN ADVANCE. NEW Line $50.00 Tweed Suits $24.00. Genuine All Virgin Wool. Fit guaranteed. Nothing like them in America. Big samples free. Manager, 44 North Ada, Chicago, Ill.

A PAYING PROPOSITION OPEN to representative of character. Take orders shoes, hosiery, direct to wearer. Good income. Permanent. Write now. Tanners Shoe Mfg. Co., 99 C St., Boston, Mass.

Fifteen Dollars a Day. Sell HARRI-SON'S "New York Style" suits and overcoats. Tailored of 100% virgin woolens. Priced $19.75 to $34.75. Highest commissions paid daily. Experience unnecessary. Valuable exclusive territory now open. Send for expensive sales portfolio with many selling features. It's free to men who mean business. De Luxe HARRISON raincoat line included if you write now. Harrison Bros., Inc., Dept. 856, 133 West 21st St., New York, N. Y.

Men, Get Forest Ranger Job: $125-$200 month and home furnished; hunt, fish, trap on side; permanent, no strikes or shutdowns, vacations on full pay. For details, write Norton, 270 McMann Bldg., Denver, Colo.

$40.00 Suits for $23.50! All one price. Union made of finest quality Virgin Wool. You don't have to know anything about selling clothing. We guarantee your success if you are honest and willing to work. Write at once. WILLIAM C. BARTLETT, 850 Adams, Dept. 508, Chicago, Illinois.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

(*Continued from page* 12)

culties confronting them, as related in *The Mystery of the Vanished Car*, appearing on page 36, this issue, are real, sure-enough boys. We suspect that one of them is Mr. Caldwell, himself, some few years back.

Cy Caldwell was born in Nova Scotia in 1892, started flying at the age of 23, joined the Royal Flying Corps in the following year (1916), serving in France for ten months with the 102nd Night Bombing Squadron, then instructed in flying until 1919.

Then he joined the Canadian Air Board, did forest patrols for two years; tested airplanes for the Glenn L. Martin Company for three years, and thereafter sold airplanes on the road as flying traveling salesman until last year. He is now a feature writer on the staff of the *Aero Digest*, and lives in New York City.

The following is Mr. Caldwell's own account of himself: "Married seven years and still happy; no children, no dog, no radio—and no money."

PAT KINSELLA, of the New York Police Force, is credited with having put more women crooks behind the bars of the penitentiary at Auburn than any other detective at Headquarters. He has specialized on female delinquents, and it was his reputation in this field that led to his being assigned to the case of "Night-Life Polly" described on page 24 of this issue

Ordinarily, Kinsella does not work on murder cases. He does not wish to be known as a vindictive sleuth. Despite his formidable record of convictions, he claims to have persuaded a still larger number of misguided girls to abandon a life of crime.

LOWELL HOWARD MORROW, whose stirring account of the theft of $100,000 by the young mail clerk, Bill Clark, which leads this issue, under the title "*Easy Money*," was born in Napoleon, Ohio. He does not tell us when, but he was left an orphan at six and from the age of twelve had to shift for himself.

His varied career that followed started with lumberjacking at twenty, then he tried the life of a hobo for a time, later became a sailor before the mast on Atlantic coasting schooners, and finally, newspaper correspondent and special-article writer.

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES
SEPTEMBER A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION 1927

What Chance?

By George William Wilder

A BUSINESS man, when contemplating the establishment of his trade, carefully weighs the chances for and against the accomplishment of his object.

The man who is lured by the "easy money" that beckons the would-be law-breaker, may wisely follow his example. Almost every month science reveals some new method in the process of combating crime.

The sequel that followed the accidental leaving of a grimy pair of overalls at the scene of a train hold-up in the Siskiyou Mountains of Oregon, on October 11th, 1923, vividly illustrates what the criminal of to-day is up against in his efforts to "get away with it."

Spots on the overalls, thought at first to be grease, were found to be gum from fir-trees, and from this it was ascertained where the owner of the overalls had been employed. Their size and cut determined his probable size and build. Deposits of pitch under the left-hand flap, while the right-hand flap was clean, showed he was left-handed. Microscopic examination of two human hairs, taken from a button, disclosed his approximate age. Several grains of rock salt in one of the pockets betrayed his rendezvous—a cattleman's cabin not far from the scene of the crime.

It took a long time to find the owner of this particular pair of overalls—over three and one-half years of constant, world-wide search. But he was found, and he and his two brothers, who aided him in the train hold-up in which four men were brutally killed, were each sentenced in the early part of June of this year, to life imprisonment in the State penitentiary at Salem, Oregon.

So ended the famous D'Autremont brothers case.

The man to-day who deliberately turns to crime, might as well leave his name and address with the police authorities before he begins, for the long arm of the law will reach out—and will eventually get him.

What chance has he?

TWIN BLONDES -yet they cannot wear

the same shades of POWDER and ROUGE

By Mme. JEANNETTE DE CORDET · *Famous Beauty Specialist*

Two sisters—so exquisitely fashioned it seems a miracle they could be so exactly alike! Yet—their coloring is not the same. These sophisticated sisters are conscious of their twinship in features—but more conscious of their individual coloring. They do not wear the same shade of powder, nor the same tone of rouge. . . . The tone of your skin—rather than the color of your hair and eyes—determines your type. Do not disguise your type with a too light powder, nor an odd tone of rouge, but skilfully aid Nature by accenting your natural coloring, and thus give *emphasis* to your type . . . With Pompeian you can use just the right shade of powder and the correct tone of rouge for *your* skin.

POMPEIAN BEAUTY POWDER *and* BLOOM

POMPEIAN Beauty Powder and Pompeian Bloom both come in five perfect shades for the various types of women. The Powder adheres perfectly, remaining in a velvety finish for hours. The Bloom, a rouge of absolute purity, comes in tones that blend perfectly with Pompeian Powder.

POWDER and BLOOM each 60c

Ask for the BLOOM in the NEW purse size

Madame Jeannette, The Pompeian Laboratories
Dept. 402 I, 595 Fifth Ave., New York

I enclose 10c (coin or stamps) for which please send me your new 20-page booklet, "Your Type of Beauty," showing 24 different types of women illustrated in color. Also your Sampler of the 5 shades of Pompeian Beauty Powder in glass vials.

Name .....

Address .....

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

"EASY MONEY"

"'One hundred thousand dollars, Bill! Think of it, man!'

"It was the tempter in Bill Clark's ear. He listened, and when the time came——"

By
BILL CLARK
as told to
LOWELL HOWARD MORROW

Yes, it was a dangerous scheme. But I would do it for Helen's sake—and she need never know

"SLIM" ASHLEY was looking at me again—expectantly, searchingly—the light of hope in his large, round eyes. Only for a moment I met his eager gaze, then I looked away over the hazy hills to where the mellow blue of the sky merged with their summits. His proposition staggered, appalled, yet fascinated me, and set my nerves a-tingle. He was right: money ruled the world—and I needed money badly. But I was not sure of myself.

"Come, old man—it's *easy*."

His drawling words shifted my stare back to his earnest face, and I took note of the smile of confidence that was wrinkling the corners of his thin-lipped mouth, and the expression on his face gave me courage. I began to believe in his plan. Something akin to our old boyhood trust returned, for in those days he was a leader. Slim had a reputation of being slow, but he certainly was slow in no way save in speech. He was always sure of himself.

"The tempter who seduced Eve in the Garden of Eden had nothing on you, Slim," I said, and laughed, though there was a tremor to my mirth.

"Get a grip on yourself, Bill, and put this thing over," he advised confidently. "Put your scruples aside and pick up the coin. Think of it, man, all you got to do is pick it up! You just remarked that you have always been honest and have been kicked for your pains."

"Yes," I acknowledged, "that is true. It has brought me no money."

"Money talks, Bill. And all the world is listening."

I believed him. I had health, the love of a good girl, a good job and hosts of friends. But I lacked what I considered of more value than all—money and its power.

"You are right, Slim," I said, "but I——"

"You need the stuff, Bill," he interposed hurriedly. "There is Helen, you know."

I gave him a startled look, then once more looked away. A hot flash swept my body and my ears burned. The sudden mention of Helen Martin caused his scheme to lose much of its ugly aspect. I had it in my power to make her comfortable and happy. All I had to do was reach out, pluck our air castles, and put them on solid ground. Slim was right—it was *easy*. Yes, it was a dangerous scheme. But I would do it for Helen's sake—and she need never know. I owed it to her. Our love had been ardent, but unwise, and it was vastly important that we marry before a certain day.

But—I lacked the means on which to marry so proud a girl. I knew she was looking forward to riches and social prominence. She often had mentioned such things. I wanted her to have everything her heart could wish—automobiles, servants, a fine home and leisure to enjoy life. But my salary as express messenger would not permit a fraction of these things. My rise in the service had been rapid, so that at twenty-six I was one of the most trusted messengers on the road. However, I felt that the company had been niggardly with my salary, and I had saved but little of it.

My assistant stirred in his sleep

Slowly my eyes roamed the countryside, lingered a moment on our roadster over there near the highway, and returned to the little hill on whose top we sat. It was a place of solitude; there was not a soul in sight, and I realized that Slim had chosen the spot well. It was much safer here to discuss a dangerous scheme than within city walls which sometimes have ears.

"You do your part and I'll do mine," he broke in abruptly. "As I have said, it's the safest thing in the world. There has been no exchange of notes; it is certain no one has overheard our confab, and we work alone. One hundred thousand dollars, Bill! Think of it, man!"

I was thinking of it—thinking mighty seriously. As Slim spoke I was trying to screw up my courage and stifle my conscience.

"You know all the big fellows are getting theirs—whenever they get a chance—and who can blame them? Money is the only thing that counts any more in this world."

His words and manner were seductive. I wanted to honor them despite the misgivings that crowded in the back of my mind. But the soft, alluring voice of Spring was in the air. The buds were bursting, and the notes of mating song-birds came trilling through the trees. Glorious Nature! All I lacked to enjoy it fully was—money. Still I hesitated. I thought—and thought.

Without answering, I finally rose and looked at my watch.

"My train leaves at nine-thirty," I remarked casually. "We've got only an hour to get back to town."

"Well?" drawled Slim as he rose and faced me, his eyes burning into my soul—"what do you say?"

"It will be in my hands Wednesday night," I said absently, as if speaking to myself. "It might be arranged—I'm sure it might be arranged."

"Then it's a go—is it?" His voice betrayed an eager joy.

For answer I gazed hard at him and reached out my hand. He wrung it silently, then we turned and went down the hill to the auto, and neither spoke until the motor was started and I had swung the machine back into the road.

"I thought you would do it," Slim said quietly, then lapsed into silence. Neither was disposed to talk, and aflame with a new thrill, I bent low over the wheel, gave the motor the gas and watched the road. I seemed to be running away from something that was constantly overtaking me, passing me, waiting for me at the top of the hill and mocking my efforts with a ghastly smile. Always considered a fast driver, I never before had driven my car at such reckless speed. Subconsciously I realized that I had made a mistake.

Still, I had made the leap into this new world with my eyes open—the world of money—whose god was the only god that answered man's prayer. Besides, I did not dream of failure. There could be no failure, for had not Slim provided for every contingency? His plan was flawless, so I thought, and I could hardly curb my impatience to lay my hands on the fortune he had shown me.

Arrived in the city, we parted very cordially—as always.

I put my machine in the garage, then went to the depot and got aboard the express car. I looked about the car with a sigh of satisfaction. In a speculative mood, I noted its desks and compartments, its arrays of parcels and bundles. For years it had been the scene of my labor—now it should become the birthplace of my fortune.

SLIM ASHLEY had but recently returned from several years' absence in the West. It was rumored that while there he had dealings which, if not criminal, were not exactly honest. For these rumors I cared nothing—now. My only concern was the success of our little adventure in finance.

At last Wednesday night arrived. It still lacked an hour of train time when the special messenger came into the car and handed me the precious package. Once a month for years he had done this, for every month $100,000 in currency, consigned to a large St. Louis bank, was entrusted to my company. I was not a little proud of the trust imposed in me personally, of my record, and the place I held in the hearts of my employers. So, when I signed the receipt and handed it to the bank messenger I fancy my hands trembled a little and my eyes fell beneath his honest gaze.

—just as I took the package from the safe!

Without stopping to chat a minute, as was my usual custom, I took the package over to the safe, unlocked it and thrust it into a drawer by the side of another one *exactly like it*. Even the seals and the stamping were identical. I closed the safe and turned away with a grim, exulting smile over my handiwork—thrilling with the thought that soon I would be a rich man.

As I nervously walked the floor of the car I kept glancing at my watch, whose hands seemed to crawl, so anxious was I for the train to pull out. But all things have an end. At last I heard the air-brakes release, and the train began to move. It was warm in the car, so I shoved the door open a space and stood looking at the lights blinking past as we rattled over the yard switches out onto the main line. The stars were out overhead, but in the southwest, toward which we were heading, was a great bank of lightning-riven clouds.

"WE'RE heading into a storm," I observed to myself as I closed the door and turned to my work. "Well, it doesn't matter—though I hope it will be over before we reach the gully." It was at the gully where I knew Slim would be waiting.

It was a run of several hours to the gully, but I kept wishing we were already there, and the train seemed to go at a snail's pace. I could barely conceal my nervousness from my assistant, but he did not seem to notice it, and after completing his work, sat dozing in his chair. Every little while I would slide the door open and gaze out at the night, impatiently watching for the signal when I knew it was still many miles away.

We made but few stops between Chicago and St. Louis and at last we pulled out on the last lap of the trip. Once more I slid the door open, remarking to my assistant that it was close in the car, which was true.

"You don't look well to-night, old man," he said, rousing up. "What's the matter?"

I made no reply as I poked my head out. A few big drops of rain splashed in my face and the wind swept by in fitful gusts, leading the march of the black cloud mass across whose face the lightning played luridly. I closed the door and glanced at my helper. He sat leaning on the desk, his head on his arms, and I knew that he would soon be asleep. I sighed contentedly.

EVERYTHING was favoring me. I had not long to wait. Trembling with eagerness, I tiptoed to the door and opened it far enough to shove my head out. The wind howled above the roar of the train, and the rain drove furiously into my face as I twisted my head and stared down the track until my eyes ached. Would we never come to the gully? Then suddenly a flash of lightning revealed its black mouth but a mile ahead.

I opened the safe and took up one of the twin packages—the one containing the $100,000, I was sure of that! My assistant stirred in his sleep just as I took the package from the safe, and for an instant my heart was in my throat, but he settled down again. My hands trembled as I shoved it beneath my shirt, and with a furtive glance at my sleeping companion, I went back to the door.

Now that I had actually stolen the money and taken the first step toward riches, my remaining scruples vanished in a bunch. I opened the door and stood there waiting, unmindful of the driving rain that swished past me into the car. I was reckless. I now felt superior to all consequences. I was conscious of an inner exhilaration I had never experienced before. I even chuckled at the idea of a conscience which had troubled me before. I was bidding poverty good-by. I was opening the door of happiness to Helen—the sweetest girl in the world.

I STRAINED my eyes into the gloom until they burned from the lash of the storm. Suddenly there was a slight sound at the desk. I turned in alarm. My assistant was again stirring uneasily in his sleep. For several minutes I watched him fearfully as the train sped on. I cursed him under my breath. Must he awaken now and spoil it all?

But he soon grew quiet. I turned back to the door and took the precious package in my hand. Just in time!

Ahead so close that as we rushed toward it, it seemed to leap up at me, was the blazing camp-fire agreed upon. In an instant it was blinking and sizzling in the rain right before me. I hurled the package and saw it fall within the circle of the fire's light. I was wondering where Slim was, when the broad brim of his felt hat rose up out of the shadows, and in a moment he ran forward and picked up the package.

I closed the door and dropped into a chair, overcome by a sudden shock of shame and weakness. This act was so at variance with the life I had always known. But in a minute I had reasoned away my conscience. I opened the safe door and stared grimly at the bogus package. I knew I would have some explaining to do, but I felt equal to the task.

I was cool and confident when we finally arrived in St. Louis. I had a lay-over there of twelve hours before the return trip. So, after delivering my express matter and making out my report, I hired a swift car, crossed the river to Illinois and drove madly toward the gully, where I was to meet Slim and divide the money.

THE rain had ceased and the moon was riding high in a clear sky, so I made good time. I secreted the car in a clump of bushes well back from the road and hurried across lots through the woods to the gully. I scratched and bruised my hands on the brambles, but I did not mind—so eager was I to get my hands on the money. I had some difficulty locating the spot, for Slim had allowed the fire to die down to a few coals, but at last I saw him sitting on a rock, his head bent forward in his hands, his gaze fixed on the flickering embers. I wondered at his abstraction as I bounded forward. And then he jerked up his head and looked at me gloweringly.

"EVERYTHING was favoring me. I had not long to wait. Trembling with eagerness, I tiptoed to the door and opened it far enough to shove my head out. The wind howled above the roar of the train, and the rain drove furiously into my face as I twisted my head and stared down the track until my eyes ached. Would we never come to the gully?

"Then suddenly a flash——"

"What's the big idea of changing the plan?" he growled, rising and staring at me with narrowing eyes.

"What—what do you mean?" I stammered, aghast at his manner.

"Why didn't you throw it off? Where is it? Got it with you?"

For a minute I stared agape, unable to comprehend his questions.

"Come, Bill, produce the goods. Let's divvy up and have it over with."

"I want to know what the devil you mean," I said testily.

His eyes narrowed to mere slits as his face grew dark in the flare of the fire. He came up close and gazed at me with burning eyes.

"Look here, Bill," he finally rasped—"don't you try to double-cross me! Play fair or I'll squeal."

"Squeal!" I echoed in blank astonishment.

"I reckon you came out here to tell me you didn't get the stuff. You want it all and——"

"I DON'T know what you are driving at, old man," I cut in sharply. "You seem to think I am trying to gyp you out of your share, when you have it all. I threw it off and I saw you pick it up. So come across."

Once more he leered in my face insultingly.

"Damn you, Bill!" he said in a burst of anger, "this won't do. *You got to play fair!*"

"You talk in riddles, Slim. I stole the stuff—and now—

now——" I paused as a startling thought seared my brain —"now I want my share!"

"Bill, you know you lie. You want to keep it all and——"

"Don't call *me* a liar!" I shot back, now in a blinding rage. And then in a surge of fear and chagrin I saw the truth—the man before me was acting a part! I remembered how good an actor he was back in the old school days whenever we staged our amateur shows. He had concealed the money and now was stoutly insinuating that he had never received it. He would keep it all and laugh at my helplessness. Oh, what a fool I had been! I had no thought of stealing the money until he suggested it—and now——

"Damn you!" I barked, beside myself with fear and rage. *"Produce that money* or I'll choke the life out of you!" I grabbed him fiercely by the shoulders. At that he sprang back with a snarl and made a motion to draw his gun. Then I leaped upon him. He clenched and tried to throw me off, but I hung on desperately, and being pretty evenly matched, we surged back and forth in a deadly embrace. Twice Slim reached for his gun, but each time I caught his hand. Once we went down together, only to struggle to our feet without either gaining an advantage.

We stumbled through the fire, scattering the coals about the ground; swung in and out among the shadows and fell against trees. Both of us were gasping for breath and I felt myself weakening. When my heels caught on a root, Slim forced me back and I came down on the back of my head. It was a crunching blow. A blackness enveloped me—and I knew no more.

My soul quailed under Helen's stern gaze. "Go!" she said —"and may God forgive you. I cannot!"

IT was high noon when I came to my senses. My head throbbed horribly as I sat up and stared stupidly about. Then as my roving eyes noted the dead camp-fire and the evidences of the struggle, bitter memory drifted back. Presently I staggered to my feet and felt the back of my head. It was clotted with blood from contact with a sharp stone. I looked about. Slim was nowhere in sight. With a groan I slumped down on a log, the whole awful truth crushing my soul. He was a false friend. I had stolen to fill the pockets of another man. I must face the consequences alone. I was ruined.

Hour after hour I sat huddled on that log, all the pangs of remorse and hopelessness gnawing at my heart, all the barbed shafts of a wounded conscience searing my brain. Several trains rumbled past, but I paid no heed to them. Lost in the depths of my misery, I longed to die, then, coward that I was, I shrank back from death. I would flee from my crime. But thoughts of Helen and her hapless state made me resolve to stay and face the ordeal for her sake. After all, I reasoned, they could prove nothing.

I went to a creek and bathed the wound in my head, then back to my car. Once on the highway I was again tempted to flee, but I overcame it and resolutely turned the car toward St. Louis.

By the time I reached the city I had coddled myself into the notion that, aside from Slim Ashley's treachery, things were not so dark after all. There (*Continued on page* 70)

"NIGHT-LIFE POLLY"

Three persons had possible motives in the brutal murder of Polly Benton, beautiful artist's model. The clues Detective Kinsella finally obtained, led to the amazing discovery that——

By Detective PAT KINSELLA
As told to W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS

THE news that greeted me when I reported for duty one July morning, not so long ago, was enough to startle me out of my usual matter-of-fact attitude toward the daily grist of crimes. Polly Benton had been murdered.

Now, that name—or, rather, the real name it stands for—had lately been given a tremendous notoriety by the newspapers. Her death consequently called for head-lines in the largest black-faced type. It would cause a public sensation, and we detectives, after all, are part of the public. We may become a bit hard-boiled on the subject of ordinary murders, but when the victim is well known, we're just as capable of feeling excited as the next person.

In my case, there was a special thrill. I knew Polly Benton, because I had once had her under supervision in the line of my duty. She was known as "Night-Life Polly" in half the cabarets in New York.

A year earlier, she had been an artist's model, and one of a dozen girls whom the eccentric millionaire, Gilbert Sigerson, had selected to train for a career in the movies. He had pretended, at any rate, that the movies were the inspiration of his queerly conducted philanthropy. He had started a school supposed to be open to all worthy applicants, but of the thousands who tried to get in, he had picked only young working girls, under eighteen years of age, pretty and unprotected. Half of them had neither father nor mother living, and the remaining six lived with mothers who were widowed or divorced.

There had been classes in pantomime, dancing, and other exercises at the school. But it is certain that the aged millionaire, who was past sixty-five, had spent a good deal of the time in giving "studio" teas at which he was the only man present, and in petting those of the girls who were willing to be petted.

OLD SIGERSON had paid particular attention to Helen Costigan and Polly Benton. These two, apparently, had been anxious to please him; had, in fact, been rivals for his senile affection and the gifts of jewelry and candy that went along with it.

Scandal had started to buzz when a Mrs. Smith, mother of one of the students, had complained to the Police Depart-

ment that Sigerson had been persistent in his attempts to fondle her daughter, Georgina, though the latter had repulsed him. I was assigned to investigate the matter, and I met Polly Benton and Helen Costigan at that time. Polly was a beautiful child of seventeen, with bronze-red hair and blue eyes, well developed physically and worldly wise beyond her years. I did not obtain any evidence of criminal practices, but I did succeed in frightening Sigerson and he closed the school.

The newspapers got wind of it. Some of them kidded the old Lothario about his "tea parties," while the more conservative editors wrote solemnly in condemnation of the police for not having ferreted him out before. The thing would have blown over, however, if Sigerson had not suddenly married Polly—with her mother's consent, of course. Thereupon, suits for breach of promise had been brought in behalf of both Helen Costigan and another girl named Gertrude Heinholz. The lid was off. The yellow press proceeded to rake over every imaginable detail of Sigerson's life, his movie school, his fondness for young girls, his marriage. The outcry resembled in some respects the recent Browning affair.

And the wave of sensationalism had just about reached its crest when I learned that Polly had been killed.

A few minutes after I arrived at Headquarters that morning, I was summoned to the office of the Chief of the Homicide Bureau.

"YOU'RE assigned to the Benton case, Kinsella," the Chief told me curtly. "Go right along with Detectives Guilfoyle and Baker, of the regular squad. Work closely with them, and report every day to me."

I knew, without asking, that I had been put on this job—although I was not a member of the Homicide Squad—because of the work I had done in probing the irregularities of the movie school and more especially because I had been in contact with Polly. On our way up-town to the Sigerson home in the West Seventies, Guilfoyle gave me first details concerning the murder.

"The jane was stabbed with some kind of a dagger," he said callously, speaking out of one corner of his mouth, above the roaring of the train. "A scream was heard about four o'clock in the morning. A maid-servant got to her first. She was too far gone to talk. Then her husband came. They slept in separate bedrooms. No arrests as yet, but it looks bad for Sigerson."

I LISTENED to this typical sleuth's report without comment. I preferred to form my own judgments, on the scene of the crime.

Sigerson lived in a modernized, brownstone private house on the north side of the street, near Columbus Avenue. Guilfoyle, Baker, and I were admitted by a uniformed policeman who was standing guard in the hallway. He directed us to the second floor front, where a dreadful exhibit of

Old Sigerson had paid particular attention to Helen Costigan and Polly Benton

sudden death awaited us silently. An examining medical officer had been there and gone, but care had been taken not to disarrange the evidence.

POLLY BENTON'S body lay face downward on the floor, some three feet away from the bed. A deep wound which had bled copiously, was visible below the left shoulder. It could only have been inflicted from behind, by means of a powerful downward stab. An open window leading to a roof garden suggested that the murderer had entered the room that way, and that the girl had leaped from her bed in terror. The scream had almost certainly been uttered prior to the fatal blow. The latter had pierced her lungs and reached the heart cavity, and must at once have cut her breath short.

I scrutinized the edges of the wound and was struck by the fact that it had been caused by a three-cornered instrument, one side of which had been grooved. This strange weapon had been withdrawn and was not in the room. If it could be found, it would obviously be the most important clue to the identity of the murderer.

A search we three detectives made for finger-prints and footprints proved entirely fruitless. However, we located and ticketed as being of possible significance the following objects:

(1) A paper napkin, stained with coffee and crumpled loosely into a ball, found on the carpet between Polly's corpse and the dressing-table.

(2) A cigarette butt, found on the arm of a chair, which it had scorched.

(3) A long yellow hair, found clinging to one of the lace curtains at the open window.

We then passed to the roof garden, where we observed that the gravel had recently been disturbed, though no definite tracks had been left. This roof garden ran the width of the house. A fire-escape connected it with the back yard. But the window of the bathroom opened on to it, on the same level as the two windows of Polly's room. Whether the murderer had been a resident of the house, or had climbed to the roof by means of the fire-escape, he could have approached Polly most readily by way of the bathroom—and with the least danger of being seen.

We returned indoors, and proceeded to question the material witnesses. Gilbert Sigerson, two maid-servants, and the cook, a woman, had been detained in the front parlor. The millionaire looked haggard, almost fear-stricken. I uttered the customary warning against their saying anything that might tend to incriminate them. The women sobbed, but Sigerson was eager to talk.

The girl's rage had attracted the attention of those near—and they later remembered her threat

"MY wife and I spent the evening at home," he stated. "We played cards until about eleven o'clock, at which hour she went to bed. I joined her in her bedroom a little later, and we chatted until after twelve. I then

went to my own room, fell asleep very quickly, and knew nothing about the awful tragedy that occurred until Polly's maid, Mary Powell, woke me up at a quarter past four and told me about it."

"H'm! Did you smoke cigarettes while you were having your last chat with your wife?" I asked.

"I suppose I did. I am always smoking cigarettes."

"And did either or both of you take coffee?" I went on, thinking of the stained paper napkin I had found.

"Coffee! Why, no! We drank no coffee last night," he answered, plainly uncomfortable, and much mystified.

"Did you have coffee served in Mrs. Sigerson's bedroom at other times?"

"In the mornings—yes, occasionally. We took breakfast there together yesterday morning."

"All right. Where is your bedroom located?"

"It is a front room on the second floor."

"Next to your wife's, that is to say. Do you mean to tell us that you, who were nearest to her, did not hear her scream, did not know she was being murdered, until a maid brought the news to you?"

"Yes! O God—it's horrible to hear it put that way, but it's the truth. I am a very sound sleeper."

"Now, Mr. Sigerson, do you care to tell us whether you were on good terms with your wife, especially whether you had any hard words with her yesterday?"

He squirmed miserably. "I—I prefer not to answer such questions before consulting my lawyer," he stammered.

GUILFOYLE then called forward the maid, Mary Powell. I noted that her hair was yellow, which accounted plausibly for the hair I had discovered on the curtain. She repeated her story of the scream in the night, and of having run down-stairs from her room on the top floor to find her mistress bleeding to death.

"Can you prove that the attack on Mrs. Sigerson was made before you started down-stairs?" I asked.

The other two servants promptly set the point at rest. They, also, had been awakened by the scream, they said. They had discussed it with Mary Powell on the landing, before she had left to see what was wrong with her mistress.

"Very good," I commented, addressing the Powell girl. "But earlier in the evening—before you retired to your room, or afterwards—did any sounds of a peculiar nature reach you from the second floor?"

"I don't know what you mean," she replied.

"I'm talking straight English, all the same. I ask you whether you heard anything you'd have thought worth repeating as gossip—to the cook, we'll say?"

"WELL, Mr. and Mrs. Sigerson were having one of their quarrels, from ten o'clock on," the girl said slowly. "I couldn't make out the words, but they were bawling each other out."

Sigerson clenched his fists and started to say something, then thought better of it.

I dropped the quiz, in which, to (*Continued on page 92*)

"I hate you and I'm going to kill you, so help me God!" said the Costigan girl

The *Murder* at PINEHURST

"I saw a figure in dim outline, with upraised hand—there came a terrific crash—and I knew no more

By DAN B. HOSMER

Superintendent of the F. N. BURNS Detective Agency of Wichita, Kansas

THE telephone rang. "Yes, this is the detective agency, Hosmer speaking," I said mechanically, placing the receiver to my ear, expecting the call to be an operative reporting.

"Carson speaking for Mr. John Baintree, sir. Mr. Baintree has been injured—is probably dying, and he wishes to confer with you personally at *Pinehurst*, on a matter of great importance. Could you come at once, sir?"

"Please say that I will be there as quickly as possible," I replied, and I hung up the receiver on Carson's "Thank you, sir," and began locking my desk.

"What's doing?" queried Crane, swinging his feet from the window-sill to the floor with a thud. Crane was barely twenty-one, the baby of the force, but he was a clever little operative and always in demand because of his winning personality and ability to make friends readily.

"John Baintree is dying," I said, and at my words I saw Crane's jaw drop slightly. "He has sent for me. Ask one of the boys to come in and take the office. I want you with me."

In less than five minutes we were in my car speeding toward *Pinehurst*.

"So old John Baintree is about to cash in," said Crane thoughtfully as we turned onto an arterial highway and picked up speed.

"So it would seem from what his man said," I replied, adding speculatively, "I wonder what service a very mediocre detective like me could render a dying millionaire."

An impenetrable mystery shrouds old Baintree's house of death. Who is the sinister figure who lurks in the background?

"Hard to tell," Crane replied. "I guess millionaires have their troubles same as the less fortunate. I hear the old man is something of a nut and keeps his place locked up like a jail. What do you know about him, anyway?"

"What everybody else knows—nothing for sure. He purchased *Pinchurst* from a South American planter many years ago and has lived there ever since, alone, except for one or two trusted servants. He avoids all contact with the outside world and lives in strict seclusion. The heavy gates are always kept locked, and no one is permitted to enter the grounds unless summoned by Baintree himself, or his butler. The old butler is in command, transacts the general run of business, and guards the place against intrusion. It is rumored that Baintree hasn't left the grounds in more than twenty years. Why? Nobody knows."

"Well, I'm darned glad it fell to my lot to accompany you," Crane answered. "I've been hearing vague stories about this strange old bird ever since I came to these parts, and I've always had a burning curiosity to see inside that dump." By "dump," meaning *Pinchurst*.

Silently we wound our way around the pine-covered hills until at last, rounding a sharp curve, we came rather suddenly into full view of *Pinehurst*. The estate was on the main-traveled highway, some thirty minutes from the city, and three miles from a small town named Waverly, and was situated far enough back from the road to insure privacy. A high, natural stone fence, covered with clinging vines, completely surrounded the place. A winding graveled drive led from the stone entrance to the house, a large castlelike structure of gray stone, which stood out prominently against a background of tall, blue-green pines.

We drew up in front of the tall, stone entrance, barred by heavy, iron gates. Before I could honk my horn, or Crane could alight and ring the bell for admittance, a man, obviously a gardener, stepped from behind one of the wide supporting pillars and touched his cap. As if assured by our appearance that we were the parties he was expecting, he allowed the heavy gates to swing open and admit us.

As we alighted from the car and climbed the broad, stone steps which led to the main entrance, I experienced a peculiar reaction. The house, which at a distance had appeared beautiful almost beyond description, at close range seemed cold, forbidding, prisonlike, with its heavily barred windows and drawn shades.

I rang the bell. With a promptness that seemed

almost automatic, the door opened and a rather tall, dignified man, from all appearances a butler, admitted us.

"I will show you to Mr. Baintree's room at once, sir," he said briefly, passing all formalities.

As we followed the gray, erect figure up the winding stairs, our shoes making a tap, tap, tap on the marble steps, the place seemed strangely deserted and ghostly in its deathlike silence. The old man ushered us down the broad hallway to the north wing of the house, where he stopped before a closed door, and, after knocking lightly, opened it and stood aside for us to enter.

I stepped across the threshold. In the dim light I noticed that the room was large and expensively furnished. An antique four-poster bed stood between two windows, and lying upon it, a doctor bending over him, an assistant and nurse in close attendance, was John Baintree, his head swathed in bandages.

As we entered the room, the elder of the two physicians stepped back from the bedside and turned to us.

"Mr. Baintree has been injured," he said, in curt, professional tones; "please be as brief as possible in your interview. Should he show signs of fatigue, call me at once. I shall be in the parlor on this floor," and without another word he turned on his heel and left the room, followed by the younger doctor and the nurse.

The old butler placed chairs for us near the bedside, and at a signal from his master, noiselessly withdrew from the room.

"My sister, Mrs. Hess, and her daughter Ethel, and my nephews, Frank Baintree and George Giller, are with me. They have been here about ten days, having come at my request to be present on June tenth, when a trust fund established by my father thirty-five years ago expires, and a distribution of the principal is to be made in accordance with a provision of the will.

"I have few servants. Jan Carson is my butler, or, rather, butler-secretary. Carson's daughter, Mona, assists Kitty Haney, the housekeeper. Mrs. Cronk is the cook. One of her sons, Robert, acts as gardener, while Willie, an unfortunate, assists her in the kitchen. That constitutes a list of the persons in the house at this time."

"YOUR servants," I said—"they have all been with you for some time?"

"Yes, for many years."

"You consider them trustworthy?"

"Yes, absolutely."

"Now, please describe the manner of the attack, Mr. Baintree."

After a short rest period, the old man resumed his story: "Mona Carson, my butler's daughter, is a harpist of considerable ability, and after dinner it is her custom to play a few selections for me. Last evening she played as usual. My sister, Julia, was suffering from a nervous headache and did not sit with us, and my nephew, George Giller, excused himself early, pleading an important letter to write.

"I DREW my gun, and giving the door a kick, I landed in the room at a single bound.

"I had been a detective for many years . . . yet I have never experienced anything like the shock and horror that swept over me at the sight which met my eyes. Upon the bed——"

"Last night I was struck down in my study when I surprised an intruder in the act of rifling my safe," John Baintree began in a low, distinct voice. "This morning, when I had recovered sufficiently to investigate, I discovered that not only had an attempt been made to break into the cabinet which holds the private safe in which I keep my papers, but that my jewel safe had also been broken into and my jewel collection stolen. The value of these jewels I cannot even estimate. The collection was started by my father many years ago and was priceless."

As the old man paused, I interposed hastily: "It will save considerable time if you will tell me, please, what occurred prior to the attack, who all were in the house at the time, and everything else that you can think of that might be of value to me in my investigation."

JOHN BAINTREE was apparently quite a tall man, with even, clear-cut features, deep-set gray eyes, and hair quite gray. He was reserved and direct in his manner, the type that could shut himself away from those about him at will, as completely as if a stone wall had suddenly been erected about him.

"I have guests in the house at present," the old man replied, and at his words I almost started in surprise. In all the years that I had been hearing about *Pinehurst* and the strange old recluse who lived there, I had never heard of him entertaining anyone, not even his own relatives. No one knew who they were even.

That left my other nephew, Frank, and my niece, Ethel, and myself in the drawing-room together.

"Ethel and Frank bore me inexpressibly; so, about nine o'clock I excused myself and went to my room. I sat reading, and permitting myself to doze a little, fell asleep in my chair. I do not know how long I had been asleep, but I was awakened by a noise. I listened. It seemed to come from my study. I arose quietly and tip-toed to the door leading into the study, and paused a second with my ear against the panel. I could distinctly hear a low, prying, cracking sound.

"I then opened the door—noiselessly, I thought—but the intruder heard me. I saw a figure in dim outline, with upraised hand—there came a terrific crash—and I knew no more. Carson found me on the floor this morning, after discovering I was not in my room when he came to awaken me."

"Besides the jewels, what else was taken from the safe?"

"I must explain," Baintree murmured, raising a hand to stop further questioning. "The intruder did not succeed in breaking into the cabinet which holds the safe where I kept my papers. The jewels were kept in a secret jewel safe behind the life-sized portrait of my father which hangs on the south wall of the study. I did not know that anyone except myself knew of the existence of the jewel safe. It is equipped with a burglar alarm, but it had been put out of commission, the double releases which permit the picture to swing out disclosing the safe, successfully

manipulated, the dial knocked off, and the jewels taken."

Noting that the old man was showing exhaustion, I said, "May I inspect the study while you rest for a few moments?"

"Yes, you may go in. The study is to the left. Nothing has been disturbed, as no one has been in the room since Carson removed me this morning."

Directing Crane to summon the doctor to administer restoratives, I went into the study. It was a large room, considerably longer than it was wide, with tall, barred windows which gave it a prisonlike appearance in spite of its costly furnishings. Against a wall space, between two windows to the east, was the large carved cabinet which held the safe in which John Baintree kept his papers; on the south wall, near the door where Baintree had entered when struck down, hung the portrait with the secret jewel safe concealed behind it. A door led out onto a private balcony, which extended almost the full length of the study. Another door led into the hallway. Both doors were equipped with old-fashioned, ornate, brass latch bars with bolt and chain. I glanced about the room. It did not show, except for the damage to the cabinet door and the open jewel safe, that it had only a few hours before been the scene of a dramatic occurrence.

I passed the cabinet, since it had not been robbed, and turned my attention to the jewel safe. The portrait of David Baintree was in a massive, gold-leaf frame, with electrically lighted candle standards on either side of it. A set of special hinges allowed the picture to swing slowly out when the double releases were properly worked, revealing the safe, a lightly constructed, built-in-the-wall combination affair. One thing was certain — only some one who knew about the double releases could have gotten to that safe. Whoever pulled the job evidently did not know the combination, however, for after gaining access to the safe, he had had to knock the dial off with some heavy steel instrument in order to get to the jewels.

I searched the room carefully for possible clues, but found nothing of importance. On the library table stood a heavy block of carved ivory, an antique curio, and on its white side was a spatter of blood. Here, no doubt, was the object which had been used to beat the aged millionaire into unconsciousness. I did not touch it. I would have a fingerprint man come out at once and take the prints off of everything in the room that might have been touched by the intruder.

Having finished with my preliminary inspection of the study, I found my assistant, Crane (*Continued on page 86*)

Carson started to speak. A moment later he had fainted and crumpled to the floor

The *Hundred-Thousand-*

"The best way to cheat a cheater, is to smile," he sent her on this embezzlement case. "And in our

By RENE HANLEY, formerly Investigator for HOWARD BROWNE

"RENE, I want you to take the Twentieth Century this afternoon for Chicago. Leave your baggage at Grand Central. Hurry over to the office at once!"

These were the orders I received upon my return from a trip to Los Angeles, where I had been sent to find and bring back a silly little kid who had run away from home to enter the movies.

The girl's mother had met us at the station. I had hoped to run out home, and had called up the office to report my arrival in New York and obtain permission to take the rest of the day off.

When I left for the West three months before, Mr. Browne had promised me a month's vacation and I had planned to take mother down to Palm Beach. Accordingly, I hung up the receiver in the telephone booth with a snap, which was the only expression possible for my sorely tried patience.

"You look fine, Rene, and I'm glad you've had a good rest coming back, for this is apt to be a pretty tough case," was the way the Chief greeted me when I entered the office.

"Mother has been looking forward to going down to Palm Beach with me," I ventured. "I thought I was going to have a vacation."

"Sorry, but you'll have to postpone that," he answered shortly. "I have held back this assignment for twenty-four hours, so that I could put you on it. It's a big thing, and if you are successful there will be a bonus in it for you."

I was rather surprised that the Chief intimated the slightest possibility of my not succeeding. As a rule his orders were: "Do thus and so, and bring back the bacon!"

I looked at him inquiringly.

"Some sugar daddy! He sure looks the goods!" said Charlotte

Dollar SMILE

said Browne to his clever little detective, when make 'em think you mean it. It's worth money line, kid!"

"Yes, it is going to be one of the most difficult things you've ever done," he said, as if reading my thoughts, "and if you fail this time, I won't blame you. The proposition is this: you are to 'rope in' a very clever and alert young business woman who has embezzled one hundred thousand dollars from her employer, and get her to give you back that money. She must not learn that you are a detective or that you have been commissioned by anyone to get it!"

Just like that! I had learned by experience that ejaculations of dismay or useless discussions annoyed Mr. Browne, so I waited patiently for further details.

"Briefly, the story is this: James H. Menken, the banker—you know of him?"

I nodded. (I am concealing the man's real name under a fictitious one).

"Well, Menken came to me and told me that a woman called Joyce Millar, who had been his private secretary for five years, had embezzled one hundred thousand dollars. He wants to get the money back without either arresting her, or letting her know in any way that he is interested in the case."

"Aren't the bonding companies responsible for all money stolen by bank employees?" I asked. "Won't I be running into their men?"

"No-o-o," Mr. Browne answered slowly. He picked up a memorandum pad and flicked the pages, as if he were looking for something, but his eyes were blank. "Miss Millar did not touch the bank's money. She had complete charge of all Menken's private affairs, as well as acting as his official secretary. You know, he is a millionaire. It seems that she is an unusually clever young woman and did work for which a man would have received ten thousand a year. As it was, her salary was only fifty a week. But she had never seemed to be dissatisfied."

But I had noticed a shrewd gleam in the old gentleman's eyes

"Sure. Sure—I see," I muttered. "Well, whether the jug hits the stone or the stone hits the jug, it goes ill with the jug!"

"Rene, you better cut out that trick of making misquota-

tions; it's getting to be a regular obsession with you," the Chief said, and frowned. "First thing you know you'll be known as the 'Misquoting Operative' and you'll be as useless in this business as a girl with a harelip, or a cleft palate. You ought to know by this time how carefully crooks catalogue the slightest peculiarities of investigators, so as to be on the outlook for them. And your odd habit is as conspicuous as a wart on the end of your nose."

"I'M sorry, Mr. Browne," I mumbled, "but those big authors have such an uncanny knack of saying what I think. 'A proverb is one man's wit and all men's property!'"

The silence which followed this outburst made me feel as uncomfortable as if I were sitting on a bed of nettles. The Chief remained motionless, his face expressing neither annoyance nor amusement.

"I don't know whether it would be wise, after all, to put you on this girl's trail if you're not feeling exactly on tiptoe," he remarked at length, very slowly. Every word fell on my ears with a thud that was positively sickening. I wasn't keen for the assignment—in fact, I had felt that it was beyond me—but I cringed under the Chief's displeasure. "Not only is the Millar woman mighty clever, but she is in the company of 'Dude' Mendez, the forger, and whoever goes after her will need to be on the alert every minute."

"Oh, I'll show you that I'm on the alert all right, once I'm on the job, Mr. Browne," I promised very eagerly. "I won't make one more quotation until I bring the girl back."

"But I don't want the girl brought back—she has to be left just where she is. It's the hundred thousand that has to be brought back."

There followed a few moments of apparent grave doubt. At last the Chief shrugged his shoulders, selected a cigar from the humidor on his desk, and—bending forward toward me—he gave me the details of the embezzlement. Our own operatives had already investigated the case from several angles.

"THIS Joyce Millar went to work as a stenographer in the bank twelve years ago at the age of seventeen. She was always considered a very conscientious employee and very ambitious; attended the bank's special courses and all that sort of thing. The investigator assigned by the bonding company to look up her private life when she first applied for a position, and the man who looked her up five years later when she became secretary to the first vice-president, both reported her as an exceptionally quiet young woman who had no men friends, but seemed to spend most of her time studying. Her experience in the vice-president's office led to another promotion, and she became an assistant to Menken.

"Three years ago—that is, two years after she became Menken's secretary—Joyce installed herself in a beautifully furnished flat on Riverside Drive, had a maid, and blossomed out in fur coats and that sort of thing. She could not have lived in that style for three times the amount of her salary. Her only male caller was a man who so closely resembled her employer that, before going any further into that period, I put a few questions to him."

Mr. Browne paused; a crooked, unmirthful smile curled around his lips as he gazed meditatively at his cigar ash.

"His evasive answers, and his explanation that at that time the girl was all right and had probably made some money in Wall Street, convinced me that he himself had been putting up for her maintenance. At that time, Joyce was in charge of all Menken's investments. He was in the habit of signing blank checks for her to use not only in paying his personal bills, but for the purchase and sale of his stocks and bonds. She seems to have been something of a young financial wizard. Anyway, her employer had absolute trust in her judgment.

"LAST May she moved from the Riverside Drive apartment—that was one month before Menken married a young society girl. Her maid was dismissed and she left no new address with the superintendent of the building. Through an official of the bank where she kept her personal account—a friend of mine—one of our men discovered that the girl had rented a room and arranged to board with a woman named Mrs. Fanny Anderson, in New Rochelle."

"'Fanny the Fake!'" I exclaimed. "Gosh, Miss Millar is a clever one. You never can tell——" I started, but I caught the quotation quickly by the neck and choked it off. "Just imagine her waiting for eleven years to pull a big trick like that. But I thought that Fanny was going straight——"

"She is," Mr. Browne interrupted sharply. "Don't jump at conclusions, Rene. Miss Millar was not previously acquainted with Fanny, and she did not take the money until some months later. The fact is that Fanny has a very nicely furnished house in New Rochelle and runs it as a sort of paying-guest proposition. Joyce Millar was simply a feather which was accidentally blown into her nest when she put an ad in the newspaper for a lady boarder. The operative who investigated that part of the case found that Fanny had nothing to do with the embezzled money.

"However, it was at her house that Miss Millar met Dude Mendez. The stenographer was probably feeling blue and lonesome, and was just ripe to fall into the arms of the dashing Dude, who must immediately have seen the possibilities attached to having a bank president's secretary in love with him."

"Didn't Fanny give the Millar woman a hint as to what she was up against?" I asked.

"NO. Yesterday our operative made Fanny talk pretty freely, and she said then that she was afraid of Dude. Anyhow, the Millar girl seems to have been very unsophisticated. In spite of her affair with her employer, she never batted 'round, and seemed to have no friends. Must have been just pie for Mendez.

"ORDINARILY, I would have felt inclined to wring the little wretch's fat neck, for I knew that he had ruined a pair of my best cobwebby hose. . . . This time, however, I could hardly keep from gathering up the spoiled pup and hugging it to death!

"For, this woman and this dog——"

"Well, they cleared out four weeks ago. She called up the office saying she was sick, but would be back to work in a few days. It wasn't until a week ago that Menken got suspicious and secretly put his private affairs into the hands of an accountant, after he had called up her old address and found out that she had left there—and that she had not given the bank cashier her new address.

"You know what he learned—that she had cleared out with a little over one hundred thousand of his private fortune. For obvious reasons, he naturally does not want to put the affair into the hands of the police; so he brought the case to me. He has given us *carte blanche* to go ahead—but under no circumstances must the Millar woman know that he is our client.

"The girl must have been very sure that her employer wouldn't dare prosecute her. Anyway, when she left she told Fanny that they were going to Chicago. My assistant, Herschy, knows Mendez very well, so I sent him on and he soon located them. From my friend, in the bank here where she had her personal account, I learned that she had withdrawn her money and had re-deposited it in a bank in Chicago. The embezzled money is in negotiab bonds—probably in a safety-deposit box there."

"Have you thought of any scheme whereby we may annex that hundred thousand the girl has?" asked Lennox

I had arrived at the office around ten o'clock and for two hours Mr. Browne coached me on what I should do. He had representatives in Chicago who were also working on the case; my end was to become acquainted with the girl and win her confidence. His parting words to me were: "Rene, the best way to cheat a cheater is to smile. And make 'em think you mean it. It means money in our line, kid!"

"Not such a cinch of a job," I reflected as I stepped on a train that afternoon. "What does he think—I can grow a hundred-thousand-dollar smile?"

As I had never received very much schooling myself—Mr. Browne had taken me out of a cash-girl's cage and trained me to be a detective—I had a great respect for education. This Millar woman had all the advantages I lacked, and besides that, I figured, she must have been a terribly brilliant person to understand all about stocks and bonds.

Before I left the office, however, Mr. Browne had handed me copies of the reports made out by our operatives who had dug up Joyce's past. These referred to all persons by code numbers. No names were mentioned, so if by any chance I lost the reports they would mean nothing to the finders.

Over and over again I read these reports, trying to get some line on the personality of Joyce Millar. Dude Mendez and Fanny the Fake belonged to distinct classes of criminals. Half a dozen different lines of approach would have immediately offered themselves had my assignment been to rope in either one of them—of course, whether or not I would have succeeded in "throwing" them later, would have been a different matter.

This business girl, however, was a different proposition. To me she was an alien prospect. For all her cleverness and education, she had shown herself morally weak—twice she had fallen for the old line of soapy palaver. As confidential secretary to Menken for a couple of years, she must have been aware that there had been "other women" in his life—that she was taking a chance in her "trial-marriage" with him. Second, for all her being a "a young financial wizard," she had been so dumb as to turn thief for a rotter like Dude Mendez.

Anyway, it was up to me to find the flaws in Joyce Millar's disposition and heart. As I read and re-read the reports, gradually a fairly satisfactory personality developed. At first, the stenographer appeared merely to be one of those drab, colorless, conscientious creatures who make such excellent and seemingly trust-

(*Continued on page* 103)

The MYSTERY of the

Sherlock Holmes is the world's prize detective. of emulating his genius. In this story two laughed at in the beginning, the

By "DOCTOR WATSON, JR."
as told to CY CALDWELL

WHEN me and Jim sneaked down to the Avondale depot, we didn't have no idear that we was going to get mixed up in a real mystery. We went down there to hear Alec McNeill, the night operator, read about Sherlock Holmes.

But No. 2, the fast passenger-train, ran over a man who was standing on the track just this side of Marshy Hope, and it had to side-track at our station because it was late. Jim jumped on the baggage-car and looked the dead man over as cool as you please. He said he was Sherlock Holmes and I was Doctor Watson. When the baggage-man laughed, Jim glared at him and asked if he had observed that the man was dead long before the train hit him. That's Jim for you!

The trainmen were surprised, I can tell you. The body was cold and showed that it had been dead for quite a while. Someone must have killed the man and propped him in a standing position on the track.

NEXT morning we swiped a paper from old Duncan Neill Robertson, the station agent, and found out that sure enough Jim was right. The dead man was Charles Walker, a clerk of the Trent Steel Company, and he had been shot.

Jim found some other important news, too. The paper said that a box car, consigned to the Trent Steel Company and containing $60,000 worth of copper, had mysteriously disappeared somewhere between Weston and Bridge City. It had been the twenty-first car in a train of fifty cars—and the conductor and his two brakemen were sure that it had been on the train at Piedmont, four miles from our station. They were amazed at its disappearance.

"Well," says Jim, "there's a connection between these two dastardly crimes."

I couldn't see it, but I walked with him to the place where the man was run over. We didn't find nothin' except a birch pole broke off close to the gravel between the ties. There were lots of footprints, but they was probably those of the trainmen and detectives.

I went back to the house and told my Aunt Sue all about it and talked so fast she pretty near forgot about some pie I had stole from her that morning—but not quite. Trust Aunt Sue for that, no matter how slick you talk. But she didn't do nothing—just said I should have asked her for it.

But I might not have got it, so I guess I handled the case the best way.

However, that was nothing. The big question for me an Jim to solve was, who put that dead man on the track with a pole to hold him up, and what had become of the vanished car worth $60,000?

That was what we was to find out, an' there was nothing going to stop us neither!

"Listen to this item in the London *Times*," says Jim, reading from the Weston *Post* next morning:

" 'The police have discovered that Charles Walker, whose body was found on the tracks of the Intercolonial near Marshy Hope, had been visiting an uncle there. The uncle, a farmer named Judson, says that his nephew left, apparently for Bridge City, three days ago.' "

There was a lot more that Jim read, but that was the only new information in the case. The rest of it was repeating what had been printed before, with Chief of Police Chisholm saying he had some clues. But Jim said he didn't put much stock in them, whatever they were, and that he didn't feel any poorer by not knowing them. And he said he didn't see how it was going to help him any to know this man Walker had been visiting his uncle, which was a natural enough thing for him to do.

We knew old Judson, and a real nice old man he was, too, and Mrs. Judson was real kind and good. Sometimes when me and Jim have been down to Marshy Hope we been to the Judson's place, and Mrs. Judson would give us cookies or doughnuts and milk. Real kind, she was, and Jim said as how it was a shame she should get mixed up in this murder business.

When Duncan Neill Robertson read the paper, he said he minded now that Judson did have a nephew, and how he used to live down there a long time ago, before me and Jim was around, but that he hadn't been round for years, to his knowledge, which was queer enough when you think that he only lived in Bridge City, not forty miles away.

"That's a funny thing, now," said Mr. Robertson; "that Charlie, staying away from his uncle's all these years, and just coming back to get killed. I ain't seen him for years, but I mind him well as a sort of wild lad, always junketing around and drinking, but no harm in him that I could see. Guess he kind of grew away from the old folks, and warn't interested in seeing them. Guess it's ten, twelve years since he was there. And when he does come back, he gets himself killed. But I know one thing—old Judson never had nothing to do with it."

Jim asked a lot of questions, but he didn't get nowheres, because Mr. Robertson answered a few of them and then he said it was amazing how kids would pester some one for information that was no good to them, and if they spent half the time getting learning at school, they might amount to something. He said a boy these days wasn't one-two-three compared to what they were like when he was our age.

AND I guess he must have been right, too, because I notice all the old men say that when they were boys they were a lot stronger and smarter than the boys these days, and that they don't know what it's all coming to, anyway. I told Jim I was real discouraged about it, but Jim, he said that he was smarter right now than half of these old fellows, and that he reckoned when he grew up, he'd be about ten times as smart.

Mr. Robertson was just settling down to read his paper, that he had taken from Jim before Jim had any chance at more than that one piece about Walker, when Mrs. Robertson, who lives up-stairs in the station, come down. She asked him very polite if he expected her to break her back

Vanished CAR

Many thousands of boys—and men—have dreamed young sleuths start out to do it, and, though amazing outcome proved that——

lugging wood up-stairs, and get dragged down to an early grave, or if he wouldn't mind stop playing the gentleman long enough to get the wood himself. She told him how lovely he looked settin' there comfortable in the shade, and that he was not only a credit to the country but considerable of an ornament to anyone that liked a statue like him, there being all kinds of tastes in this world, and that she must have been blind or something twenty-eight years ago when she first seen him.

So, Mr. Robertson laid down the paper and went quiet and thoughtful back of the station, where we could hear him chopping wood, while we read the paper. I was real glad Mrs. Robertson pried him loose from that paper, because he was good for all morning with it, and Jim wanted to see if they was anything more about that car, because he figured Walker must have been mixed up with it somehow, though the only connection was that Walker worked for the steel company the car was going to. But that was plenty of evidence for Jim. I guess Jim is so smart he could have got along without any evidence and not more than one clue. That's Jim for you.

There was a long piece about the missing box car—ghost-car, the paper called it—telling all over again how come it was lost, right enough, but not a bit of news as to how it was lost. Then there was an interview with the General Freight Agent, who said:

It is absolutely certain that the car left Weston on No. 87, and it is equally certain that it was not in the train when No. 87 arrived at Bridge City. There are several reliable witnesses to both of these facts. No stop was made along the line except at Piedmont, where the train side-tracked for a passenger, and where the car was seen to be in the train. No. 87 is a fast freight and is run on a close schedule. The stopping and breaking of the train, the shunting of a car on a siding, the remaking of the train, and the getting up of speed again would have necessitated a delay of from five to ten minutes.

According to the dispatcher's sheet, No. 87 was reported on time at every station along the line, and the stations are close together. A delay of ten minutes, or even five, could not be made up by a heavy train on a fast schedule in a run of four or five miles. Yet, despite the impossibility of getting a car out of that train, we have searched every siding along the way, checked every car in the yards at all stations on the

I knew Jim was studyin' where that darn car could be. It sure was a puzzle!

chance that the numbering and lettering of the car were changed, and, in short, done everything possible to find the car.

AFTER reading that, Jim sat quiet for the longest time, with his eyes closed. I begun to think he was asleep, when all of a sudden he jumps up with a yell, and begins to dance round like he was crazy, waving the paper in the air and carrying on like all possessed. Just at that minute Duncan Neill Robertson come round the station from his wood-chopping, which hadn't helped his feelings none, and saw what was happening to his paper.

He give out a kind of roar, and I never seen an old man move so fast. If Jim hadn't been even faster, there's no knowing what would of happened, because Mr. Robertson was naturally feeling kind of put out, and Jim was the first thing he had an excuse for getting mad at, it never doing him no good to get mad at Mrs. Robertson, of course, she being more than a match for him any time.

Jim lit out from there like he'd been shot from a gun, and was off down the track like a rabbit. I reckon he was making better time than any freight, and coming pretty close to a regular passenger schedule. I had to laugh, because Jim's that brave and dignified, mostly, that he wouldn't run from hardly anyone, but would stick it out and do a lot of talking. Jim can talk himself out of most anything, but I guess he figured this was one of the times when words don't count for much, and that speed was the only thing that was any use to him.

He stopped when he was about half-ways to Dewar's Mill, and set down on the grass by the side of the track, waiting for me to come up with him, which I did on a sight easier schedule than he had been traveling on. He looked pretty hot, did Jim, but not a mite flustered, and didn't even speak a word about the narrow escape he'd had from a licking. That's Jim for you.

"The case is clear to me now, Watson," he said. "Pardon me for not leaving word with Mrs. Hudson that I was going out. It's lucky you found me here at Charing Cross Station. We can catch the eleven-ten for Marshy Hope and proceed with our investigations. There are still a few loose threads to be gathered up before my case is complete, though it's pretty near full now."

I SAID I was glad to hear it and that I'd like to go with him as my patients were all doing well. Of course, I didn't think that Jim really had found out anything, but it was a good game, anyhow, and it was all the same to me whether we solved any mystery or not. But I certainly was in for a surprise, because while I thought Jim was just playing detective, he was being a real, sure-enough one. But how was I to know that? All he had to go on was what the paper had printed, and I couldn't see anything in that at all.

"Come, Watson," he says at last; "we will unravel the mystery."

Jim sure has a fine way of saying things like that. And when we got half-way to Marshy Hope he told me: "I want you to notice the track along here, Watson. It's all down grade from the west, and straight, until it gets nearly to Marshy Hope. Then it swings off on a curve and starts up grade."

Well, I seen that plain enough, and said so. Me and Jim hadn't been beating it up and down, walking and hooking on freights for quite a while now without knowing the track and how the grades lay. Often, coming back from Dewar's Mill, we'd caught a freight when it was puffing slow and hard up the grade to Avondale.

"And what do you deduce from it, and from the spur track leading into the old gravel pit?" Jim asks when we come to a track that ran into the pit, back fifty rods or so from the main line. "And remember this, Watson: there ain't another spur track like this,

"I wouldn't go near that place for a hundred dollars!" I told Jim

opening out from the west, and on a down grade, between Piedmont and Marshy Hope."

"I don't deduce nothing," I said, and I didn't.

"JUST what I thought. You see, but you do not observe," he says, real superior. And right then I knowed pretty much how Doctor Watson must have felt. I'll bet Watson wanted to lick Holmes many a time, and didn't for the same reason I didn't—because he couldn't get away with it. I'd just liked to have pasted Jim one right there. It would have done me heaps of good, I can tell you. But shucks! Jim and I have fought before and he always beat. Besides, Aunt Sue says as how fighting is wicked, and if people don't fight, they get a lot of credit. So perhaps some credit was coming to me, but I could have done without it, I guess.

Jim, he examined the switch and pointed out how it'd been fresh oiled, which was kind of odd, for I don't remember ever seeing that switch used—anyhow, not for a year or more. Then he goes and looks over the spur track and points to the rails. The rails was very old and rusty, but on top and on the inside edges where the flanges of wheels would touch, the rust was all mashed down, and in spots the steel was scraped clean.

"Golly, Jim!" I exclaims. "They's been a car in here!"

"If you don't know my name," he comes back, real put out, "you better go back to your patients, Doctor Watson."

"Well, then, Holmes," I says. "Is this where the car is?" I was all trembly, like when I seen the dead man.

"The very spot, my dear—Watson," says Jim, and starts off down the spur track, with me coming along kind of leery behind him.

I wasn't scared, mind. I was just as bold as anybody else would have been. Not any bolder, perhaps, but I was walking along right behind Jim, right close to him, in case he needed help or anything. And there was Jim hurrying along, breathing hard and eager. I was breathing pretty hard, too. And I was thinking if it was wise for us to get half out of breath that way when we might need a whole lot of wind pretty soon, in case we had to climb up out of that gravel pit in a hurry.

It would be a long run back to the main line if the case got too tough for us, or anything like that. And the sides of the pit away from the line was very steep, with little bunches of grass and brush that wouldn't be much for a fellow to cling to, especially if he wanted to climb out of that place fast. The nearly level floor of the old pit was covered with small birch and poplar trees and such, not enough to hide among, but thick enough to make it hard going if you wanted to get out into the open in a hurry.

I couldn't help but feel that we was getting kind of shut off from the world in there, and I wouldn't have been sorry if Alec McNeill or some other man had been along with us. But Jim, he never batted an eye or stopped to think of anything like that. He just plugged along fast, but pretty soon he slowed down, and then got slower and slower until we was hardly moving, and then we stopped.

"I guess we better check up some of the details of this case," he whispers to me, "in case we overlooked any clues."

Now, that's what I call a real detective way of doing things, and I told Jim so, in a whisper. My throat was all dry and hoarse from the walk, and I could have done with a good drink of water, especially one out of our old pump at Aunt Sue's. That's about the best water anywheres around, and I'd have liked to've been right at the pump drinking some then, instead of crouching down behind a pile of rotted cross-ties, with the sun beating down on us and the close, muggy air sort of crowding in on us, and the crickets rubbing their hind legs together and making that scratchy, hot sound that always makes me feel warm, I don't know why.

It looked still and lonesome-like—as if a murder had been committed there

I could hear a mowing machine whirring away, far off somewheres, and a real good comforting sound that was, and a bird singing up on the hill above the pit, real happy that he was up there, I guess, and I don't blame him. I was going to say to Jim that perhaps we could think better if we got out where there was more cool air, it being real close where we were, when he starts to talk. Ordinarily I like to hear Jim talk, because he's smart and can think up a lot of things to pass the time, but down there I'd just as soon he didn't make no noise. But he talked pretty low like detectives do, and nobody could hear.

(*Continued on page 100*)

What HAPPENED

Blackmail! That word sends the blood cold, of men Broadway adventuress, practiced blackmail

By Detective T. V. S. PETERSEN,

Internationally Celebrated Detective

***As told to* ISABEL STEPHEN**

"I WONDER whatever happened to 'Bubbles' Moran?" I overheard a man remark in one of the night clubs recently. "She was certainly one cute kid. I haven't seen her around lately, and I sure would like to run into her again."

"Oh, she's probably hooked a sugar-daddy——" his companion suggested, but was angrily interrupted.

"Not Bubbles!" the first speaker snapped. "She was one white little kid. Wanted to see life and that sort of thing at first, but I guess the racket proved too raw for her. I got one letter from her saying she was feeling all in—asked me to write and cheer her up. She didn't dare let her folks know she was playing around, so she asked me to address my letter care of General Delivery. I did that little thing—but never heard from her again! And I never knew where she lived."

I could have told them where Bubbles was—but it is better that she should be buried right where she is. If that man chances to read this story, he will learn for the first time how good Lady Luck was to him, at least once in his life.

When the editor of TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES asked me to let him have the story of one of my most important cases, I was rather in a quandary as to what to say. Most of the cases I handle are very long-drawn-out affairs—some of them covering years of work—and would take up too much space for a short story. However, occasionally a client retains me to take care of some delicate, confidential matter which he does not wish to entrust to strangers.

That's how I came to meet up with Bubbles Moran—one of Broadway's fairest and most voracious blackmailers. Names of most of the places mentioned in this story are changed—and, naturally, I am disguising the names of my client and his unfortunate friend.

It was around four o'clock on the morning of January 27, 1926, that I was awakened by the persistent ringing of my telephone.

Reaching drowsily for the instrument, I growled a greeting into its mouthpiece.

"Oh, Petersen, this is Hughes," the voice at the other end of the wire announced. "I've been trying to get you for over twenty minutes. I knew you must be asleep, but this is a matter of life and death."

WALTER HUGHES, as I am calling my client, who is president of one of the largest manufacturing corporations in America, had dined with me the evening before. I had brought back that day a delinquent cashier who had worked for his organization—and I had been without sleep for over forty-eight hours. On bidding him good night three hours or so earlier, I remembered mentioning my intention of grabbing off some much-needed rest.

"You know young Gordon—general manager of all our agencies," Mr. Hughes went on. "Gordon's in some horrible mess, and I've had the devil's own time to keep him from committing suicide. I gave him a powerful sedative and he's asleep now. He——"

"All right," I interrupted him. "Bring him 'round to my office in the morning. Better not discuss anything over the phone."

"But the trouble is he doesn't want to consult a detective. I'm sure if you could see and talk to him, he'd listen to reason." Mr. Hughes' voice sounded hoarse and very much agitated. "Couldn't you run over to our office? We could meet you there."

"No; I'm sorry. I must get some sleep. I'm sure if you will bring him to my place in the morning and come in by the private entrance, he won't guess that he's going into a detective agency—till he's in. Make it ten?"

"All right," he agreed, with obvious reluctance. "Sorry to have awakened you. Good-by."

I hung up and hurriedly got back under the warm bedclothes. It was one of those raw, rainy nights, and the air of the room was clammily cold.

I DIDN'T need any gift of clairvoyance to tell me that Gordon's "mess" was most probably some woman or man who was blackmailing him. I never hold out the glad hand to such cases, and accept them only where one of my clients is involved.

I wasn't very much worried about Gordon's committing suicide. As a rule, people who discuss their intention to "finish themselves" seldom carry out their threat.

I had met Gordon on several occasions. He is one of the go-getter type, with enormous confidence in himself and his ability. Though he had inherited about a quarter million dollars on the death of his father, he was a hard worker, and I knew Walter Hughes thought a great deal of him.

At exactly ten o'clock Mr. Hughes and Ernest Gordon arrived at my office, which is in a building overlooking City Hall Park. The men offered a strong contrast. Mr. Hughes is the typical successful business man whose shoulders bear the weight of a large, conservative commercial enterprise. Poised, quiet, unhurried in his movements; well, though unobtrusively dressed; pleasant-voiced—that is Walter Hughes.

Gordon, on the other hand, suggested the last word in the so-called "younger generation." Broad-shouldered, keen-eyed, hard-lipped, he was obviously tailored by a shop that featured the English styles. Always when we had met on previous occasions, he had given the impression that his time was terrifically valuable and that he was the hub of his universe.

I noticed that Mr. Hughes motioned the younger man in before he entered. The impression came to me instantly that the president was still very much worried over his charge. It so happened that I was standing at the window looking out on City Hall Park when they came in.

"What the dickens is this, sir?" I heard before I turned around. I saw that Gordon's eyes were glued to a collection of handcuffs, pistols, daggers, and other curious mementoes of several of my past conflicts with gentlemen and ladies who operate beyond the law. The exhibit is nailed on the wall behind my desk.

to "BUBBLES"?

who have been its victims. "Bubbles" Moran, beautiful on a big scale. Then one day she——

"How do you do, gentlemen?" I said, and bowed. "Won't you sit down?"

Mr. Hughes had closed the door and stood with his back to it. Gordon's eyebrows met in an angry line over his haggard face. He edged toward the weapons. From something in the expression of his face, I suddenly came to the conclusion that the president had not exaggerated the danger of his employee committing suicide. The fellow was quite unmistakably completely irresponsible. His actions were those of a sleep-walker.

Like a flash his hand darted out and seized the handle of the dagger

Like a flash his hand darted out and seized the handle of one of the daggers, and drew it half out of its sheath. My life has depended too often on keeping a keen, vigilant eye on the movements of the other fellow for any one as clumsy as Gordon to catch me napping.

In an instant I had disengaged his hand from the hilt of the dagger.

"That's an interesting trophy," I said lightly. "Let *me* show it to you. It was given to me by Nicholas II, of Russia."

For a moment he scowled at me, without recognition. His disordered brain was functioning sluggishly. Mr. Hughes had not exaggerated. The young man was in that abnormal condition which always precedes suicide. Suddenly he turned angrily on his employer:

"What on earth did you bring me here for?" he raged. "I see this is a detective's office. I don't want to hire any detective!" A crafty expression crept into his eyes, and he continued: "I suppose I was crazy last night and said a lot of asinine things—must have been the highballs I had at the club. . . . That was just a lot of bunk. Let's get out of here!"

As if I could read his thoughts, I could sense the cunning scheme—Gordon wanted to rid himself of his self-appointed guardian.

Mr. Hughes received his manager's explanation with annoyance, and, quite obviously, at its face value. He was about to leave with apologies when I managed to catch his eye and convey to him my suspicions. He understood, and seemed to change his mind about leaving.

It was up to me to change Gordon's suicide impulse, if possible; certainly there was a good chance that I might relieve his mind of worry, and so help his condition, if I could go to work on his problem. Experience told me that I never could get him to talk by asking direct questions; so I took another tack.

I began talking about other things, in a chatty, easy manner. Principally I talked about the exploits and anecdotes connected with the trophies that

The man who prided himself on "knowing women and their wiles" had succumbed to the first little gold-digger who pretended to love him "for himself alone"

nung behind my desk. Then I purposely became boastful.

The boastful narrative annoyed him—and then it happened.

The man's ego suddenly rebelled. Without any suggestion from either Mr. Hughes or myself, Gordon suddenly broke into the midst of one of my stories:

"In the last nine months *I've* paid out one hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars to blackmailers, and they are still hounding me!" he exclaimed.

Even Mr. Hughes was staggered. "One hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars! Good Lord!" he gasped.

"Oh, it was my own money," Gordon retorted. "Here—" he continued. After searching through his pockets, he produced a wallet. From this he extracted a number of canceled vouchers and handed them to me. "Yesterday I got a demand for another ten thousand dollars. I can't lay my hands on that much cash right now. I can't give it to her."

"Sit down and tell us about it," I suggested, my own narrative forgotten now that we were on the right track. "All blackmailers have a broad streak of stupidity in their make-up, and I've never met one yet that I couldn't muzzle. Nasty hounds, of course—but they are cowards when you get after them."

"Go ahead my boy," Mr. Hughes said kindly, as Gordon slumped down on a chair and stared dazedly at the wall. "I'm sure you haven't done anything that thousands of other men haven't done. Get it off your chest."

After a full minute's silence, the blackmailers' victim started his story. In a level, monotonous, lifeless voice, he spared himself no detail; his business-trained mind triumphed over his reticence:

"I met a girl named Bubbles Moran in one of the night clubs about a year and a half ago," he began. "She was a friend of Ida Malone, one of the hostesses there. She told me she lived with her parents—an old, very strict couple—and that she slipped out of the house after they were in bed. She wanted to see life. Always (*Continued on page* 75)

Why were those bread-crumbs by the dead man?

A Very *Mysterious* Girl

Someone had been in the room where Farrell was found dead—had cut Farrell's throat. If not Old Maggie—then who?

By Detective JOE BERNS
As told to JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH

POLICE blotters throughout the country record the brief facts of many a strange tale. Although I am at present on special duty with the United States Government, for many years I pounded the pavements as a harness bull and have seen something of this myself.

I have in mind a particular case that came up when I was on patrol duty in a Southern city which I need not name. I had been given a beat in the old Third District, down in the "bottoms" as it was called, which was the toughest section of the town.

It was the fifteenth of July, and one of the hottest nights I have ever experienced. I had stepped through the side entrance to Maggie's Place for a glass of beer. My beer was served me, I drank it, and was standing around thinking I would like another when in stepped old Maggie herself through the private entrance back of the bar, and walking up to me, said in a low voice:

"Mr. Berns, Jim Farrell is up-stairs, dead. Come with me."

Jim Farrell in Maggie's Place, dead? I knew he was her enemy. The thought stunned me.

In a small, dirty room containing a rusty iron bed, a broken dresser, two rickety chairs and a bare table, I found Jim Farrell with his throat cut from ear to ear. He was slumped over on a table, his face between his outstretched arms, and the sight of him like that and the ghastly appearance of the room, with the floor spattered with blood, gave me a sickening feeling in my stomach. By him, on the table, was a bloody razor.

I hurried to a phone and called the Station-House.

I should mention here, before going further, that neither my search then, before calling up the desk sergeant, and afterward, nor the search made by the detectives who arrived later, uncovered anything in that room that would seem to be of any help whatever in tracing the murderer—except the razor—and that proved to be of no help at all. This, of course, from the view-point that Maggie herself wasn't the murderer, which, as a matter of fact, wasn't the view-point at all of the detectives who came in and took charge of the investigation. What they figured will be seen a little further on, but here I want to mention a detail that seemed trivial enough at the time, but that eventually proved to be of considerable interest—namely, I had noticed that on the table by the dead man was a shallow bowl or dish, empty, and beside it was a little pile of bread-crumbs.

Now these bread-crumbs were not such as would be made by cutting a few slices of crumbly bread, for they were different both in appearance and quantity. They formed a pile and obviously had been purposely made by grinding up the bread in some manner, as though to feed to birds or chickens. Also, there was part of a loaf of bread there that possibly was being made into crumbs when the interruption occurred—or so it seemed to me. Yet, there was nothing in the room to go with these crumbs. I couldn't see how any person would want to eat dry bread-crumbs; so, I concluded they had not been made for the purpose of being eaten.

What, then, was their purpose? I mention this in detail because they played, in my opinion, a rather important part in what happened later, and because they puzzled me at the time, although no one else had taken any notice of them apparently, except that I had called Maggie's attention to them.

Before he hardly had the words out of his mouth, I——

DETECTIVE Sergeant Jerry Mehan had charge of the investigation during the first half hour, before it was taken over by those higher up, as the case developed into the important murder mystery that it later became. At no time was it thought of as being a suicide case. This, however, was not hard to understand, as Farrell's coat was torn and he had the appearance of having engaged in a struggle before he met death.

Jerry had old Maggie facing him as she sat on the bed and he in the remaining chair, with note-book in hand, taking down a brief of her story of how it happened, or, more accurately speaking, all she knew of what happened—which didn't seem to be much.

"And you say you didn't know Farrell was here?" questioned Jerry.

"No, sir. This morning a girl came here an' she said she was looking for work and didn't have no money, an' was wantin' a room cheap. I give her this room for a dollar a week and didn't ask her no questions. There was no towel in the room——"

"That was this morning, you say?" interrupted Jerry.

"Yes, sir—so I was bringin' her a towel to-night to give to her like I promised I would, and when I knocked on the door, no one answered, so I pushed the door open and I found Jim Farrell here dead—like you see him there."

That was about all there was to Maggie's story.

There was no sign in the room that the girl had been there. Maggie could not say who the girl was; also, questioning everyone in the house and in the neighborhood, failed to locate anyone who had seen the girl Maggie described.

"She was about twenty-one," said Maggie, "an' when she was a kid, she must have been pretty, but fast livin' had made her look sick. That's the way I set her down."

"I guess you're indulging in a fairy-story," said Jerry, with a look cast in my direction. "That's a very mysterious girl, it seems to me. What do you think, Joe?"

"Very mysterious, indeed," I replied. In fact, I began to feel that she didn't exist. Then, on second thought, I concluded that Maggie must know what she was talking about.

Now, it so happened that old Maggie was a factor in the politics of that town. The party in power, or some of the bosses of that party, were her friends, and had many times in the past used the back rooms of her saloon as a gathering place where many a big deal had been "put over." The then mayor, the police chief, and the rest of the office holders under that administration, owed their jobs, in part at least, to these same men who were Maggie's friends.

Naturally, then, when the dead man happened to be a member, and petty leader, of the enemy's political machine, keeper of a drug-store in the better section of the town and a man who had come out publicly against old Maggie and all her kind, the matter was something that required careful thought before taking any radical step There were no witnesses against Maggie; she had run a saloon there on that spot for over twenty years, and it was not likely that she would seek to run away, even if she were suspected. Anyhow, after Jerry Mehan had had a rather lengthy telephone conversation with Police Headquarters, he informed Maggie that she would not be arrested. I assumed that Maggie's story was discounted by Jerry, but that the slate was clear, for he advised her privately to think up some better story for future use, when she was questioned later.

The coroner arrived and, after a cursory examination of the body, called an inquest and shortly after gave out the statement that Jim Farrell had died from wounds inflicted by some unknown person or persons.

I went below and got the drink that I had missed.

The place was crowded. No one knew what had happened, so quietly had the thing been conducted, the comings and goings taking place through the back way. A little later the body itself went out by the same exit.

"You poor nut—it's empty!"

"Well," I remarked to my good friend, Tim O'Malley, the barkeep, "it's a hot night."

"You're right it is, Joe," he replied, wiping his round, red face with the end of his apron. "And will you be havin' another on the house before you go out to keep your weather eye on the water rats?"

Of course, I did not refuse, and meanwhile I amused myself by listening to the maudlin conversation going on

around me, and watching the pitchers and buckets coming and going like the endless chain of a sand-scooper, but all the while, subconsciously I was thinking of bread-crumbs.

Presently a girl came and spoke to Tim, and he leaned over and said to me: "Maggie would like to see you in the back room, Joe."

I FOLLOWED the suggestion and found the old lady seated in what she called her "office" at the back, and looking very sober.

"Mr. Berns," she greeted me, "Jerry Mehan doesn't believe what I told him. Did you get that?"

"Yes, I did, Maggie," I said. "I couldn't miss it when I heard what he told you."

She looked at me steadily for what seemed about five minutes. Maggie was a hard nut, tough, and wise in the ways of the world, but I had always believed her honest with her friends.

"Do *you* believe me?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes," I answered, and I was not kidding myself in saying it either—"I do believe you, Maggie. If you say you didn't kill Farrell, I believe you."

"All right," she replied. "Your drinks on the house are still good."

I laughed. "What if I had said I didn't believe you, Maggie?" I taunted.

"Never a damn drink would you get out of my place!" she retorted, and I knew she meant it. "I would throw out all your whole damn police department if you won't stick by me, and they could hang me for it an' I would laugh in your face!"

I paid no attention to this bragging.

"HOW do you account for it?" I said. "How did Farrell come to get croaked in your place?"

"He was after that girl. Can't you figure it out?"

"And you knew nothing about him coming here?"

"Course I didn't," burst out Maggie. "Do you expect me to keep track of everything that goes on around here?"

"She must have been crazy to go after him with a razor like that," I commented. "What did she look like? Did she look like a crazy person?"

"Aw, quit your kiddin'. She was just a poor little kid who was lonely and wanted someone to love her. I don't know who killed that guy Farrell, an' I don't care. But look here, Joe"—Maggie leaned over and placed her horny hand on my arm—"you're back of me in this?"

"All the way," I replied.

The old woman rose, went to a cupboard back of a partition that was near us, took out something and wrapped it up.

"Here s a quart of home-made jam for the kids. I'm in a tight hole, Joe, an' I appreciate the way you're actin'. An' to-morrow Tim'll have instructions; anything in the house is yours for the askin'."

I took the jam, thanked Maggie, and left, feeling a bit guilty, and I don't know to this day just why. Maybe she had killed Farrell, but I didn't think so.

I had the matter of bread-crumbs on my mind, and in the course of the next few days I asked a number of my friends what their idea was of the bread-crumbs I had seen in the room where Farrell was found dead. I described to them how they looked and told them there was an empty bowl by them and nothing else in the room, except what I have mentioned before. The answers I received indicated that the persons I asked were mildly amused, and found it hard to believe I was serious, and no one among them had anything to offer except to turn the matter into a joke.

I EXPLAINED the whole matter to my wife and said to her: "If it is true, as Maggie claims, that there was a girl in the room, what possible use could she have for a pile of bread-crumbs such as I have described?"

"Why, she probably meant to eat them," replied my wife, and laughed. "Naturally, what would anyone want bread-crumbs for but to eat?"

"But there was nothing else to go with them," I insisted. "Who would eat dry bread-crumbs? You wouldn't."

"THERE was no sign in the room that the girl had been there. Maggie could not say who the girl was; also, questioning everyone in the house and in the neighborhood, failed to locate anyone who had seen the girl Maggie described. . . .

"'That's a very mysterious girl, it seems to me,' said Jerry.

"'Very mysterious, indeed,' I replied. In fact, I began to feel she didn't exist. Then——"

"Maybe there was something else to go with them, and someone else ate it," she countered.

That was as far as I got!

Meanwhile Farrell was buried, and the funeral they gave him was attended with more pomp and ceremony than if the mayor of the city had died. The political factions in the city were stirred up to a fever heat. A bright reporter had conceived the idea that it was a political murder and that there was a mystery motive back of it, which, if laid bare, would shake the foundations of the municipal government, and probably go even further. The political faction that claimed it stood for law, order, and decency, was trying its best to make capital out of old Maggie's case. And it succeeded. The two principal newspapers of the city took respective sides and it became a matter of public discussion.

THE newspaper opposing us, of the two mentioned above, razzed the Police Department as a whole, and the Chief of Police in particular. Because the public had taken it up, and prominent citizens were outspoken in their comments, the Chief was forced to take action.

It is said that police "clean-ups" are sometimes faked, but this one wasn't. We executed orders and went over the city with a fine-tooth comb, but for the most part our daily catch consisted of cripples, (*Continued on page* 72)

The HOLD-UP of the KANSAS CITY *Express*

"Listen! Go to my place and tell my mother all about my trouble," said Maxwell

By TOM AKERS, Cub Reporter
As narrated by JOHN H. KEARNES

Was the young express messenger, Roy Maxwell, on the "inside" in this train hold-up, or——

THREE men, like cougars stalking their prey, lay crouched in the lush weeds near the crest of the steep railroad embankment. Dominating the croaking of frogs and the querulous cries of nightbirds in flight, in the near-by Hemmingway Swamp, came the rumbling of the fast express from Kansas City—then the gleam of the headlight of the engine as it slowed down for the bridge approach which would lead it into Tennessee from Arkansas.

It came to a grinding stop, accompanied by the screeching of air-brakes. The three men sprang to their feet, the barrels of their shotguns gleaming as they rushed to the train. One covered the engine crew and climbed aboard, while the other two ran

to the rear end and held up the conductor and brakeman, and forced them to cut the couplings between the express car and first coach.

The puzzled express messenger poked his head out of the door of his car, only to look into the menacing muzzle of a shotgun. The two bandits, still covering the conductor and brakeman with their guns, leaped into the express car, just as the engine started forward. One guarded the messenger, while the other leaned out of the open door and fired two shots as a signal to the bandit in the locomotive cab that all was clear.

I was quick to make a note of that name

In a few minutes the engine was stopped again and the three men made their way off into the darkness with thirty thousand dollars taken from the safe in the express car.

A telephone call from the bridge tender notified the police in the city across the river. I'll take that back—it wasn't the police force that was notified; it was Captain Flynn, or "Wise Charley," who earned his nickname because of his egotism and contempt for newspapermen.

I was covering the night police for the *News*, and I entered the station just as Flynn, with his poker face, was giving his orders. Wise Charley, except for a sardonic smirk in my direction, ignored me, but Sergeant Boyd told me what had happened, and, after I had given my office the tip, took me with him.

I was just a cub, and I hated Flynn fiercely and wholeheartedly—with the hurt pride of youth. But Boyd was my friend. He it was who steered me over the rough places and kept me "wised up" on the news at the Station. So on this trip, when he advised me to keep my eyes and ears open and to "never mind Flynn; he's just got a grouch on." I knew I was to get an even break.

As Boyd and I reached the Tennessee end of the bridge we saw two men putting a hand-car on the track.

"All right!" called Boyd as he ran up to them. "Hop on, kid, and let's go!"

"Who the hell are you?" asked one of the men, with suspicious gruffness in his voice.

In reply Boyd turned back the lapel of his coat, and the gleam of his silver badge was reflected in the moonlight. I hopped on just as the two section-men had taken their places at the pump-bars. It was a slight uphill grade across that bridge, and so feverish were Boyd and I to get to the scene of the robbery that we lent a hand and made the car fairly whiz.

Flynn had the train crew lined up when we arrived. He beckoned Boyd to him, but when I started to follow, he bellowed:

"Git out, kid! This is private. When we got anything for yuh, we'll hunt yuh up."

I resented his tone. I hated him for his attitude. I was as mad as a wet hen—in fact, I was trembling with the rage that possessed me. But it was no time to sulk—I would keep my eyes and ears open, as Sergeant Boyd had suggested.

I borrowed a lantern from one of the section crew and started back to where the train had been stopped. I was stifling my mortification and at the same time wishing that I could find some clue that would confound "Wise Charley."

Like all tyros, I was bent on looking for footprints—hoping that some patch of the sole or turn of the heel would help me. As I studied the ground, the gleam of metal

flashed from the edge of the lantern's light. I hurried to it and found an exploded shotgun shell that lay in the cinders at the margin of the weeds. I picked it up, smelled it. The acrid odor of burned powder still clung to it.

I looked furtively in the direction of Flynn and the group which surrounded him. No one had observed me pick the shell up. I slipped it into my pocket—perhaps with the vague idea it would help me to spite Flynn—and went on looking for footprints. My foot struck something and sent it spinning ahead. Again the lantern light revealed the flash of metal. I had found another!

The two shells were of the same size, with the same metallic caps and the same greenish-blue paper cylinders. I put both in my pocket—but my ideas by this time were not quite so vague. I felt jubilant.

When I turned back toward "Wise Charley" and his men, I found that they had been joined by some Burnet County, Arkansas, deputy sheriffs, and that they were forming posses to beat through the neighboring basin of the Hemmingway Swamp.

I joined the posse headed by Sergeant Boyd, and intended to slip the shells to him. But I changed my mind. If I did, he'd likely have to turn them over to Flynn, and then neither of us would get the credit.

Throughout the remaining hours of the night and until sun-up we combed the swamp, with its tangle of willows and water weeds. The mosquitos and gnats took their toll of human blood, a veritable banquet, as we worked. It was like a nightmare. After daylight all of us, dirty, stung and tired, glad the nightmare search was over, converged at the end of the bridge. Not only did we fail to find the men, but we also failed to find trace of horses' hoofs or vehicle tracks. The other posses reported the same ill-luck, and then we gave up the search.

The other man-hunters were going to bed, but not I. I was too excited over the clues I had found. And then, too, the smart of Flynn's indignities still hurt—my anger had not cooled. From the telephone directory I listed the names of hardware dealers and sporting goods houses which dealt in weapons and ammunition. I started out to canvass them, in search of the one which had sold those shells. It was at the fourth one that a clerk told me:

"Those shells are not regularly carried in stock by any dealer. They are made for special loading. You'll have to go to a gunsmith who has loading tools and who specializes in other than the standard charges of powder and shot."

There was my clue! I almost jumped with joy, but my

"Yeah," said the girl, "Clint Billings just vamoosed — left his store, and his wife——"

ardor cooled when I recalled that there were none in town—that I knew of. I was almost disheartened, but I determined that come what would, I would not turn those shells over to Flynn.

IT was while I sat over a cup of coffee, ordered for want of something better in which to seek inspiration, that I thought of my old friend Harry Newman, taxidermist and big game hunter, who knew firearms and shotguns as astronomers know the fixed stars, and who always had his shells specially loaded for his hunting trips in field, forest and canebrake. I didn't even wait to finish my coffee, but went to his establishment.

"Where can I get some shells like these?" I asked, after I had fairly burst into the house. I held the shells in my extended hand.

He took one—examined it speculatively: "Well, there are three places that I know of, but I always go to Old Man Schneider. He's down on Front Street, near the levee. If he doesn't carry shells like this, I don't know who does."

He told me where the other two establishments were, but as Old Man Schneider was the closest, I determined to go to him first.

It was a ramshackle old building that still bore the marks of the grape and cannister from Farragut's guns when he had shelled the waterfront in Civil War days. It was so tottery in its aspect that it made me nervous to look at it. As I opened the door a bell jangled in the rear of the room, and in response a bent, gray-whiskered old man emerged from behind a dusty curtain.

He asked politely: "What can I do for you?"

I drew the two shells from my pocket and held them toward him. "Did you load these?"

The old man took the shells, stroked his beard as he felt the metal and looked at the paper cylinders, then answered: "Yes, sir."

There was elated excitement in my voice as I almost shouted:

"Recently?"

"Just a few days ago."

"Who for?" The eagerness in my tones must have made the old man suspicious. He looked at me over his glasses as much as to ask why I was so inquisitive. But when I opened my coat and permitted him to see just enough of my press badge to draw his conclusion that I was a detective, he answered:

"THREE men came in and ordered me to load some shells with special charges of buckshot; they said they were going hunting in the canebrakes and needed heavy loads—something that would stop a bear. Say," he added with that air of having thought of something all by himself, "you know, I thought at the time there was something wrong; this ain't the time of year for that kind of huntin', and that's why I took particular notice of them."

"Can you describe them?" I asked.

He hesitated for a moment, then replied, "Yes, I can. The man who did the ordering was a tall fellow with broad shoulders. He was red-complected and had a sandy mustache. His eyes had a snaky, mean look. He was about so high—" he held his hand above his head and indicated a height of about six feet—"and weighed about two hundred pounds. One fellow with him was fair-complected, had a black mustache and blue eyes. He was smiling most of the time and weighed about one hundred and eighty pounds. The other fellow was a slender kind of chap, with light hair and didn't look to be over twenty years old. He didn't have much to say."

I was up against it. Hunting the three men he described would be like searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack. So, still refusing to take the police into my confidence, because of my resentment against Flynn, I went to my managing editor and told him all that had happened and what I had done.

He listened with such a nonchalant and half-bored air that my spirits fell a few notches. When I had finished, he calmly asked me if I had had any sleep. I replied that I had not—I would have been very much discouraged if I had not known him so well—and he told me to go to bed. His parting admonition was:

"And keep your mouth shut!"

That order—plainer than anything else he could have said or done—gave me the comforting assurance that he would back me up and that he intended to do his part toward the taming of Flynn.

I did go home, but not to sleep. I couldn't fall into slumber. When I did, my sleep was fitful, and far from restful. I was so near to something tangible, and yet, it seemed to me, so far. So about mid-afternoon I gave it up and went to the Police Station.

I FOUND that Flynn had already made up his mind about the case. He had decided it was an "inside job," and that Roy Maxwell, the youthful express messenger, had helped with it. He had arrested Maxwell and was "sweating" him. Flynn felt no compunction about giving the "third degree" to a suspect—he was a past master in the art of "sweating."

But I learned, when I had looked into the room, that "Wise Charley" was not "doing so good" with Maxwell. I could see him, with his fists doubled, and the left corner of his mouth twisted sarcastically, as he asked:

"Yuh had the door open, didn't yuh?"

"Yes," came the calm reply.

"Yuh knew opening the door was agin orders?" he thundered, stepping nearer the young messenger. His tones and actions were menacing.

"Of course," Maxwell replied, rising, still deliberately calm, "but——"

"Sit down!" bellowed Flynn, and Maxwell sat down.

"What'd yuh have the door open fer?" he sneered.

"Why," Maxwell mumbled sheepishly, "it was so hot—and the train had stopped—and (*Continued on page* 66)

"THE Sheriff had seen the barrel of a gun, nose through the door. He never flinched. Nor did he lose his footing a moment later when——

"Crash! The steel-shod nose of the power-boat hit the house-boat amidships, and in another instant——"

The Gambler *with a* Heart

"Eddie, you're thinking the same thing I am, aren't you —about that little woman?" asked old Gil Hawkins, the con man. Eddie nodded. Both knew that——

By MARK MELLEN

"WHO'S that over there in the corner?" demanded Izzy the Itch.

"Where?" asked Eddie Gorman, the book-maker; and he and Hymie the Hyper craned their necks as they looked around the room.

That back room of Ivory O'Toole's cider "stube" was reserved for a select group of grifters by tacit consent of the other patrons of the place; and the fact of a stranger's presence naturally raised a question. Gentlemen who live by their wits must necessarily be wary of strangers. No telling when one is to meet a detective, or possibly some victim who has been "taken" years back and is still looking for revenge.

The man who attracted Izzy's attention leaned across the table—the table farthest removed from the door. His head was propped on the palm of one hand, while he stared into the vacant space before him, seeing nothing. In appearance he gave the impression of being a truck driver on holiday—from lack of work,—and very much discouraged with his future prospects.

Old Gil, the confidence man, gave the fellow a quick glance and turned away, then looked again.

"I know him by sight," he said. "He's in at the counter every second or third evening for his glass of apple juice. "Ivory!" he called.

Ivory (poor old Ivory, who was forever trying, unsuccessfully, to make a fortune out of schemes of high finance) got up from his chair and slowly moved toward the table where the four friends sat. He dodged tables and chairs by instinct as he came across the room, for his eyes didn't leave the newspaper for a second.

"Lay off that stuff," commanded old Gil, looking at the paper, which was folded open at a page devoted to the "ponies." "The less you have to do with those horse-races, the better. And the

(*Continued on page* 96)

"Can't say as I know who Jim is," replied Ivory. And he spoke the truth

The CRIME

Most criminals leave behind some tell-tale clue, person planned differently.

By ARTHUR HALLECK

I AM not a detective, and therefore cannot write the account of a mysterious murder which occurred in the family of my wife, before I married her—from the detective standpoint. I must tell it from the amateur standpoint, but at least it will be true. I have, of course, changed the names of all persons concerned.

A year before, I had come back from France, not in the best of health, due to experiences in the Great War. Financially I was well fixed, however, and after a summer spent in the north woods of Canada, I returned home feeling fit for the first time since my discharge from the Army. Then, too, I was happy, for I was engaged to the best girl in the world. Every man who is in love, and is engaged, perhaps can say the same thing.

Her name was May Calvert. Her father was a wealthy physician, seventy-eight years of age. May was twenty-one. I was twenty-five.

The situation was this: Doctor Bernard Calvert, famous as a brain specialist and surgeon, at fifty-six had married Mary Hast, his secretary, who was eighteen. A year later, May was born—their only child. Mrs. Calvert, now at the age of forty, was a beautiful and very attractive woman, with a husband thirty-eight years her senior, feeble and bed-ridden.

The thing happened on a Saturday, the twenty-ninth of October. At about four P. M. that afternoon I received a telephone call from Ellen, the maid in the Calvert home. We were at the Newberrys', friends of May, when the call came. May was puzzled when I told her that Ellen had asked to have her come home at once.

"Did Ellen ask for you?"

"Yes," I replied. I was puzzled myself and not disposed to say much.

Excuses were given and we left.

The Calverts lived in an apartment-house on Park Avenue and as our car drew near the place, I saw Doctor Purdy, the Calvert family physician, hurrying to the doorway. He went up on the elevator just ahead of us.

WHEN we got there he was in Mr. Calvert's room, and the door was closed. Ellen met us and took us into the sitting-room. In broken sentences she told us that Mr. Calvert was dead.

May gave me a glance, grasped both my hands and I held her to me until the shock of the thing had passed sufficiently for her to collect her thoughts. The girl loved her father devotedly and though she never shed a tear, I knew how much she was suffering.

Doctor Purdy drew me aside when he came out. His face was grave.

"I am going to call the Medical Examiner's office, Mr. Halleck. There is every evidence that Mr. Calvert was strangled to death. Are you going to stay here?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, watch the door. Don't let anyone in there."

I said nothing to May of what Doctor Purdy had told me as to the cause of death. We sat and I tried to take her mind off the terrible happening, but of course it was useless. She pleaded for permission to go into the room to see her father, but I had to insist on keeping her out.

An hour later when the young doctor, one of the assistants attached to the Medical Examiner's office, had arrived and made his examination, he confirmed Doctor Purdy's report. Within a half hour several detectives from Police Headquarters were cluttering up the rooms. Meanwhile I had told May what the Assistant Medical Examiner had said.

May and I entered the room, accompanied by Doctor Purdy. Calvert lay on the bed. The blind was drawn, but there was enough light for us to see the horrible expression on the dead man's face. At least, it was horrible to us, unused to death, and neither May nor I cared to look at those features long. To me it did not look like Mr. Calvert at all, and I'm sure May felt the same. She was too shocked to speak. Doctor Purdy stood in silence and waited.

It may have been a wrong thing to do—to take May into the room—for she broke down completely and clung to me in a paroxysm of grief. Just then Mrs. Calvert entered, accompanied by Reginald Carew, a young man about twenty-eight, whom I knew. They both viewed the body in mystification and grief. Then we all walked out.

I COULDN'T figure out how this thing had happened, and, as a matter of fact, no one else could at that time. Who had murdered this poor, defenseless old man, lying peacefully in his bed, a paralytic on one side of his body and only able to raise his left hand? Who would want to murder him? Where was there any cause?

But, even granting a cause, how could it have been accomplished?

The facts were these:

At one-o'clock lunch at the Calvert apartment that Saturday, there was Reggie Carew (already mentioned), Mrs. Calvert, May, and myself. Young Carew was filling the rôle of escort and dance partner to the dashing Mrs. Calvert. Doctor Calvert knew of it, of course, and, whether he liked it or not, at least he condoned it.

While we were eating and chatting, the old gentleman was in his room in bed. Ellen had taken him his warm milk and bite of toast at the lunch hour, and, before May and I left for the Newberrys' we stepped in to see him. He was smiling and kissed May affectionately. That was about one-thirty.

Mrs. Calvert and Carew left at two-fifteen for the matinée at the Winter Garden. It being Saturday, Miss Fraser, the housekeeper, and Lucy Hahn, the cook, had the afternoon off and they left at one o'clock—as soon as lunch was served. The only person remaining in the apartment besides Doctor Calvert, after the departure of Mrs. Calvert and Carew, was Ellen.

Ellen, it developed (I am giving the result of the detectives' investigation), went to her room immediately after

Without a CLUE

where they have "pulled the job." This guilty But—did the plan work?

clearing away the dishes from the table at one-thirty, which required from five to ten minutes, she said. She left the dishes in the kitchen for the cook to wash when she returned.

At four o'clock Ellen had come out of her room, meanwhile having been engrossed in reading a story, and passing the Doctor's room, had looked in to see how he was. She found him dead and immediately phoned me at the Newberrys', where she knew I had taken May.

From two-fifteen, when Mrs. Calvert and Carew left, to four o'clock, when Ellen found him dead—one and three-quarters hours, Doctor Calvert had been alone. Someone during that time then, had quietly strangled him. But—the apartment was on the eighth floor and the only door leading out of it was equipped with a heavy sneck-lock. The elevator man stated that during the period between two-fifteen, when he had seen Mrs. Calvert and Carew leave, and four o'clock, he had taken no one either up or down in the elevator but whom he knew who they were, and where they were going. Also that no one had been in his elevator during that time who had either gone to or come from the Calvert apartment.

"What do you think about it?" asked Reggie. "Do I look like a murderer?"

This statement was easily verified by others. There were two liveried doormen below, watching the main entrance in shifts, between seven in the morning until after midnight. No access was possible from the trade entrance to the guests' elevators. No one was allowed in the building who was not known, or else his business was stated and the person whom he wished to see was communicated with through the switchboard operator. As to possible admittance by other means than the entrances already referred to, there was no outside fire-escape and access through a window was impossible.

How then had the intruder entered, if anyone had entered at all? And why should anyone kill Doctor Calvert? For money? Not a thing had been touched in the room. It was plainly a case of murder from some cause other than robbery. And there was not a single clue.

As I have said, I am not a detective. But this mystery engaged my undivided interest. I could think of nothing else, and there was ample reason for this, for I was engaged to marry May Calvert, the innocent daughter of an adored father who had been brutally murdered. I wanted to know the reason why.

A few days after Doctor Calvert's burial, his will was admitted to probate and parts of it were printed in the newspapers. A great interest was aroused in the case. His entire fortune, amounting to about two millions, was left to his wife, with the request that she provide well for her daughter, May.

Carew had been questioned at length on several occasions by the Headquarters detectives. They had found nothing wrong with his story, which was simple enough, and was supported by Mrs. Calvert, who had been questioned separately. The three-quarters of an hour which he and Mrs.

Calvert had spent in the Calvert apartment after May and I left, was consumed in conversation between them as they sat in the living-room, he stated. Asked what they had talked about, he said they had talked about psychology, a study in which he was interested.

NATURALLY, since Mrs. Calvert was the beneficiary under the will, and Carew was paying attention to her before her husband's death—by violence—also, since she and Carew were in the apartment three-quarters of an hour, practically alone, and had opportunity to do violence to Doctor Calvert, had they so wished, it was not surprising that suspicion turned against them, although it was not outspoken. It was an undercurrent of gossip and innuendo. Nothing could be proven, but it was felt by many who were familiar with the case that there was something about Carew that was not right.

His record was thoroughly investigated, not only because of the things above mentioned, but also because three months after Doctor Calvert's death, it was reported that he was engaged to marry Mrs. Calvert. And this, in spite of the fact that it had never been open to question as to whether Mrs. Calvert had loved her aged husband. She had loved him. I myself knew that, and it had been a mystery to me why she had ever allowed Carew's attentions. Her husband's death had been more of a shock to her than to anyone else, and this I knew from my personal knowledge of her and of all that had passed. That was why, when I heard that she was going to marry Carew, I was dumbstruck at the thought.

May turned on me in a way that surprised me: "Find out who killed my Daddy and I'll marry you the next day!" she retorted

I have mentioned that the police looked up Carew's record. It was found that he had been in New York a little less than a year, having come from Paris, France. He spoke French and German fluently and was of a studious nature, quiet and unassuming. He was an extremely handsome man and always dressed well. He had no police record. His life, apparently, had been uneventful.

Those who knew Carew best stated that there was no question but that he was an idealist and of a very high type of character, yet when questioned specifically, none seemed to know much about him. Requests on specific points usually succeeded only in bringing out an avowal of a "general impression" that he was a fine fellow. As to his pleasant, courteous nature, my own personal knowledge of him supported this. Before Doctor Calvert's death I had had several talks with "Reggie," as everyone called him. He interested me as a personality. After the murder, with its consequent publicity and notoriety for all concerned, Reggie did not change in the least. He was just as mild, courteous, unassuming and friendly as ever.

About a week after I first learned of Reggie's engagement to Mrs. Calvert, May and I came across him in the dining-room of the Plaza. He came over at once to our table and, with his usual smile and complimentary remarks, took a place with us. I had not seen so much of him of late and I wondered whether the vital topic would, or could be broached with safety. I wanted to talk about it with him. I wanted to get his view-point and I also had some things I wanted to say myself.

But I need not have had any tender feelings in the matter, for in a few minutes he led into it with the greatest ease and nonchalance possible, considering the circumstances.

"Oh, I say, Arthur," he said, "what are your ideas about all this talk? What do you think about it? Do I look like a murderer? Sometimes it almost makes me feel guilty, the way people stare at me, everywhere I go." Then he turned to May. "Miss Calvert, I appreciate your feelings. The whole thing is tragic enough, but nevertheless, what can I do? It is an absurd thing, it seems to me, to cast suspicion upon me, in something that is so far-fetched and ridiculous as to be wholly unthinkable."

"Then there's my angle, too, Reggie," I put in. "Some say that I have the deep interest that I do have in trying to solve this mystery, because I feel that May here, who is

soon to be my wife, has been defrauded out of her share of her father's fortune, which I would like to have for myself. As a matter of fact, I am independently wealthy, and everyone who knows me, knows that I could have no interest in it whatsoever in that respect."

"I believe you," said Reggie. "There you are! It's another case of 'what people say.' If they can't find something to talk about in my affairs, then they will find something wrong with yours, since we both happen to be in the headlines. Half of it is these damn reporters," he added with a wry smile. "No person is safe from their misrepresentations."

"And yet sometimes they find out things by their persistence, that work for justice," commented May, in an even, cold tone that had bitterness in it.

CAREW only smiled and passed off the remark, seeming not in the least affected. After we had left I told May that I intended to cultivate Reggie's society.

"What for—because you like him?"

"No," I replied, "because I have a purpose in it."

When I had found out these things I said to May: "Your prospective father-in-law certainly gives the impression of being a paragon of virtue."

"That's just what Mother says. She says he *is* that." She looked at me eagerly. "I am anxious to know whether you think he really is—after you have found out everything you can about him?"

"Well, I don't know, May," I replied thoughtfully. And I was telling the truth. I hadn't yet made up my mind. As a matter of fact, I had a whole lot to learn.

MEANWHILE I was getting impatient with the delay that May was insisting upon in regard to our marriage. She stated that she loved me, that she intended to marry me, and was going to set a definite date for the wedding. However, she hadn't set the date, the weeks were passing, and there was little prospect of her doing so. Finally, one day when she and her mother and I were together, I grew serious and pinned her down.

She turned on me in a way that surprised me: "Find out who killed my Daddy and I'll marry you the next day!" she

"MRS. CALVERT looked up at me again and a slight smile played about her pretty lips. It was almost a sneer. Then came, in an even, quiet voice.

"'A Broadway bum; that's what he was, a Broadway bum. The low-down cad! The white-livered *liar!'*

"As she spoke, she reached to a drawer in the stand near her, pulled out a——"

"It's a shame, the way he has Mother twirled around his little finger," she replied. "I don't understand it. It worries me. If you can find out anything about him that we don't know, do it—please do it!" She paused and looked at me appealingly, with tears in her eyes. "I would give my own life to know who killed Daddy!"

"I know you would, dear," I said quietly, and I gave her hand a squeeze. "And one of these days we are going to find out."

I kept my word. I did cultivate Reggie. I was able to do so because I think he somehow felt there was a bond of sympathy between us, from the remark I had made when we were dining together at the Plaza that day.

AFTER a few weeks, we grew to be quite chummy. But I must in truth say that I found nothing in either his conversation or manner which might indicate in the slightest degree that he was not sincere in his attentions to Mrs. Calvert, or had not always been so. I sought out some of his more intimate friends and I diligently cultivated their acquaintance also, but everything I could learn only served to strengthen the impression that here at last, in the midst of gay, reckless New York, was a young man of almost unbelievable uprightness of character and high moral conduct. It appeared (and I do not say this in sarcasm) that he had never done wrong. I say it *appeared* so. He was so strict with himself, in fact, that he never allowed himself to indulge in a drink of liquor, and his friends said he refrained from smoking because (as he himself stated) he simply didn't like it, though the inference was, he believed it to be an undesirable habit and a discredit to a young man.

retorted. Then she burst out crying, and rushing to her room, locked herself in.

I was getting myself into a mess. Did the girl suspect that I had killed her father? I mention this because at the time I really did wonder about this, for May had been acting rather queerly of late. She had not been herself. She had said that maybe somebody had administered slow poison to her father and that he had not been strangled at all. I wondered about that too. Maybe she thought *I* had, with the expectation that she was to be given all of her Dad's money when he died.

All this may sound absurd, but it didn't seem at all absurd to me then, at that time. I racked my brain through that period, thinking about the thing until I grew thin and pale. I got into the habit of lying awake nights thinking about it, trying to figure out a theory of how the murder had been committed—some new theory. The police had thought out every theory possible, or what they thought possible.

IT was during this time that I made an appointment to see Doctor Purdy. When I walked into his office he looked me over appraisingly and said: "Now, what the devil is the matter with you, young fellow? Do you imagine you are sick?" The old gray-haired physician had a twinkle in his kindly eyes as he said this and he shook me by the shoulder in a friendly way. Then he looked at me more closely. "You don't look quite so well as when I saw you last. Worrying about your coming marriage, my boy? Is that it?"

I sat down and did not reply right away. He looked at me keenly over the top of his glasses and waited.

"Doctor," I said, "what evidence (*Continued on page* 83)

For a CHINAMAN'S GOLD

By DOCTOR ROSWELL BAILEY
As told to CARL EASTON WILLIAMS

I WAS the assistant company physician of the Stony Creek Mining Corporation, of Stony Creek, at the time Sam Wong, the laundryman, was mysteriously shot in that God forsaken town. It caused a great stir there, chiefly, I think, because there was a peculiar coincidence connected with it.

The coincidence was that at about the time Sam Wong was shot, a string of pearls worth $250,000 disappeared from off the person of one Frisco Irish, a thug, who had supposedly stolen them.

Another Chinaman was mixed up in the deal. His name was Sing Ling, and he owned and ran the combination restaurant and opium dive where Frisco was found "doped up." The Sheriff felt that Sing was a bad egg and that he had association with the underworld of San Francisco—from which place the missing necklace had been stolen. Anyhow, Sing admitted having "frisked" Frisco. His story was that he did that with all of his patrons while they were under the influence of the drug, so he could "take care of their valuables," if any—they being irresponsible when in this condition.

Sing said he discovered the pearls on going through Frisco's pockets, and that he laid them on a table near by, and the next thing he knew they had disappeared. Someone had taken them when he had his back turned.

The Sheriff didn't believe this story and he locked Sing in the town jail. I was brought into the case through the fact that the Sheriff could not wake up Frisco Irish. Had Sing loaded the pipe with an extra big dose of opium for reasons of his own?

IT was soon after I had brought Frisco to consciousness that I was called to the side of Sam Wong, and the thought occurred to me that maybe there was something in Sing's story. Maybe the pearls had been taken from Sing's place, and maybe Sam Wong was the man who stole them. Why? For no other reason except that Sam now had a bullet in him. After all, it wasn't a coincidence—it was just a connection—maybe.

I attended Sam. He died from the effect of his wound, within a few hours of being shot. Meanwhile, Doctor Allen Beecher, to whom I was assistant, had become interested in this peculiar situation. When Beecher wasn't drunk he was credited with having a shrewd sense of the fitness and value of things. Doctor Beecher seemed to be interested in the fact that where there was once a $250,000 string of pearls, there was now nothing. Where then were these pearls?

I also was becoming vitally interested about this time, for, the day after I attended Sam Wong at Dave Henderson's lonely cabin, near where he had been shot by some person unknown, I had a hard time waking up. At about noon I opened my eyes to the world, wondering what it was all about. I never felt so dopey in my life, and a little later, after I was through shaving, I became curious about a tiny, suspicious-looking spot on my left arm.

Was that spot the mark of a hypodermic needle? I began to think. I had slept by Sam Wong's corpse that night, and when I awoke had found it had been removed from my side and was on a table. I also found (and it greatly aroused my curiosity) that Doctor Beecher had paid a call at the cabin while I was asleep. As I say, I was thinking all the while that following day, as I tried to collect my senses, and I decided that something was wrong.

It was not so long after this that I made a startling discovery—if my suspicions were true. Stuck to the under side of Doctor Beecher's desk in his office I found a goodly number of wads of gum. The Doc *didn't chew gum.*

I hurried to my safe-deposit vault in the local bank, asking no questions and not even taking the time to stop and investigate what might be inside the gum wads—if anything.

Nothing else could it be. I was sure of it! Someone had opened Sam Wong's stomach and had taken therefrom $250,000 in pearls. And that someone was——

I TOLD the Sheriff my suspicions, and together we went to examine Sam Wong's body. It was, truly, just a little bit uncanny to find that it was as we expected—that is, that the body had been opened. And it was a neat job. It was not butchery, such as an unskillful hand might have perpetrated. There was the skill of the surgeon, the careful cleavage between the muscles, and all neatly laid back into place after the opening. Even the carting of the body across the back of a broncho had not much disturbed the perfect-fitting edges of the incision.

"Do you see, Sheriff," I said, "that this is a job such as only a doctor would be able to do? You see where it points?"

"Oh, I see that all right. It's a surgeon's work. The only question is—which surgeon?"

"Just what do you mean?"

"Why, the only trouble with that, Doc, is that it cuts two ways, d'you see? Beecher will naturally say that you did this little job. Sam Wong was cut open. This was your case."

I caught my breath. The implication staggered me!

"Besides, how did you know about this?" asked the Sheriff.

"Why—by deduction, of course."

He laughed. "How do I know you knew it by deduction?"

I HESITATED. This was, indeed, an unexpected turn in the case. The mystery would at last be solved—by fastening the whole thing upon me. For a moment I could not think what to say.

"You spent the night out there, alone with him, you know," added the Sheriff.

And now another thought occurred to me, that made me feel weak and faint. Beecher did not now have the pearls—or at least I thought he didn't. They were—probably—at this very moment deposited in my own safe deposit vault, in the wads of gum. Perhaps after all, now, my best hope

A man who risks his life to win a fortune, usually resorts to desperate methods—but no man has tried more desperate methods, nor more clever ruses, than those employed by the crafty Oriental, Sing Ling

Was that spot the mark of a hypodermic needle?

lay in the chance that I really had made a silly mistake, and a fool of myself at the same time.

The Sheriff was watching me, shrewdly, with a grim little smile—or was it a friendly smile? I could not tell. I stood there stupidly trying to think. It was all very embarrassing. Perhaps I looked guilty.

"Do you get me, Doc?" the Sheriff said. "Where are the pearls? Hand them over."

As a matter of fact, I was—probably—in a position to do that very thing, though he didn't know that yet.

"But, of course, you think that I'm telling you the truth?" I faltered.

"Sure, I know that," he replied, laughing. "But when it comes to a show-down, Beecher can fasten it on you better than you can on him. I may have to lock you up yet, Doc."

However, just at this point, when it looked dark, I saw a light. This was the thought of the possible clash between Joe Gates and Beecher, and I now hoped that I had paved the way for this. Gates had accompanied Beecher to the cabin where Beecher had operated on Sam Wong, and I felt sure that Shifty Joe was in on the crooked deal. With my general stupidity in the whole affair, I thought now with some consolation that at least I had done one bit of cute work in saying to Beecher that Joe was "looking for him." If those wads of chewing gum were what I thought, Beecher would suspect Gates, and Shifty Joe would misconstrue the Doctor's position. Yet, of course, I might be wrong about the whole business. But in a case like that, one clutches at a straw.

"The only hitch in the program of fastening anything on me, Sheriff, comes about through Joe Gates getting sore at Beecher."

"What's that?"

"Well, there's a little more I didn't tell you, Sheriff——"

"Well, I'll be gum-swizzled," he broke in. "Here's me puzzling all about this mystery all day, and you come along a half hour after I saw you last and got it all figured out clear. Shoot it quick."

"Well, it was this way——"

But at this point Frank Green, the deputy, burst into the room.

"Better come along with me, Sheriff—something doing."

BUT already the Sheriff had his hat on his head and was on his way to the door. "Doc Beecher and Shifty Joe——?"

"Right. How'd you guess it? I been shadowing the Doc, as you told me. I listened at the door—and there was one whale of a row. I heard what they said. Joe went away, but he said he was coming back——"

"Sure—he's going back with his gun. We'll wait inside the door and pick him up before anything happens. I know all about it. Come on, Doc."

By this time we were out on the street. It seems, however, that Gates did not go all the way to his room at the Stony Creek Hotel for his own gun. Instead he borrowed Jimmy Young's six-shooter. When we saw him he was just opposite the administration building, that is, opposite my office windows, and starting to cross the street. The three of us broke into a run.

When Gates was half way across the street, he looked up at the windows. In another instant there was a shot—from one of the windows. Shifty Joe drew his right hand from his coat pocket, and almost before we could see it, he too, had fired—up at the window. For the next three or four seconds all Stony Creek resounded with the roar of a pitched battle, for both Beecher and Gates were firing as fast as they could empty their guns.

Then silence.

AS the thick smoke cleared we saw Gates turn deliberately around to walk away. He took just three steps, and then his knees bent and he drooped down—sort of wilted into the dirt.

Again we started on the run. "Go and pick him up, Frank," said the Sheriff. "I'll go up-stairs."

I ran with Frank to the body sprawled in the dirt of the street. One glance told me that he was gone, and I followed the Sheriff up to our office. The door was locked, and I pulled out my key. Beecher had crumpled up under the window. He was lifeless. I examined him quickly, and then we stretched him out on the floor.

The Sheriff stepped to the window. Already a crowd had gathered.

"Frank," called the Sheriff, "borrow that wagon over yonder and take both of them away. Lay them out alongside of the Chink."

I reflected, as I looked at the still, reclining form of my former colleague, that it was, after all, a fortunate ending for him. Better to go this way, quickly, than to go by the processes of a disease with which I knew he was afflicted, that would gradually eat away his brain and central nervous system. This was the lesser tragedy.

"Just to think," I said—"three men shot to death over a little string of white stones."

"Hell!" said the Sheriff, "and the mystery still remains. Where is it? Where are they?"

"As to that," I replied, "I may be able to help you out."

"My God, Doc, you got this whole thing sewed up."

"Can't help it. Feel my hair, back here—all sticky? That's chewing gum."

"But what the devil's that got to do with it?"

"Why, I bumped my head, reaching for my fountain-pen top, under his table, see?" And with that I reached my hand under the table and felt around again, this time perhaps more thoroughly than at the time of my former hasty action. Anyway, there was one wad of gum that I had overlooked. "Wait, here's one I missed!" I said, holding it up triumphantly.

A quizzical smile spread over the Sheriff's face. "You mean—you missed this one with your hair?"

But by this time I had picked up a knife, and was exploring the wad of gum, confidently expecting to find a little hard stone in its center. But the knife cut straight through. I divided it into smaller sections. I squeezed them. Nothing but pure gum.

"That's funny," I commented. The Sheriff was watching me.

"You better sleep all by yourself from now on, Doc," he remarked cryptically.

My face felt hot, and I knew it had flushed red. Maybe, after all, my mind had gone. I stepped back, and tripped over Beecher's body. There he was. There was no doubt about him!

"Sheriff, I guess you and I had better search this office some more."

"I guess so, too." He took off his hat. "But what about the chewing gum?"

"Well, I thought, you know—because Beecher didn't chew gum—why, he——"

"Say, Doc—that's right," exclaimed the Sheriff—"he chewed tobacco!"

"Well," I went on. "I had to work fast. Saw him crossing the street, so I jammed the gum wads into a handkerchief and put it in my vault at the bank."

"All right; we'll just go and get it and look it over."

THE bank was now closed, but the official in charge opened it for the Sheriff. A few minutes later the two of us sat at the Sheriff's desk in his office with wads of discarded chewing gum spread before us. The first lump was another false alarm. Nothing but gum. My heart sank. But the Sheriff kept on, and the next wad—ah, the next contained a beautiful pearl! What a relief! After

"THE three of us broke into a run.

"When Gates was half way across the street, he looked up at the windows. In another instant there was a shot—from one of the windows. Shifty Joe drew his right hand from his coat pocket, and almost before we could see it, he——"

all, I had been right.

We spent some time extricating and polishing the pearls, using hot water later to soften the gum. All the jewels now needed was a string. They were beautiful, to us, who knew so little about precious stones, though they seemed temporarily discolored in spots by the gum and hot water.

The Sheriff then had Frisco Irish brought in. The crook entered with a grin.

"Here, Frisco——"

"I told you my name was Ingram—Frank Ingram."

"Well, anyway, you see we got your pearls back again."

"Thank you, Sheriff. I didn't know they were gone."

"Do you know that three men have been shot to death—over these pearls?"

"Oh, gosh! I heard some shooting. Too damn bad, ain't it, Sheriff?"

"Well, they ought to be precious, after all that," I put in.

"But to tell the truth," said the fellow, with a queer smile, "I only paid ten dollars for them."

"You what?"

"I paid ten dollars. They're good pearls. I was going to give them to Jessie. Here, I think——" and fumbling in his pockets he produced a sales-slip from Black & Company, jewelers, in San Francisco. "Best make there is, Sheriff."

"Sam Wong was cut open. This was your case," said the Sheriff. The implication staggered me!

This time it was the Sheriff whose face was flushed. He was fingering over the pearls uncertainly. He put on his glasses for a closer inspection.

"By the way, Sheriff, what you holding me for—that's what I want to know!"

"Wait a minute," said that worthy official, and he reached for the telephone. In another five minutes Wallace Fisher, mining engineer and mineralogist, entered the room. He scratched one of the stones with a knife, and said that it was paste.

"I could grind up some fish scales, bind them with paraffin and some hardening material, and make you some pearls as good as this one—for a dollar a string, in quantities."

"My God—I was stung! Ten berries." This remark came from the prisoner.

It was too much for the Sheriff.

"Thank you, Wally," said the Sheriff, and the mineralogist departed.

"You say three men were killed over ten dollars—I mean, one dollar's worth of this junk?"

The Sheriff gave the fellow one withering look.

"What you holding me for?" the man repeated.

"Damned if I know, Frisco. Get out."

"Thanks, Sheriff. I'll do that." Whereupon he picked up the loose stones from the desk and poured them into his pocket. Two or three fell on the floor, but he paid no attention to them.

He had no sooner left than Sing Ling was brought in.

"I guess you're clear, too, Sing," said the Sheriff. "We've all had enough trouble out of this fool business. You go back to your chop suey."

But Sing Ling shook his head. "No like um now. Go back—Flisco. S'long."

"All right, Sing—anywhere you like. Good-by." And then he added, after the door had closed behind the Chinaman, "The whole blooming thing's a joke!"

"But not for Sam Wong, or Shifty, or Beecher," I corrected.

"Suffering Mike, that's right," he replied, snapping his fingers. Then he reached for his pen and wrote a telegram to the authorities in San Francisco.

The Frank Ingram person, better known as Frisco Irish, left town within half an hour, on the horse that Doctor Beecher had purchased from Jimmy Young. He got it for a song. Sing Ling followed him twenty minutes later, taking the same trail, having made a quick deal with Charley See, who took over the business. Sing Ling had his own horse back, of course.

With Beecher out of the office, I spent the rest of the day moving things about and (*Continued on page* 83)

The MAN *with*

Why would a man of unsmirched character desert a beautiful without a word of explanation? When Detective Fox made case," he stumbled onto the strangest discovery

THE woman who was ushered into my office that morning was an unusual type—beautiful but not self-conscious. She neither primped nor preened, nor in any other way attempted to convey a personal awareness of her own attractiveness. And she was really beautiful, in face, form, carriage, and general expression. Her soft, gray eyes, with their touches of gold and jade intermingled, looked out from their frame of curling lashes with such kindliness and understanding as to cause one to believe that she saw only good in even the vilest of God's creatures.

I quickly sensed, however, that this woman had suffered a great injury—something which had hurt her to the very remotest depth of her soul. And I felt instinctively that her understanding of humanity and its frailties had made it possible for her to meet the blow standing up.

She was not long in confirming the correctness of my guess.

"Mr. Fox," she began, immediately upon seating herself in the chair I had indicated, "I understand that you conduct a private investigating business——"

She paused, and I nodded.

"I came to you because I wish that no publicity be connected with this—that is, no more than has already been necessary."

"I understand, madam."

"I am Mrs. Monroe—Mrs. Thomas Monroe——"

I am sure I looked my surprise. This woman, so calmly stating her business, was the wife, then, of a man who had lately disappeared under spectacular circumstances. The case had been, seemingly, utterly unexplainable, and was, I knew, still upon the police docket as an unsolved mystery.

Monroe, credited with being an unusually successful life insurance salesman, had for some unknown reason failed to return home one night. Early the following morning his automobile had been found parked near the edge of the lake a few miles out from the city, and just off the main highway. The wind-shield had been shattered by a heavy boulder which still lay inside the car. A number of papers relative to Monroe's business and bearing his name, were scattered about the front seat, as though carelessly discarded in a hurried rifling of the man's pockets.

IT was believed at first that Monroe had been murdered and his body thrown into the lake—a theory that was strengthened by the discovery of a hole in the thin ice near the shore.

But persistent dragging of the lake in that vicinity had failed to locate the body. And because the water was comparatively still in that particular spot, it was not thought possible that the body could have been carried farther out into the lake by an undercurrent. So the search was finally abandoned, and the general opinion seemed to be that Monroe had willfully absconded, leaving behind such obvious clues as the broken wind-shield and the scattered papers for the purpose of making it appear that he had been attacked, and probably murdered.

No reason for his apparent desire to get away could be found. His reputation, so far as was publicly known, was without a smirch. His accounts with his company were found to be in perfect condition. It appeared, furthermore, that the domestic life of the Monroes had been unusually congenial, that almost perfect happiness had been experienced by the pair. No one could understand why Monroe should willingly desert the wife he had apparently loved, and who seemed to possess as great a love for him.

And now, having met the man's wife, my own wonder was increased to the *n*th degree.

I saw that the woman had suffered grief, humiliation and suspense—as deeply, perhaps, as it is possible for mortals to suffer. And yet she was able to talk of the tragedy without a tremor in her low voice. If ever I have seen perfect poise, that woman had it.

"Yes, Mrs. Monroe," I said. "I believe the police department has conscientiously tried every means of solving that mystery."

"Yes, I suppose so," she agreed.

"Is it something else, then, that you wished to consult me about?"

"No."

I WAITED. It was impossible to be brusque with this woman. Finally, having apparently overcome either her reluctance to discuss her affairs with me, or having decided that she could trust me, or perhaps both, she drew from her handbag a small, black, leather-covered memorandum book and handed it to me.

"I found it in the pocket of an old coat of Tom's, one which he had not worn for some time."

The book was practically new, with only the slightly bent edges of the covers to indicate that it had been carried at all. Not a single entry had been made in the book; even the space for the owner's name and address had not been filled in.

But when I passed the edges of the blank pages reflectively over my thumb, I found a scrap of paper tucked into the book. It turned out to be a picture of a woman, and it had been clipped from a magazine of some sort—the paper, I noticed, was of a better quality than the newspapers use.

I glanced at Mrs. Monroe. Her eyes were riveted upon the picture. Then, as she raised her eyes to meet mine, I saw quite plainly the suffering that she tried so bravely to conceal.

Before I had voiced the question in my mind, she shook her head.

"I do not know who it is—I never saw the original, I am sure."

"And the book—it belonged to your husband?"

"I can only suppose that it did. I never saw it before."

"You said nothing about this to the police?"

I knew, of course, that she had not. I was merely seeking some way of breaking through her reticence. It seemed hard for her to put into words the thought that was evidently in her mind.

Then, without preface, she told it all, with a rapid flow of words but in a voice that was remarkably under control.

"I never for an instant suspected Tom of caring for

TWO LIVES

wife and a prosperous business—
his search for the "woman in the
of his career

By Detective GEORGE FOX
As told to E. M. JOHNSON

"Who was this woman whose picture was in my husband's pocket?"

another woman," she said. "But, Mr. Fox, I simply cannot endure this mystery any longer. If there was another woman, I want to know it. I could understand her love for him—Tom was capable of inspiring love, if any man was. I could even forgive Tom—he was no less human than any other man. But if he died with a secret in his heart—you see it is almost impossible for me to believe that he is not dead—if he died shielding a hidden love, that secret must remain hidden from the rest of the world, if such a thing is possible. That's why I have come to you, Mr. Fox. I *must* know who could wish Tom out of the way—I must know! His death cannot go unavenged!"

I was moved to wonder just then whether her desire to find her husband's slayer—if he had indeed been slain—was the real, compelling motive which had brought this woman to my office, or had her vanity been hurt and her jealousy aroused? Did she want to learn, above all else, if there had indeed been another woman in her husband's heart? It did not seem to me possible that such an amount of vanity could exist in this well-poised woman. Still, why had she withheld evidence of any nature whatsoever from the police if her sole wish had been to find her

husband's possible slayer? Of course, she might have been actuated—as she said—by the desire to shield her husband's reputation and to avoid unpleasant publicity.

AS if comprehending my unspoken thought, she said: "Tom has been gone two months now, Mr. Fox, and each day this agony of suspense cuts deeper and deeper. I can find no peace anywhere. I keep seeing his body lying in some deserted place. Or I see him wandering helplessly about, as though he were lost and did not know what he was doing. It is a terrible feeling—it almost drives me insane at times." She paused for a moment, and then continued: "I have been doing everything I can possibly find to do about the house, in order to keep myself occupied. A few days ago I began an onslaught on the attic, thinking to get rid of all the useless things stored there. It was then that I came upon the book, in an old coat packed away with other worn or discarded clothing. It gave me a shock. Who was this woman whose picture was in my husband's pocket? Did she have some connection with the awful thing that had happened? It bothered me; I couldn't get it out of my mind. Then I thought that perhaps God had ordained that I should find the picture—that it might prove to be a clue——"

I took another look at the picture. Something caught and held my gaze. I was sure that I had never actually seen that woman, but there was something strangely familiar about her features—something reminiscent about the crooked little smile that held me for the moment fascinated.

I do not know what it was that prompted my next question, unless it was an attempt on the part of my subconscious mind to collect certain half-forgotten facts into a more or less definite idea. I wasn't aiming, consciously, at any certain thing when I asked: "How long have you and Mr. Monroe resided in Cleveland?"

"Less than a year," the woman answered. "Tom was transferred here from the Toledo office the first of August——"

Toledo! And then I knew! I drew out a scrap-book in which I kept newspaper cuts of missing persons, descriptions of suspects being sought in connection with various crimes, and photographs of criminals for whom a dragnet was being thrown out.

I CAME across the picture of a woman whose body had been fished out of the Maumee River near Toledo. It tallied with the picture brought me by Mrs. Monroe. The coroner's jury, it seemed, had given a verdict of suicide, but the police were not entirely convinced that it should not have been murder instead. The bruises on the woman's head might have been the result of striking the rocks as she fell, but the police held that they were such as could have caused her death before she had been thrown into the river.

And the date upon which the body had been found was two months previous!. It had been found floating among cakes of ice by some boys on New Year's Day.

And then I looked up the date of the disappearance of Thomas Monroe. It was December 28th.

I said nothing to Mrs. Monroe of the discovery I had just made. I wanted time in which to assemble facts and suspicions into some sort of working plan before I mentioned them. The discovery might mean nothing at all, of course. On the other hand, it might be of the utmost importance.

So far as I was concerned, the present interview was at an end. I believed that the woman had given me all the facts that were in her possession.

After a moment more, Mrs. Monroe quietly arose. I noticed that her hands were clenched until the knuckles protruded like tiny white marbles. Her voice was steady and determined when she said:

"If Tom loved another, and chose her in preference to me, I shall have nothing more to say, because I—I loved him that way, Mr. Fox. But I must know! You understand, do you not? And if his life has been taken—that, too, I must know. It is this uncertainty that is killing me!"

Then she turned and walked rapidly out of the office.

BY this time I was seething with interest in the case. I read everything I could find in connection with the finding of the woman's body in the river at Toledo. Her name, I found, was Ruth Eastland, and she had been a prominent figure in the industrial life of the city because of her active interest in welfare work, particularly among the young girl workers. The picture Mrs. Monroe had brought me had, without doubt, been cut from some factory publication such as most industrial plants put out at regular intervals.

"FIGHTING against the black tide about to swallow me, I made a desperate lunge forward with my whole body, at the same time drawing my gun. I butted the maniac under the chin with my bleeding head, and backed him against the thick hedge.

"Then, with almost unbelievable quickness he——"

HAD an intimate friendship existed between Ruth Eastland and Thomas Monroe while the man lived in Toledo? And had something, or some one, interfered in that friendship and caused Monroe, in a fit of jealous anger, to do away with the woman, afterward committing suicide? Or had there been a third party interested to the extent, perhaps, of taking the lives of both and thus ending the ill-starred friendship?

Or was it mere coincidence that the woman had either taken her own life or been murdered in one city, while on practically the same date the man, in another city, had either lost his life or voluntarily made dramatic exit in some other way?

Might not the presence of the woman's picture in the man's pocket be explained by mere impersonal interest in and admiration for the achievements of a co-worker and fellow-citizen? As salesman of life insurance policies in which, under the group insurance plan, many of the factories had interested themselves, it was not unlikely that he had met Ruth Eastland purely in a business manner and that, having come across her picture in a magazine, he had preserved it out of friendly interest alone.

I felt that the first thing to do was to investigate Monroe's life in Toledo.

This lapping back had, I learned, been pretty thoroughly done by the police and their detectives when the search for Monroe was being pushed. Apparently nothing damaging to the man's reputation had been dug up. His business accounts had all been straight and his ability as a salesman had been such as to win him promotion.

However, in my lone prowlings I came upon a surprising as well as significant thing. Thomas Monroe *had* had a secret. That secret was ten thousand dollars' worth of securities, which had been deposited with a large trust company in Toledo and were, evidently, being held in trust for some person, relative or otherwise.

I managed an interview with the president of the company and found that he was greatly concerned over the matter. He seemed glad to talk with some one about it.

"The fact is, Mr. Fox," he confided, "Mr. Monroe had just secured ten thousand dollars on those securities at the time of his disappearance. The securities are, of course, worth a great deal more than the original ten thousand—they have accumulated dividends throughout the seventeen years they have been held by our company until they have practically doubled themselves. This was the first occasion upon which they had, in any way, been made use of by Mr. Monroe. He offered no definite explanation either for this call, saying only that it was an urgent need, and that he hoped to be able to replace the loan within a reasonable time."

Would Nina Lee recognize him?

"And these securities, Mr. Pitman—you have no knowledge as to whom they will eventually go?"

Mr. Pitman then showed me the memorandum that accompanied the securities. It was signed by Thomas Monroe, and read as follows:

In the event of my death occurring before March 31st, 1926, the securities shall become the property of one Nina Lee Monroe, 19 Oak Terrace, Detroit, free from all restrictions, the day following above-mentioned date.

"And this is the last of February," I commented.

Mr. Pitman nodded. "I am glad that you came, Mr. Fox. I feel that you should have the complete facts. Bound to secrecy as we are with regard to all our clients' affairs, I should not have deemed it within the rights of our company to disclose these facts without such an inquiry as yours. Mr. Monroe's death has not yet been made an established fact, you understand."

"Thank you, Mr. Pitman. I am exceedingly interested in the case myself," I told him, "and if it is at all possible to clear the thing up, I mean to do so."

I left him then to take up the trail of the mysterious Nina Lee. Who and what she was, or what relation she bore to the missing Thomas Monroe, I hadn't the slightest inkling. She might be an ex-wife, a sister, or even a daughter, since she carried the family name. I had a hunch that the wife of Thomas Monroe—the woman who had engaged me to ferret out the mystery of her husband's disappearance—had no more knowledge of the existence of said Nina Lee than I had. So I did not consult Mrs. Monroe on the matter, but proceeded at once to Detroit.

But before leaving Toledo, I made every possible effort to learn if there had been any known friendship existing between Thomas Monroe and Ruth Eastland. I failed, however, to find a single person who could say with any assurance that the pair were even acquaintances.

On that angle I was puzzled, but I did not discard the idea that the two cases were in some way connected. I set it aside for future consideration. And now that another mysterious person had entered the picture I found myself floundering in a sea of possibilities. Eventually, I felt, I would come upon a thread of evidence strong enough to haul me to the shore of a solution, although one can never be sure of anything in a case like this.

Nina Lee Monroe was not hard to locate—that is, I had no difficulty in finding her number on Oak Terrace. The house was one of old-time grandeur and seemed to have stood, at an earlier day, in solitary splendor, surrounded only by the well-kept grounds of a beautiful country place. Now it was on the edge of a new real estate development.

A maid answered my ring, but when I asked for Nina Lee Monroe she gave me a queer look. Nina Lee was not at home, she said. The sight of my badge seemed to throw the girl into a state of nervous fear and she slammed the door in my face.

But I was there to learn something of Nina Lee Monroe, and I was not to be thwarted in my errand. I rang again, determinedly. The door was answered this time by a buxom, middle-aged woman, who peered at me searchingly through thick-lensed glasses. Her manner indicated great agitation.

"Nina Lee is seeing no one to-day," the woman stated flatly. "But you can state your business to me. I am housekeeper here, and Nina Lee is in my care."

She led me into a small reception room to the left of the main hall and closed the door behind us. She did not offer me a chair, but stood waiting, giving me to understand that the stating of my business need not take many minutes.

"I am making an attempt to find the whereabouts of a Mr. Thomas Monroe," I said, "and the hunt has led me to this place. If you will be so kind as to inform me what relation Nina Lee Monroe bears to Thomas Monroe, it may help in solving a mystery."

She gave me a long, hard look.

"It's not for me to say what relation he may or may not be to Nina Lee. Is that all you want to know?"

The woman, of course, had exactly the information I needed. But she was excited and thoroughly unmanageable.

I pulled out a heavy black cigar and lit it. Then I settled myself comfortably in a chair. Seeing that I meant to stay until she was ready to talk, the woman studied me intently for a long moment. At last she spoke in a frightened, uncertain voice.

"If you are really a detective, maybe—maybe you will help us. There's a strange man prowling about the garden. I'm almost certain he's trying to kidnap Nina Lee. She's out for a ride, thank God! There's nobody but women here, and we're scared to death. Oh, I ought to have called the police long ago, but I don't know what to do——"

Satisfied that the woman was speaking the truth, I hurriedly followed her through the back hall, and then went alone into the garden. I poked about and searched and listened. But I heard nothing and saw nothing. I was about ready to kick myself for wasting time here when my attention was attracted by the figure of a man who was approaching the garden by way of the graveled driveway. He was of medium build, thin-faced, his clothes torn and dirty. He walked with a peculiar lurching gait, as if unable to maintain proper balance. In some ways his walk resembled that of a drunken man, and yet it was unlike that, too.

I noticed that a curtain at a window on the upper floor was quickly drawn aside. Then I saw the face of the housekeeper framed in the window. She gave me a quick nod and withdrew.

And then, without warning, I was engaged in a battle with a human whirlwind.

With a sudden lunge the man was upon me; the weight of his body was catapulted against me with such force as to set me rocking uncertainly on my feet. My hand had been on my gun as the stranger approached, but his unexpected attack took me by surprise. Before I knew what was happening, he had produced a heavy club from under his coat and had dealt me a fearful blow on my head.

I felt dizzy for a second, and staggered, but I saw the next blow coming and managed to dodge it.

I then aimed a straight, thrusting punch at the man's jaw and, as it crashed home, saw him stagger back on his heels. He tottered for an instant and his knees sagged slightly. But he quickly recovered his balance, and, with a peculiar, bellowing sound, rushed forward, the club raised with murderous intent.

I fully believed by now that I was pitting myself against an insane man. We were about evenly matched in size and weight, but I quickly found that my own ring-trained sparring ability was up against the (*Continued on page* 88)

The Hold-Up of the Kansas City Express

(*Continued from page* 50)

all of the boys had ignored the rule for so long that it had become a dead-letter."

"Dead-letter, huh!" snorted Flynn. "Pretty convenient tuh have it open last night, wasn't it?"

It was then that the import of "Wise Charley's" interrogations broke on Maxwell. His face flushed. His fists clenched.

"My God, man," he gasped, rising again, "do you mean to insinuate that I had any part in it?"

Flynn laughed uproariously: "Insinuating? Why, my young bucko, haven't I made myself clear? Of course, I think you had a part in it. Damn it, I *know* you had a part in it." As Maxwell, hectic with rage, stepped toward him, he changed his tone to one of wheedling advice. "Come across now," he counseled; "tell the truth! Help us get the money and it'll go easier with you."

"You go to hell!" yelled Maxwell.

Flynn laughed again, but it was grimly this time.

"Take him away until he cools off!" he ordered, and two detectives took the express messenger to a cell.

I waited in the corridor until they returned, then went into the jail. I found Maxwell sitting on the bunk, his head in his hands, the picture of utter dejection. Something about his appearance there convinced me of his innocence. He hadn't observed me leaning against the bars of his cell, so I asked:

"Anything I can do for you, Roy?"

He rose to his feet and looked at me with a scowl. When he saw that I wasn't one of the detectives, his expression changed to hopelessness and he asked: "Who are you?"

I told him that I was a reporter for the *News*. Again his countenance reflected suppressed anger as he retorted, bitterly, "I have nothing to say."

"I haven't asked you to say anything, Roy; I just asked you if there was anything I could do."

"No," he replied, "but I'll make that damned Flynn pay for this!"

Involuntarily, I exclaimed: "I hope so!"

He heard me. He had been pacing his cell, and his back had been turned. But he wheeled and faced me. "What's that?"

"I mean it, Roy," I said. "In the first place, I don't believe you had anything to do with the robbery, and, in the second place, I'm aching to see that wise boy taken down a notch or two."

My sincerity must have carried conviction. Hope was in his face.

"Well, say," he responded, "maybe you'll be my friend after all."

"Sure, why not?" was my reply.

"Listen! Go to my place and tell my mother all about my trouble," said Maxwell. "Tell her, as you told me, that you don't believe I did it—it'll be better than to have her see it in the paper in cold type, and these muttonheads won't let me get to a phone."

"You bet I——"

"Say!" a voice bellowed down the corridor. I turned. It was Flynn. "Get away from there or I'll lock you up, too!"

I OBEYED, but with a smiling face—just to irritate him—and I went to Roy Maxwell's home. It was a modest little cottage sitting on the outskirts of the city—a home that he was buying out of his salary to provide for his mother against the time that he might want to marry.

It was a painful task, the one I had volunteered. How could I tell his mother of the sorry scrape that he was in? When she responded to my rap on the door I was almost trembling with nervousness, but when she appeared, I was reassured. She wore a clean housedress, her graying hair pretty and becoming, and she was smiling.

"Won't you come in?" sh invited hospitably, after I had told her my name and that I was a reporter. "Won't you have some lemonade? I made it for my son, Roy. But he didn't come home. I guess he had to go right out, back on his run again."

Knowing that I was about to break her heart with my news, I couldn't accept the lemonade.

"Mrs. Maxwell," I began, and something in my voice or countenance must have presaged unwelcome tidings.

"My son, Roy—he's not hurt?" she cried, agony in her voice.

"No," I replied, wondering how much better for him it might be if he were. "His train was held up and his car robbed, and the fool police captain has arrested him for it."

Instead of fainting or becoming hysterical as I feared she would, the mother, who showed she had a Spartan strain in her, remained cool. The knuckles of her hands whitened as she gripped her chair. Then she exclaimed, and there was family pride in her voice:

"Well, thank God, he didn't do it. It's not in the breed to do that. I know he is innocent."

I was surprised at her calmness, yet I admired her for it.

"No, Mrs. Maxwell, he didn't," I replied. "I know he didn't and I am going to do all in my power to prove that he didn't. Also, I am convinced that my paper will do all it can along the same line."

There was maternal yearning in her eyes when she exclaimed that she wanted to go to him. But when I told her they wouldn't let her see her son, if she did, and that it would only make Roy feel badly if she were refused, she agreed to wait until the next day. I went back to the Police Station.

I looked over the desk sergeant's report in search of news for my paper, but I found only a few petty items—among them the complaint of two wives that their husbands had disappeared. While I was looking at the names and wondering whether the coincidence of the two missing husbands was worth a paragraph in the *News*, Flynn, unseen by me, approached the desk. He coolly took the sheet from under my eyes and with a sardonic chuckle started toward his office.

I gritted my teeth, but said nothing. The idea that somehow I was going to get even with him obsessed me.

When I went out to supper a little later, I made my way to a cheap restaurant not far from the Police Station.

There were three vacant tables and I chose one near the wall. While I was sitting there, waiting for the waiter to bring my order, two girls came in and sat at the table near me. They were silent for a moment; then one of them asked the other:

"Hear about Clint Billings duckin'?"

"No," was the reply.

I paid little attention. Some sordid incident, I thought—it meant nothing to me until——

"Yeah," said the girl, "Clint Billings just vamoosed—left his store, and his wife, and everything. Never said a word to anybody about it; didn't take any money, his wife is telling the folks, but took plenty of grub and tobacco."

SOMETHING significant here—a business man decamping, leaving his business and wife, taking no money, but plenty of groceries and tobacco. Maybe I could get a good story out of it. I eavesdropped closely, as they went on talking.

I was quick to make a note of that name—Clint Billings. Then I caught this:

"Wife thinks he's gone huntin' and fishin' down river."

Hunting and fishing—down river—two other missing men—the three men at the gunsmith's. Coincidence? Maybe not!

Leaving the restaurant, I went to a near-by drug-store, where I borrowed the city directory and found that Clint Billings had a grocery store near Fort Harrison, in the southern edge of the city, and on the banks of the Mississippi River. I then returned to the Police Station and called my managing editor. I asked to be relieved for the night.

"Sure," he said. "I'll send Walter Rogers down."

"Please stay in the office until I come," I requested. "I want to see you."

When I got to the city room he took me into his private office and I told him about the conversation I had overheard between the two girls. I also informed him of the police report concerning the disappearance of two married men. Without a word he picked up his desk phone and ordered the operator to connect him with Rogers at Police Headquarters.

"Rogers," he said, when the connection had been made, "two married men were reported missing this afternoon. See Sergeant Boyd; get the names and descriptions of the missing parties and then phone them to me as soon as you can."

As he hung up, he turned to me.

"I don't believe there's more than one chance in a thousand that you'll stumble on to anything, but at that, it's worth trying."

I had waited perhaps twenty minutes, when the phone rang. The Boss answered it. He listened a moment and then handed the receiver to me.

"Here," he said, "Rogers has the stuff for you."

I took the receiver in one hand and a pencil in the other and wrote as Rogers gave me the report.

"One's name is Clarence Tarpley, foreman of the Cherokee River Stave Factory. He didn't go home at all last night, or the night before. Weight, one hundred fifty-

six pounds; blue eyes; chestnut hair; twenty-eight years old; about five feet ten. The other fellow's name is Russell Hite. He is employed at the Superior Bottling Works, twenty years old; blue eyes; light brown hair; about five feet ten."

THEN I compared those descriptions with the ones given me by the gunsmith, but I could not reach any definite conclusion. It certainly was not a heartening comparison.

"What do you make of it?" the managing editor asked.

"Nothing," I replied as I showed him Rogers' report.

He read it and then asked about the descriptions the gunsmith had given me. At last he observed: "Billings may be the chap who bought the shells. But even if he is, he may have had nothing to do with the robbery. Perhaps he was up on the track trying out his shells before he started on a hunt."

"No," I interrupted. "Those shells were freshly exploded when I picked them up. I could still smell the burnt powder."

"We'll take no chances," he ordered. "Go out to Billings' place and see his woman; see what she has to say."

It was the usual Southern grocery, half store and half grog-shop. The front door was locked, so I went to the side entrance and knocked. A woman whose slattern appearance made her appear to be thirty-five, although she was probably not more than twenty-seven, answered. She was garbed in a mother-hubbard and wore loosely fitting slippers, but no stockings.

"Mrs. Billings?" I asked.

"You're speaking to me, brother. What d'yuh want?"

"I'm looking for your husband; where is he?"

"Lawzee, I 'clare I don't know!" she exclaimed. "Wisht to the Lord I did—the no-good white trash! I'd like to wring his neck."

A bright thought struck me.

"Say," I said. "I'm a reporter for the *News*. I met him up-town several days ago and we were talking about hunting. He seems to be quite a hunter, so I just thought I'd come out and get a story for the Sunday paper on the hunting down river."

"You're just the feller I want to see," she replied quickly. "I was just fixin' to go down to the newspaper and put in a notice that since he's left my bed and board I ain't goin' to be responsible fer any o' his debts." Then as if she half-regretted her statement, she added:

"Clint's been actin' awful funny here lately. First, about three weeks ago, a young feller came here and they drank and whispered together. Then the next day the kid—that's all he was—came back with another feller, and the three of 'em just sat and whispered. Clint acted like he was trying to chase trade away when a customer would come in—and he wouldn't let me stay in the room. Then the kid and the other feller began comin' every night. When I got after Clint about the way they carried on, he told me they was friends of his'n and they was planning to go fishin' down the river. It wasn't long after that when Clint had a shanty-boat brought down to the store landin'——"

I hardly let her finish her story. That was it! Why hadn't I thought of it before? A boat! Down river! That was the only way the train robbers could have gotten away without leaving a trail. The woman talked on, but I wasn't listening. My mind was too active to hear her.

I BEAT it back to the office and told the managing editor.

"Huh," he grunted. "Begins to look good. Rogers just called me. Told me Flynn's got Maxwell in the sweat box again. Better go down and see what's going on."

That was his way—I knew it—to tame me down, and I could have kicked myself for ever being excited.

I found Rogers standing outside Flynn's office door listening. When he saw me, he stepped aside and I put my ear to the crack.

"Yes, damn you!" I heard—I recognized Maxwell's voice—"I tell you I opened the safe door. They were standing over me with two guns. I wasn't going to get my head blowed off."

Then I heard Flynn's sneering retort: "Yuh can't make that stick with a jury, kid."

I stepped away and motioned to Rogers to follow me. He repeated all he'd heard.

"We'd better go back to the pressroom and play ignorant," I said. "He's just about done. Then 'Wise Charley' will call us in and tell us how good he is."

We did and it wasn't fifteen minutes until a sop stuck his head in the press-room door and told us the Captain wanted to see us.

"Well," Flynn boasted, "I cleaned this job up in a hurry. This guy's confessed he opened the door of the safe for his pals. Want any more proof that I was right? That this was an 'inside' job?"

I almost said something that might not look so good in print, but kept still, and "Wise Charley" went on. "He's just like a calf—give him enough rope and he'll hang himself."

When I went back to the office, I found a note saying that the Boss wanted to see me. I went in. He was looking at a map.

"If they stocked up in a houseboat," he said, when he saw me, "they'd make Morgan's Point before they'd need anything. You get on the train and go down there; see if you can head them off." There was a time-table on his desk, and I reached for it. "There's a train leaving at eleven-thirty," he said.

I looked at the clock. It was ten minutes of eleven—plenty of time.

I reached Morgan's Point just at daylight. It was only a little way from the depot to the levee, so I walked down. A negro in a shanty was just getting up.

"Seen anything of three men in a houseboat going down river?" I asked him.

"Dun't know, sah," he droned. "Ah jis' got up. But thar was three fellers, white folks, stopped yestiddy and bought some coal oil and some cahds. Dey cut loose 'bout dahk."

"Thanks," I said, flinging him a half dollar.

AGAIN I consulted the time-table. Hard luck! No train for at least two hours, and then only a local freight. But I ate breakfast, waited, caught the freight,

and arrived at Muddy Point, Mississippi, about mid-afternoon. I went directly to the office of Sheriff Henry Cox.

"I reckon," he said after I had told him my story, "if they're comin' down river, we may as well go meet 'em. I got the county's power-boat here." He rose to go.

"Wait a minute!" I objected. "I don't want to take any chances. I'm going to phone across river to Jaspertown."

"Good idea," he agreed, "but we've got to hurry. If they left Morgan's Point last night, they'd ought to be here 'most any time. Here, let me do it!"

He took the receiver from my hand and in a minute had warned the sheriff at Jaspertown, Arkansas.

I was standing in the door waiting for him when he hung up.

"Got a gun?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, you'd better strap this on." He handed me a cartridge belt and a Colt's forty-four, then picked up two rifles, and we started out.

We met Deputy Tom Townsend, who was returning from serving papers, and the Sheriff ordered him along.

Soon the boat was chugging up the river. The officers held her close to the Mississippi shore. From the moment they stepped into the boat, neither spoke a word. They were man-hunters out after their prey. They looked it in their every watchful and alert movement. About seven miles up-stream we passed the Kate Lee with a string of grinning darky roustabouts at the rail on the lower deck.

Then we saw a green shanty-boat; a man on the prow was shoving with a pole to keep her clear of a sand-bar. Smoke was floating lazily from the chimney.

"Overhaul her!" the Sheriff commanded, cold and hard, his eyes never leaving the green shanty. But he did shift his rifle to the crook of his arm. Then, a moment later: "I'll cover the guy outside." He turned to me. "If they's any shootin', kid, just drop to the floor. We'll ram her."

AS we neared the houseboat, I was positive that the man was Billings. He stood shading his eyes, watching our approach, but there was no indication that it made him nervous or apprehensive.

About twenty yards away, the Sheriff threw his rifle to his shoulder.

"Up!" he commanded. "You're under arrest. Tell your pardners to come out grabbin' stars or we'll ram ye!"

The man's hands went up, consternation written in every line of his face.

"Drop, boy!" the Sheriff shouted, and two rifles cracked. There was a yell of pain, and the Sheriff shouted, "Ram her!"

The Sheriff had seen the barrel of a gun nose through the door. But he never flinched. Nor did he lose his footing a moment later when——

Crash! The steel-shod nose of the power-boat hit the houseboat amidships, and in another instant Billings was dumped off into the water.

One of the men came out, both hands in the air. The other came out, just one hand up. The other hung limp at his side and I could see a red spot on his shirt. The Sheriff had got him in the shoulder.

They were taken aboard and Billings

was fished out of the water. All were handcuffed and I was left to guard them while the officers fixed a line to the badly listed shanty-boat, which was towed to shore and tied.

It was then that Billings spoke—the first words that had been uttered by any of the trio since they had been taken prisoners.

"What yuh want us fer?"

"Train robbery," was the calm, laconic reply.

After the shanty-boat was tied, the officers searched it and found shotguns and ammunition, shells identical with those I had picked up on the railroad track. But no money!

They were about ready to give up when the Sheriff told his deputy to get an ax. He had found a short board in the floor with an unrusted nail in each end. He chopped the board out and there were the sacks of currency—thirty thousand dollars.

On the way back down-river, Billings was willing to talk about the robbery, but couldn't understand how they'd been caught. He admitted that he'd planned it; that from his store, for months, he had watched that train, had seen it slow down and come to a stop at exactly the same place, had observed the express messengers as they stood in the open doors. He had "jist got tired o' his woman and wanted tuh duck, anyway."

"Me 'n these fellers," indicating his partners, "had been playin' the ponies together. We'd been losing and they were hard up. One night I told 'em how easy it would be to hold up th' train. We talked about it a whole lot, an' finally they said they'd join me.

"I bought the shanty-boat and tied her up at my landin', then got a rowboat and we pulled over to the Arkansas shore. We tied the boat under the bridge until we pulled the job off, then afterwards we rowed back and swung down-river in the shanty-boat."

In the meantime, my managing editor had not been asleep. At Muddy Point, when we got back, we found a special agent of the express company and a Burnet County, Arkansas, deputy sheriff with warrants for the arrest of the three men.

I telegraphed my story. It was a scoop, of course, and that made me happy, but the supreme moment came when I got to the Station and gave "Wise Charley" the horse-laugh when he was compelled to release Maxwell—and don't think that I didn't!

I rubbed it in. I told him where I had got my lead—when he shooed me away. And to rub it in still further, the *News* printed, in minute detail, just how I, alone, had put it over Captain Flynn, the redoubtable "Wise Charley."

The trial of the three men followed over in Burnet County. They were convicted. Billings got fifteen years and the other two each got ten.

"Easy Money"

(*Continued from page 23*)

would be an investigation, but I would retain the confidence of the company, and Slim would never tell. Why should he? He had the $100,000 in cold cash!

After a change of clothing I went at once to the depot and entered the express office with an air of innocence. The clerks looked up quickly, then bent back to their work without their usual greeting. Through an open door I looked into the inner office and saw a man in conference with my chief. The men glanced up as I walked in, but said nothing. Instantly I detected a chill in my reception.

Finally the chief faced me slowly. "What's the matter, Clark?" he said in a dry, strained tone. "You're late. We had to send a substitute on your run."

"Sorry, but I met with an auto accident," I explained.

"Ah!"

The exclamation came from the man who had been in conference with my chief. He turned to me and I stared in dismay. He was a Pinkerton detective, long in the employ of the company. Methodically he drew a paper from his pocket. "I am sorry, Mr. Clark," he said pleasantly, "but I have a warrant here for your arrest."

My face must have paled, for my heart skipped a beat and my knees trembled. Under arrest—and so soon!

"What for?" I managed to ask weakly.

"You ought to know, Clark." The chief spoke crisply as he shoved a newspaper at me and pointed out the great, black headlines. With staring eyes and an incredulous air I read the grim details of how a package containing $100,000 in currency, consigned to the Old Colony Bank, St. Louis, had been stolen en route and a bundle of newspaper clippings substituted therefor.

"I know nothing about this," I said hoarsely.

"I am very sorry, Clark." The chief's voice trembled. "I hoped for better things from you."

My eyes fell under his honest gaze, and a wave of vain regret and shame swept my soul.

"Come on, Clark." The Pinkerton man had spoken, and I arose and followed him with shuffling steps.

I remained in jail but a short time, for friends with a loyalty that flailed my conscience like a whip's lash, came forward with bail. They stoutly voiced their faith in my innocence, and their fidelity encouraged me to go to Helen.

SHE must have seen me coming, for, as was her wont, she came down the lane which ran from her father's farmhouse to the road to meet me. But she did not run with eager, springing steps and welcoming arms. Her steps lagged wearily, and as she neared me my heart sank.

"Helen! Sweetheart!" I cried, leaping forward to embrace her; but she drew back with a gesture of repulse.

"Don't—don't touch me, Bill," she said chokingly, scorn flaming in her great, dark eyes.

"Helen, listen to me," I pleaded. "Surely you don't believe the papers. You don't think that I——"

"Oh, God, why did you do it?" she interposed tremulously. "Why have you ruined my one remaining chance for happiness? Why have you—you—killed my love, Bill! God help me!" She covered her face with her hands and wept bitterly.

"Helen, this terrible stuff about me isn't true," I lied stoutly. "You'll find they can't prove a thing. I'll get my job back and then we'll be married. Helen, think of the joy that will be ours when—when the little one is here."

"You know you are lying to me, Bill. You have been dissatisfied with your salary for a long time. I told you to be patient—that the increase would come after awhile. But now—now you have sold your soul—and I will never marry you!"

"Listen, Helen," I exclaimed in alarm. "Won't you believe in me? Won't you suspend judgment until after the trial? Come, sweetheart, I love you more than ever. Won't you let me prove my love? Won't you let me marry you—even today?"

For a fleeting instant something like the old love-light shone in her eyes as she swept aside the tears. Then scorn blazed anew.

"God forbid that any common criminal should father my child! I will go away alone, and alone suffer the disgrace you have brought me. My child shall never know the shame of your sin."

She paused, breathing hurriedly, while my soul quailed under her stern gaze. "Now, go from me and may I never see your face again. Go!—and may God forgive you. I cannot!"

She turned away with a choking sob, while I stood staring in dumb despair. Oh, what a miserable fool I was! I knew that Helen was proud. I ought to have known how she would take the startling news. She had seen through my mask of deceit. She knew I was guilty, and the knowledge had killed her love. I confess with shame that I was always a moral coward, and then and there I acted the part. Had I been wise I would have confessed to Helen; I would have begged her forgiveness and saved us both the black despair and tragedy that followed.

"Don't leave me, Helen," I begged. "Stand by me and God knows I'll stand by you."

"AND bring me more trouble?" she retorted bitterly. "No, I know you too well! Why didn't you stand by me? Why didn't you remain honest? Now it is too late. My father's honored name shall never be linked to that of a criminal. Father does not know my condition. He shall never know. The disgrace would kill him. Go, Bill—go!" she finished. Then, "don't touch me," she cried as I attempted to take her hands. "I—I *hate* you!"

Her voice broke and she turned from me again, her head bent and her whole body convulsed with the emotion of her agony. And I could only stand dumbly and suffer her to go. I leaned against the lane fence staring after her like one bereft of speech or motion, while black despair swept my soul. I could not call her back. I could only stand and watch her pass out of my life forever.

I do not know how I ever got back to town. The next few hours were largely a

blank darkness in which my soul suffered all the pangs of hell. I realized all the bitterness that was mine. I had renounced honor, the esteem of my fellow men, the trust of my employers and the faith of the woman I loved—all for the possession of sordid gold which I did not now possess! I had stolen that another might prosper on the forbidden fruit of my folly.

But bitter as my sorrow was, the next day brought the final crushing blow. Hoping against hope, I went out to the Martin home to plead again with Helen. Her father met me at the door and in tears brokenly informed me that Helen had suddenly left home, leaving a little note saying she would not return. He could not understand—but *I* knew.

During the days of torture preceding the trial I looked for Slim. He had completely vanished, leaving no clue—and I cursed him with all the vehemence of my torn soul.

At last I stood before judge and jury and brazenly told my story. I had able counsel who proved that I was innocent of the theft. He pointed out how I had received the package of money and placed it in the safe. How the change was made to newspaper clippings could not be ascertained. Although I was freed of the charge, it is needless to state that I did not regain my old position, or the confidence of the public, and I realized that henceforth I was a marked man.

Broken-hearted and hopeless, I drifted West and sought in other fields to begin life anew. Vain effort. My spirit was broken. I could not hold a job. I fancied that every other man I met was a detective. I believed that no one had any faith in me.

And then one day from a friend I indirectly learned that Helen had gone on down the scarlet way and now wore the robes of shame and sin. I saw that, unable to make both ends meet in the bitter battle for bread, she had yielded to the easy way. The shock of this news took what little manhood I had left. I drank to excess. I gambled recklessly—aye, I fell in with a gang of yeggs and stole to feed the hectic clamor of my useless life.

Followed two years of this nightmare of life, then one day while perusing a Sacramento paper, my eyes fell on the name of Slim Ashley! With eyes of burning hate I read the article, which stated that Mr. Slim Ashley had added to his other enterprises by forming an irrigation company to develop lands in the San Joaquin Valley.

With a curse I threw down the paper, rose up in a blind rage and stormed about my room. The *dirty cur!* He was prospering on the money I had stolen! He was reaping a golden reward for his treachery!

I saw red. I swore vengeance. I would kill Slim Ashley. Slim Ashley *would pay!*

Revenge! Thoughts of revenge eat the souls of men. Nothing will stand now between Bill Clark and his revenge upon the friend who played him false. October TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES prints the second and concluding part of this stirring story that has a thrill in every line, and that finishes with a smashing climax that leaves the reader stunned. Don't miss it. October issue is on the news-stands September 15th.

A Very Mysterious Girl

(Continued from page 46)

fakers, beggars, panhandlers, peddlers without license—and just bums.

Old Maggie was arrested, and she made the fight of her life. Every string that was possible to be pulled was played for all it was worth; and the underground "influence" used, reached to the chair of the Governor himself. But there are some things that even politicians cannot accomplish. The grand jury indicted her, she was brought to immediate trial, and eight days after the case opened the jury brought in a verdict of guilty and she was sentenced to life imprisonment.

And still no one had thought of bread-crumbs, and at the trial (at which I was a witness for the defense) bread-crumbs were not mentioned. Why? Because I didn't have the courage to mention them. My friends and my wife had laughed at me for it. I was really serious. I thought there was a reason why those bread-crumbs were there on the table by the dead man, and that that reason would quite possibly explain the mystery of why the murder was committed. I say, I *thought* that. As to whether the reason they were there, when finally revealed, did explain the murder, will be made known a little later.

I WENT to see Maggie before she was taken to the State penitentiary to begin serving her sentence, from which, as we all supposed, she was never to return—that is, all of us except Maggie.

"I'll get out in a few months," she told me. "You watch me—I'll get out."

"I don't know how you're going to do it," I replied.

"I'm innocent, I tell you—that's why I'll get out!" she retorted. "I don't know any more about who killed Farrell than you do!"

"That all may be," I said. "But how are you going to prove it?"

She sat looking at the little barred window pensively. Maggie's saloon was right then in the hands of receivers and financially she was on the rocks. The money she had spent in connection with the trial, and one thing and another, had taken about everything she had saved over a period of perhaps thirty years of hard work and worry. She was facing a dark prospect in her old age, and I felt pity for her, for the reason that I believed more than ever that she was innocent. More than that, she had done me some favors, and I hated to see a woman, over sixty-five years of age, in the hopeless position that she was in, having lost all her friends and with no one to turn to, to help her.

"Maggie," I said at last, "do you remember the bread-crumbs on the table by Farrell when you found him? Do you

remember my calling your attention to them?"

"Bread-crumbs?" She looked at me inquiringly.

"Bread-crumbs," I repeated. "A little pile of bread-crumbs was there by an empty dish when you took me to the room. I've been trying to figure out ever since what they were for."

She shook her head. "I never saw 'em, Mr. Berns. At least, I don't remember 'em. They may have been there, though." She forced a smile. "What's the idea?"

"Nothing," I replied. "I was just wondering what they might have been there for—dry bread-crumbs."

This got no rise out of Maggie. She could see no connection between dry bread-crumbs and the fact that she was soon to start for prison where she would be held for life back of grey, forbidding walls. I had no reason for bringing up the subject either, except the fact that the thought had been on my mind from the first.

"IF there's anything I can do for you, Maggie," I said as I rose and took her hand to say good-by, "count on me. I'm going to keep my eyes open. Maybe something will turn up to give us a clue as to who that mysterious girl was and how Farrell came to be in her room. It's sure strange, but I'm not going to give up believing that we'll get to the bottom of it some day. Listen—do you think the girl killed him?"

Maggie shook her head. "I don't think so, Mr. Berns. She wasn't that kind."

"That, of course, is just your idea of it," I suggested. "You say you never saw this girl before. That's what you said."

"Right, Mr. Berns—that's what I said."

"You mean that, don't you, Maggie?" I looked hard at her.

"May God strike me dead if I'm lyin' to you!"

Maggie's eyes blazed, and she seemed sincere enough. But still—lately I had begun to doubt, and as I left the jail that day, I asked myself whether, perhaps, I had been too prone to be prejudiced in Maggie's favor because she had done favors for me. That is a human weakness, if one might call it that.

As time went on, this latter thought strengthened. When a few weeks had passed I had concluded that it was just one of those cases where sympathy had played me false. After all, in figuring it out in cool judgment, it was simple enough. Farrell was Maggie's avowed enemy. She had lured him to her place on some pretext, and in a maniacal frenzy of rage at the things he had said about her, and about the place she ran (he had called that a particular name), she had crept up back of him, and before he knew what was happening, had murdered him in cold blood.

And yet, sometimes I doubted this when the thought of that peculiar case entered my mind—which was quite often during the first two or three months that followed. But as time went on, the memory of it faded. It became a thing of the past.

SEVERAL months later I was transferred to the day shift. One sunshiny morning, almost a year after the mysterious murder of Farrell, I was turning the corner of Boone and Oak Streets when I saw a man dash out of Anthony Revillo's commission

How to Keep Hair Wavy

By Edna Wallace Hopper

My hair is ever wavy, fluffy and abundant. Yet I never have a Marcel wave.

After every shampoo I apply what I call my Wave and Sheen. Then I comb my hair backward to make it wavy, and the wave remains. Those who want curly hair use curlers, and the curl will stay. Those who want a wave give it a finger wave. Those who have a Marcel apply Wave and Sheen to keep it. Those who want smooth hair use Wave and Sheen to maintain that smoothness.

Whatever style of hair you like, my Wave and Sheen will enable it and keep it. And it gives the hair a beautiful glow. No girl or woman who once employs my Wave and Sheen will ever go without it.

All toilet counters are supplying Edna Wallace Hopper's Wave and Sheen. The price is 75 cents. A guarantee comes with each bottle. I have never offered women anything more popular than this. I urge you to learn, at my risk, how much it means to your hair. Go order it today.

house, which had just opened its doors for business. He fired a shot backward as he ran, and a man who dashed out after him, fired three shots at him in quick succession. Neither was hit, apparently, and an instant later I had taken up the chase that was to end in so melodramatic a manner that it even now hardly seems to be real, when I think about it—and the bread-crumbs.

"Stop!" I yelled at the top of my voice —"stop!"

I called again and drawing my gun, fired into the air, but the fugitive kept right on without slackening speed.

I knew those bottoms as well as he did, so we played hide-and-seek through the alleys, back yards, lumber yards, and old buildings, and in and out among traffic—but I want to say here that I carried my hundred and eighty-odd pounds with surprising speed. I was young then and a match for most anyone I met—and I guess he felt convinced of that before we got through!

We hadn't gone far when I fired a second time into the air. I couldn't take aim, and what's more, I didn't want to kill him, for some reason. Was it instinct? Whatever it was, the man ahead of me finally realized he must get to some place of safety, or be caught, and he headed for his only stronghold—the old Carver House at the corner of Jefferson and Persimmon Streets, once one of the finest hotels in the city, but now the hang-out of crooks and thieves of every description.

As soon as I realized he was making for this haven of refuge, knowing the ground so well, I took a short cut through an alley, aiming to beat him to the door, but he got there just ahead of me and darted up the steps, three at a time. I fired two more shots—this time, at him. One bullet shattered his left arm. Up and up he went, until at the top floor he whirled on me and fired three times, but missed. I fired again and his gun clattered to the floor.

Quick as a flash he bounded down the long hallway, with me in hot pursuit. The hall was littered with rubbish, broken furniture, old iron beds and other kinds of junk. The chase was soon to end now, and that was sure.

The airway dividing the Carver House and the building next to it, was about eight feet across, with windows on both sides where the hallway ended. For the moment I thought I had him trapped, but he jerked the window up and with one backward glance at me, mounted the sill and leaped the chasm with the ease of a trained athlete. He landed in a room across the way as slick as if he had only performed the trick for my benefit, whereas, if he had missed, it would have meant death.

I knew that I must not hesitate. Was I equal to that jump? Sixty feet below lay death—amid broken glass, crockery, old rubbish—the accumulation of more than half a century. The thought flashed through my mind that if I went down the stairs and came up on the other side, he would be gone.

Making quick decision, I ran toward the window and put all my strength into a powerful leap. It carried me considerably farther than I had reckoned. I landed with a crash, clean through the window, taking the sash and all with me. In those days we wore tall helmets and this helped to save my "bean."

I had him cornered now, and he was without a gun, but he was still a dangerous crook as he faced me with half-closed eyes. But to tell the truth, in that instant I hardly saw him, for my eyes were fixed on something else that almost took my breath away. There on the table in front of me was a little pile of *bread-crumbs* and an empty bowl, and near them, cringing in a corner, was a girl, who, even in the brief instant my eyes were upon her, I saw had a half-starved look. Seeing my attention taken for what must have been no more than a split second, the crook made a dash for the window.

I took quick aim and pulled the trigger only to find my gun was empty. He had mounted the sill and, turning, did a nervy thing—under the circumstances. He grinned at me sneeringly and said "You poor nut—it's empty!"

Before he hardly had the words out of his mouth, I threw it at him. He dodged, but not low enough, and it struck him full in the face; he lost his balance, tottered giddily for an instant, then with a wild yell, pitched down sixty feet below. I turned.

"Quick, officer—this way!" said the girl and darted out the door, I following her.

DOWN dark, foul-smelling stairs we raced to the dungeon-like ground floor, where we began frantically digging in the rubbish until we cleared enough trash away from the doorway leading into the court to allow me to get through, and there I found my late adversary breathing his last.

"Sorry, old-timer," I said as I tried to get him into a more comfortable position where he could end his sufferings, for he was far gone and I knew he could not live over a couple of minutes.

The girl pushed forward and bent over him.

"Quick, Pug! Tell 'im who killed Jim Farrell!"

I knelt down beside him and raised his head.

"What's your name, brother?" I asked.

"Pug."

"Pug what? What's your last name?"

He shook his head, but made no reply.

"Did you kill Farrell?" I asked, leaning near his ear, but he did not open his eyes, nor make a move.

"I guess he's gone," I commented to the girl, who was looking at him anxious and chafing his hand.

"What's happened?" came a voice, and I looked up to see Jack Stewart, one of my brother cops, looking down at us. He had cut in on the chase, as I afterward learned, about a block from the Carver House, and had just caught up with us, all out of breath. He knelt down by us, and we both looked at poor Pug.

"Did you hit him, Joe?"

"Yes—and knocked him down from the window." I nodded up above. "Better call the ambulance, Jack. Maybe he'll last until we get him to the hospital."

It was, however, a useless suggestion. Pug seemed to have heard what was said, for he raised his hand weakly and made us understand he wanted to say something.

We leaned nearer him, and he whispered feebly: "I killed Jim Farrell—found him

with Nell and I cut his throat, damn him! Where is she?"

"I'm here," said the girl. "What is it, Pug?"

"Nothin'. I just . . . good-by. . . ."

The last word was a faint whisper, barely audible, and with it Pug's spirit fluttered out.

LATER, back in the room to which I had led the girl, I asked her about the thing that was on my mind, and that had been on my mind so much in the past.

"What are these bread-crumbs for—can you tell me?"

"Yes—I eat them," she replied.

"Eat them?"

"Yes." She produced an old razor. "I shave the crumbs off with this and I eat them in milk. I live on bread-crumbs and milk—that's all I ever eat."

"I see," I mused—"that explains it."

She slumped into a chair and looked around the bare room dejectedly.

"Now that he's gone, I may as well tell you."

"Never mind," I said. "You can tell it when you get to the Station House. Come along."

I took her there, and later that day she was taken to Headquarters, where she made a full confession and signed her statement, which was that Farrell had seen her some time previous to the day she came to Maggie's Place—which was the day of the murder—and had taken a fancy to her. This was conceivable, as, in spite of her rather sickly appearance, she was attractive-looking. But, as Maggie had said, she looked to have led a fast life.

Her story was that Farrell followed her to Maggie's Place, and when Pug found him in her room, he didn't stop to ask questions but went after him to beat him up. This may, or may not have been true; I am giving here what her signed confession stated. Anyhow (so her story ran) Farrell proved more than Pug had anticipated, and finding he could not draw his gun, and that he was getting the worst of it, he grabbed the razor Nell had been shaving bread-crumbs with and cut Farrell's throat. He then placed Farrell in the chair, leaned his upper body over on the table, and placed the bloody razor by him, to give those who found him the thought that he had committed suicide.

As for Nell, her alibi was, in her story, that when she saw how serious the fight was getting, she grabbed a can of milk and some sugar and fled.

WHEN the wheels of justice were put in motion, old Maggie was freed, and so was Nell. To be truthful, bread-crumbs didn't actually solve the case, but at the same time I think the girl, Nell Saunders, knew the game was up when she saw me give that one look of astonishment when I caught sight of them there on the table. She knew that a little pile of them were left by Farrell when she fled the room in Maggie's Place, and I think that was why she was so frantic in her efforts to have Pug confess to me before he died, that he had committed the murder—to free her of the charge, which, otherwise, would most certainly have been made against her.

It was just as well that Pug died, for he would have been sent to the gallows anyway. He had killed Revillo just before I took up the chase as he was being pursued by Revillo's assistant. He had held up the commission man at the point of a gun, and when he had resisted, had shot him and robbed him, the money—over six hundred dollars—being found in his pockets.

What Happened to "Bubbles"?

(*Continued from page* 42)

dressed very simply—danced well and was interesting. I was attracted to her because she seemed so different from the ordinary gold-digger. Never would accept presents. Always slipped home alone after we were together, so I never knew where she lived. I came to New York two or three times to visit her and used to write her in care of General Delivery——"

"You gave her your right name and told her about your business connections," I interrupted, speaking in the same quiet, even tone.

"When I knew her better. She seemed interested and—impressed. Said she was sorry I wasn't a poor man of her own class. I didn't tell her I was married—my home is in Kansas, and I thought I was playing safe, though I didn't believe for a minute she was—questionable."

"When did she start in asking you for money?" I asked.

"I was back West for about three months—and we corresponded. She wrote that she was coming out to Kansas to see me. I told her she mustn't and admitted I was a married man. A few weeks later I received a letter saying she needed $10,000 for a doctor's bill. That floored me. I paid it. Then a demand for another $10,000 for the nurse. She said the nurse had heard her talking about me in her delirium, and so on and so on. Always something else, and demands got bigger and bigger. The letters were mailed from different cities—and she directed that the checks be made payable to different names."

ONCE started, the young man omitted nothing of the harmless flirtation which developed into such expensive fun. The girl had played her cards very skilfully and with a subtlety which would have been a credit to a psychologist. She had penetrated beneath the mask of this self-assured business genius and found the boasting little boy. The man who prided himself on "knowing women and their wiles" had succumbed to the first little gold-digger who pretended to love him "for himself alone."

When he had finished, his lips were dry and his voice hoarse. I rose to my feet at once, glancing at my watch.

"Come back to-morrow," I said casually. "I don't anticipate much trouble with that young lady. Just forget her!"

"But you don't know her—don't know where she lives—and I'm not even sure that her real name is Catherine Moran," Jackson stammered, while an eager look flashed from his deep-sunken eyes.

I laughed off his apprehensiveness, treating the matter as a very ordinary affair. The man had just about reached the end of his endurance, and I felt that I held his life in the hollow of my hand. It would not be easy to find Catherine, or Bubbles, as he called her, but while there is hope the impulse to suicide is held in abeyance. Gordon had done very wrong, but there was no reason why a brilliant young chap should be sacrificed to a vicious little "digger."

"That's all right," I assured him. "The young lady's methods are those of a veteran, and she's probably well known. Just let me do the worrying for you—that's my job. Good-by."

Though I spoke lightly and succeeded in conveying confidence to my reluctant client, I knew that I had been handed a pretty tough nut to crack.

Bubbles might be very well known along Broadway, her victims might be numerous—but there is one thing that men do not tell even their best friends, and that is the story of how they have been trimmed. Pride prevents it. Usually they will stand by and see the other fellow trimmed in turn, rather than confess that they have been suckers.

I examined the canceled checks, which, at my request, Jackson had left behind. They varied in amounts from $5,000 to $25,000, and had been cashed in New York, Pittsburgh, and Providence.

IN order to follow up the several persons who had cashed these checks for Bubbles, I would have had to put my entire staff to work, for each one had been endorsed to a different person. Besides that, people are careless about cashing checks for strangers. Likely as not, we would discover that the persons who had obliged the cunning little blackmailer were mere acquaintances of hers, and knew nothing of her past life or of her present whereabouts.

Speed was compulsory. It was absolutely necessary to discover who Bubbles was and where she lived, and to put the "screws on her" before the girl could carry out her threat to put the case into the hands of a lawyer. That would mean publicity and consequent disgrace for Gordon—and in that event I feared the worst for him.

Gordon had admitted to me that he had written her several compromising letters. Those mushy letters! A mighty lot of trouble can be caused by a nickel's worth of ink.

Around midnight I visited the private club where my client had first met Bubbles. My only disguise was a liquor-laden breath and an effusiveness which I assure you is quite contrary to my natural manner.

The head waiter, whose gimlet eyes and hard, straight mouth contrasted grimly and grotesquely with his suave and urbane bow, came forward at once to meet me.

"Alone, sir?" he queried, softly and suggestively. It isn't the prima donna nor the première danseuse nor the manager who is the most important personage in a night club, as any owner will confess—it's the subservient head waiter.

"Yes, but I'm hoping to meet Miss Moran here," I answered, somewhat fatuously. "I've an introduction from a friend of hers." I flashed one of Gordon's personal cards, inscribed with the open-sesame: "Introducing Jasper McNally."

Heavy lids, bordered with scanty, whitish lashes, hid the man's eyes as he scrutinized the card. Then, like a flash, they were focused on me. With a slightly sardonic curling of his lips, he smiled:

"Miss Moran is no longer seen around here," he said quietly. "She was not one of our entertainers, you know—just a friend of Mr. Gordon's, whom he brought here." I knew the man lied, but did not dispute his statement. "Don't you want to meet one of our hostesses?"

"All right," I agreed, after an undecided pause. "Since I'm here——"

WHILE he went after the girl, I watched the dance floor, on which a bevy of hard-faced, brazen-eyed ballet-dancers were prancing around like a lot of skinned calves. They were working terribly hard to achieve vicious voluptuousness, but so far as I could see, only one other guest was watching the performance—and he was a rheumy-eyed old gent who was seated alone.

In a few minutes the waiter led up a wise-eyed little brunette who didn't look a day over seventeen, but who had the assurance of a woman of thirty.

"How about something to eat?" I suggested, as she seated herself opposite me.

"I'm dieting, Big Boy," she said, and grinned, "but I'm no camel. Jazz music makes me thirsty and a glass of champagne is the best thing in the world for this kind of dryness."

"All right, but I'm surprised that a little girl like you would drink anything stronger than lemonade." I used the paternal tone adopted by "daddies" who seek out "Broadway babies."

"Oh, I'm much older than I look," she retorted, with a giggle. "I'd hate to be ducked head first into all the wet I've consumed since I was twenty!"

The "champagne" was ordered, and with dispatch there was brought to our table an ice-filled bucket, in the middle of which a gold-foiled, long-necked bottle proudly reposed. Our waiter served it with all the ceremony due to Veuve Cliquot or Epernay, but like the much-advertised entertainers and beauties of the club it was merely an imitation of the real thing—California wine charged with seltzer and raw alcohol.

It was an "off" night and before two o'clock the place was practically deserted. Though I had tried to question my companion about Bubbles, I received only evasive answers. The hours were frittered away with cheap wit and wise-cracks on the part of my companion, who, I admit, worked pathetically hard to be entertaining.

All in all, I had made little headway in my investigation by the time we were joined by another of the "hostesses." She was introduced to me as Ida Malone, and I knew at once that luck was with me at last. That was the name of Bubbles' chum. She had been drinking not wisely but recklessly, her eyes glittered, and her words were muddled.

"Say, listen," she suggested. "Let's run over to the Rabbit Hutch."

"That's a rotten hole, Ida," my first companion objected, shrugging.

"Oh, you mind your own business,

Maisie," Ida snapped angrily. "Want to come, Boy? This place is deader than an empty bottle. You must see 'em dance the Black Bottom at the Hutch!"

"Sure," I said enthusiastically. "It's far too early to go home! Better come, too, Maisie." I invited the first girl, though she had been so cagey in answering my careful questions about "Bubbles" that I had no desire to have her accompany me.

"No, I've got to get home," she said, rising from the table. "I got to get up in the morning and get my husband's breakfast at 7:30. Good night. Thanks for a nice evening. Come again. We'll take better care of you than Bubbles Moran would! Come on, Ida; get your wrap!"

As they crossed the floor, I noted that the girl called Maisie was talking earnestly to Ida, who shrugged her shoulders and attempted a few slightly uncertain dance steps. I had almost decided that Bubbles' former friend had been persuaded to stand me up, when she reappeared at the performers' doorway, clad in an imitation sealskin coat.

THOUGH the night clubs are fertile soil for blackmailers, I was very little inclined to believe that the owner of the place where I had spent the evening was responsible for Gordon's plight. Since the new license law went into effect, the New York City License Bureau, cooperating with the police and fire departments, scrutinizes very carefully all applicants for licenses to run these places. However, there had been a very strong impression born in my mind that the head waiter and Maisie knew of Bubbles' game and were protecting her.

The Rabbit Hutch is a typical hide-away dive far over on the West Side, which very simply sidestepped the license bureau's investigation—by not applying for a license. A motley crowd was spending the dregs of a hectic night—mostly performers from other cabarets and a sprinkling of men and women in evening clothes.

It was only after Ida had sipped her second absinthe, and was approaching the irresponsible stage, that I tentatively brought up the name of Bubbles Moran.

"Gosh, what do you want to meet her for?" she mumbled viciously. "She's nothing but a rotter. Say, if I wanted to squeal, I could say plenty. Look at this cat's skin I'm wearing—" she plucked disdainfully at her mangy wrap—"and her wearing Russian sables! Say!" she went on, maudlin almost to tears, "I can understand a poor, uneducated kid goin' wrong, but that damn Bubbles is a college graduate, if you please. Good, rotten family. Brother's same way! Met Bubbles through him . . . a bum . . . lives on Riverside Drive——"

"Why, I believe I know him," I broke in. "Number 75, isn't it?"

"Naw," she snapped. "You donno 'im. He don' live there a-tall. He lives farer up-town." She mentioned a number which I mentally noted. "I've been in the dump myself. But what're we jawin' about that Bubbles for? She's a short skate, and if ever I started to blab, she'd find herself in mighty dirty water, I'm tellin' you. Buy me another!"

Ida was one of those elderly girls who predominate among the "hostesses" of the more blaring night clubs. Even in the dim light of the Rabbit Hutch, her face looked hard and dissipated under bleached, scorched hair. She was furiously jealous of the more successful Bubbles, who had captured a juicy steak and decamped with it to feast alone.

THOUGH I remained in the dive for another hour, I learned nothing more. However, I counted the night well spent. As Ida declared that she never left until 6 A. M., I asked her to excuse me because I had to go to business, and it was nearing dawn.

"Dawn! Huh, I never see dawn," she chortled with grotesque impishness. "Never see daylight for zat matter. Pie-eyed when I leave here—somebody gets me home somehow. Wake when it's dark, ready for another round."

At ten o'clock, as arranged, I met Gordon at my office. He was in a highly nervous state, but the confident manner in which I reported on his case had an evident effect.

"Just go ahead with your work," I advised him, "and leave everything to me. Answer the last letter demanding $10,000 and tell the woman that you haven't that much ready money, but are taking steps to realize on some stock. You know how to word it, and be sure that it is in the tenor of your former letters. Just consider that this is a business deal and you are playing a shady customer who's trying to gyp your firm. Use your regular finesse. I may have to go out of town, but I'll keep in touch with you every day."

At one o'clock I reached the number given me by Ida the night before. In my arms I carried a package of books which resembled a camouflaged parcel of liquor.

The building was an elaborate apartment house with a switchboard clerk to announce visitors and a wise-looking colored elevator man. Disregarding the young fellow at the board, I stepped into the car. Glancing with a half wink at my package, I slipped a bill into the elevator man's hand and asked him to let me off at Moran's floor. Instantly, he flashed a smile that displayed a set of teeth reaching from ear to ear.

"It wouldn't supprise me if the gennlemen's not up yet," he chuckled. "Big doin's last night."

In answer to my repeated ring, two men came to the door. Though both were still half intoxicated, they appeared to be ready for trouble. I saw only the upper half of their bodies, tousled hair and elaborate silk pajamas, but there was an ugly look in their bloodshot eyes. I imagined that the man peering over the shoulder of the one who opened the door, had a gun in his hand.

"I'M looking for Bubbles Moran," I said, with a smirk. "Is she at home?"

"Never heard of her!" both men answered. The door would have been closed in my face had I not taken the precaution to put my toe in the opening.

"Last year a friend of mine—Ernest Gordon, who travels for the Hughes Corporation—told me to look her up and——"

The sound of the elevator ascending caused them to start back and beckon me in. Then I saw that the second man really held a gun in his hand.

"So many murders and robberies reported in the newspapers," he explained. "You can't be too careful."

Without apparently doing so, I was making a mental picture of the two men. Around the right nostril of the man who had opened the door there was a trace of glistening white powder. A "snow-bird!" If I could only hold them in conversation until the dope took a good hold, I was pretty certain to learn all they knew by cautious leading. Snow-birds flock together; if one took cocaine, the other was sure to do likewise—I have never known it to fail.

As guilelessly as the average would-be sport, who is a leading citizen at home and aspires to be a reckless rascal in the pursuit of the forbidden pleasures of New York, I explained how Gordon had raved over little Bubbles and suggested that I look her up when I came East.

"I didn't think of writing to her box in the General Delivery," I explained. "I thought I would run into her at the night club. Ida told me where you lived, so I had a hunch to look you up. I didn't want to talk about it over the phone."

"Oh, that's different. I guess he's all right, Dick," the man with the gun remarked, tossing his weapon on the table. "But we honestly don't know where Bubbles is. She went to Pittsburgh about three months ago. Ever go there?"

"Yes. That's the real paradise of the gold-digger," I said, and grinned sheepishly. The man addressed as Dick looked at me sharply. I continued: "It gets lonesome on the road, and I don't mind treating a girl to all the shows and night clubs she wants, but when it comes to gold-digging—well, that's what made Bubbles' name stick in my mind. Gordon told me she was different."

The men looked at each other—a glance of understanding.

"We don't know where Bubbles is living in Pittsburgh," one of them explained; "she travels around a lot, but you can reach her with a letter addressed to the Moore Hotel."

"Thanks, I'll do that next time I go to Pittsburgh," I told them. "Looks like you had quite a party here last night——" I referred to the empty glasses and bottles, cigarette butts and dry half-eaten sandwiches, which littered the room.

"Yes." Dick lazily lighted a cigarette with twitching fingers and looked at me through long eyelashes. His companion, more nervous, was absently picking up and laying down various objects. "Like to join us in a game of cards to-night?"

"Don't like cards," I answered. "My vices are beautiful women and wine."

AFTER conversationally reeling around for a plausible length of time, I left. "Old hick from the sticks just ready for the plucking," I read the cynical thought which flashed between them. And it's quite probable that they don't know to this day that I had the last laugh.

That afternoon I arranged my affairs so that I could leave town. There were many details requiring my personal attention, and for that reason I planned to keep in daily telephone contact with the office.

"Hold four men in the operatives' room ready to leave New York at a moment's notice," I instructed my secretary, "and find out from Mr. Gordon where I can telephone him each evening between the hours of six and nine."

That evening I left for the steel city. I knew the Moore Hotel well—it is one of the most eminently respectable in Pittsburgh—and I was certain that I could count on the room clerk's co-operation.

Gordon's description of the girl who was blackmailing him had been as definite as could be expected—the trouble was, that it would have fitted thousands of girls. Brown bobbed hair, hazel eyes, average height, slim ankles, and delicate, well-kept hands—the picture called forth is typical of thousands of jazz-mad maidens.

However, when I questioned the room clerk at the Moore Hotel, I found things less complicated than I had feared.

"A Miss Moran receives mail here," he told me readily enough. "I've never seen her and don't believe she ever stopped at this hotel. She has a friend in the men's coat-room and I turn the letters over to her. Maybe she can tell you about the lady. The girl's name is Miss Curtis—Virginia Curtis."

Virginia Curtis was a shrewd-looking young woman in the neighborhood of the staid thirties. I sized her up in a moment. In order to get any information she possessed, it would be necessary to give her some variation of the truth.

She readily admitted that she received mail for Miss Moran and that she received telephone messages for and from her—but, as she very trenchantly inquired:

"Just what business is it of yours?"

"That would take too long to explain here," I confided. "If you will take dinner with me to-night, I'll explain it to you. I want to meet Bubbles Moran, and I'll make it worth your while to help me."

"Well—" she considered this proposition for a moment before answering it. "I'm always ready to turn an extra honest dollar, but I don't want to waste my time—or your time. I don't know where Miss Moran is. What I suspect is my affair. She pays me to receive her mail and forward it, and to receive her telephone messages. That's all. I never call her back and so I don't know where she stops."

"Let's leave it this way," I suggested. "Come to dinner with me to-night and we'll talk it over. I'll give you ten dollars for your time and when you've heard my story you can tell me what you care to. Fair enough?"

"All right," she answered indifferently. "You'll have to make it nine o'clock, though. That's when my relief comes on."

IN the hours which intervened, I made extensive inquiries about my prospective dinner guest. I found that she was a perfectly respectable woman who had married a World War veteran. She was the bread-winner of her family, which consisted of her mother-in-law, a young daughter, and her husband, who was in a tuberculosis sanitarium. In the neighborhood of her home she had a splendid reputation. When I learned these things, I knew what line I could take.

I took her to a quiet restaurant where there was no music, but very good food. It was she who insisted on getting at once to the business on hand.

"I have looked you up, Virginia," I began and immediately I realized that she took exception to the words. Her eyebrows met together in a scowl and her

mouth tightened. "Don't get mad. I was careful. I got excellent reports. You won't blame me when I tell you that Miss Moran has been blackmailing a man whom she has driven to the verge of suicide. You didn't know that was her trade, did you?"

"Good lord, no," she spluttered. "I thought she was carrying on an affair with a man. Let me tell you how I met her. I'm sure you must be mistaken. She's gay and likes parties and all that, but I can't believe she would do anything like that."

"Tell me how you met her," I suggested.

"I was a manicurist in a beauty parlor in the hotel where she used to live," Virginia said in a shaken voice. "Her husband"—that gave me a start, for I didn't suspect she was married—"wasn't as well educated as she was, and she used to complain that he was a slow poke. But she loved her two kiddies. I became check-room girl at the Moore—the tips are much bigger—and she came to see me and said they were leaving for another city. That's why she asked me to receive her letters. She paid me well—and, well, I never poke my nose into other folks' business. 'Course, if I'd known that she was doing anything like that—but I can't believe it yet."

"Well, I'm afraid it's true enough," I said grimly. "I'm the lawyer of the man she's blackmailing. The doctor says he is dying. This woman has promised time after time to return the letters he wrote to her, and didn't do it. The poor man is in a terrible state. He's perfectly willing to pay her price, but he can't trust her, and he's sure she will go on blackmailing his family after he is dead."

The check-room girl's face was an eloquent witness to her sincerity. She shivered. The food on her plate remained untasted.

"Where do you send her letters?" I asked.

"To an address in Providence, Rhode Island," she answered slowly, "but I don't believe she lives there. You see she sends me money every now and then—bills—and the envelopes are postmarked from all over; the last one I received was from some place in Canada."

ASKING her to wait for me, I went to the telephone booth and put in a long-distance call for my office in New York. As it would take some time before the connection would be completed, I asked the captain to have a waiter stand by and notify me.

"I will need you to come along with me to search for this woman," I said as soon as I was again seated at the table. "It will be all right at the Moore—your job will be kept open for you—and I will pay you twenty-five dollars a day and all expenses. The manager will vouch for me. If we succeed in getting the woman, it will mean two hundred dollars more for you. You must decide right away. We must leave for Providence to-night. Now tell me the name under which the woman lived at the hotel, and where her husband was employed."

"Her name was Mrs. Harold McKey," she said nervously. "Her husband worked as an accountant in some steel company—I don't know which one. She said something about his being transferred, but she

didn't mention the place where they were going."

At that point a waiter approached to inform me that the New York office was calling.

"Think it over, and remember that a dying man's peace of mind is at stake. He may recover, if you help us to rescue him from this blackmailing fiend." I almost whispered the words.

The booth where I had put through the call was a pay-station and there was little likelihood of my messages being overheard. However, to be quite protected, I merely instructed the night manager to send out four operatives by the next train. On arrival at Pittsburgh, they would find a letter of instructions awaiting them at the Moore Hotel.

When I returned to our table, I saw by the determined look on the young woman's face that she had decided to play on our side of the fence.

"I must run home first and explain to Mother," she said, "and pack my suitcase. Then, as soon as possible, I'll meet you at the Moore."

Virginia was accepting the proposition—with her fingers crossed. Hotel employees become hard-boiled; they are accustomed to discussing tragedies and scandals of which the public never hears. But the intimation that she had been assisting a blackmailer, the proposal that she embark on such an investigation, the possibility of reaping a good round sum of money—all set before her by an absolute stranger—had a dazzling and confusing effect.

A SHORT interview with the manager of the hotel obtained leave of absence for Virginia. While I awaited her arrival, I wrote a letter for the operatives who were coming from New York. In it I instructed them to make a thorough canvass of all the steel companies in Pittsburgh in an effort to discover where Harold McKey, an accountant, had been employed and his present location. Reports were to be mailed me daily to a hotel in Providence.

Luck was with us when we arrived at the Rhode Island city. Mrs. Enoch Barnes, to whom the check-room girl had forwarded the letters, ran a boarding-house there, and my companion succeeded in obtaining a room in her establishment. I took up my headquarters at the hotel.

We were obliged to spend three days there before my men succeeded in tracing the man whom we had every reason to believe was the husband of the blackmailer. We did not waste our time, however. As a "roper" Virginia was as clever as a professional.

"Mrs. Barnes, my landlady," she told me eagerly one evening as we dined together, "was nurse to Mrs. McKey and her brother when they were children. As a girl Mrs. McKey went with a wild crowd, and married on a dare. Her parents are dead, but she has visited an old aunt here quite often—expects to inherit money, I suppose, as the old lady is quite wealthy. She is supposed to travel about, as a singer and dramatic reader."

So that was her alibi? Pretty good.

The report I received from Pittsburgh took us to Meadville, New York, which is quite near the Canadian border. In spite of the big money she was making, and the promise of a large bonus, Virginia was getting homesick. Not knowing what Mrs. McKey looked like, however, I had to take the girl along.

It was a sloppy, dreary morning when we got off the train at the smug little town. Dirty snow blanketed the ground in ugly patches. Dead-looking trees sprawled against a leaden sky. In striking contrast were the immaculate-looking homes and the scrupulously tidy stores, which evidenced the character of the inhabitants of Meadville: a town where pointing fingers would be more deadly than a pointed pistol.

I ordered the taxi chauffeur to drive us to a number which I calculated would be half a dozen doors from the address given me by the Pittsburgh investigators.

THE house I was looking for, turned out to be a medium-sized, comfortable, half-timbered house, with glistening windows revealing crisp, beruffled draperies. There was a good-sized front yard with earth plots in the center of each strip of lawn which bordered the carefully swept path leading from the gate to the door. At the moment we passed, a young woman in a neat gingham dress was receiving a basket from the grocery boy, her hair confined in a cap.

"That's Mrs. McKey," Virginia whispered, though it was impossible for the woman to hear her speak. "Now, do you think it *imaginable* that she would do such a thing?"

I shrugged. "Well, I showed you the canceled checks."

"That's so, and seein's believin', but all I can say is that she must be crazy." The girl sighed. "Look," she exclaimed suddenly. "There's Buster and Eileen, her two kiddies."

The children she referred to were playing on the sidewalk. Rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, smartly dressed youngsters, their joyous voices rang with glee as they raced after a shaggy Irish terrier.

When the cab stopped at the address I had given our driver, I got off and went through the motions of inquiring for a family who I knew didn't live there.

"I must have the wrong address," I declared when I returned. "But it's too darned wet and disagreeable to scout around this morning. Drive me to some hotel on the outskirts of the town," I directed the chauffeur, with a wink. "I don't want to put up at one of those traveling salesmen's gilded dumps we passed."

He grinned. "I know just the place," he said, in a smirking way. "The Gander, a road-house, where they can put you up comfortably."

Before we had proceeded very far, I had my plans all ready.

"You better get off here," I said to Virginia. "Go back and have a little talk with Mrs. McKey before her husband returns for luncheon. I don't want to make any trouble for her family unless it is necessary. Tell her that Mr. Gordon's lawyer is here in town and if she doesn't come along bringing the letters, I'm going to make a call on her, chaperoned by the chief of police."

We stopped the cab in front of a general merchandise store and Virginia got out.

"It's all right; don't wait. I'll come on

later," she ordered the chauffeur and slammed the door.

THE Gander proved to be one of those sequestered little inns which have become so popular since prohibition. Its approach was a long drive, over which bleak trees stretched their withered, dripping arms.

I had telegraphed the night before to Gordon, advising him to remain in my office until I called him up.

After registering, I immediately put in a long-distance call for my office. The lobby was quite deserted, and the switchboard girl was yawning. In order that my conversation might not serve as an antidote to her boredom, I insisted on receiving my number on the telephone which faced her desk.

"Everything is all right now," I told my excited client, whose faint hello suggested the mental strain he had suffered. "What do you want me to do?"

"Bring her on to New York if possible," he called back. "That's the only way I'll be sure that you have the right girl—and all the letters."

"That's just what I would have suggested," I called back. "Expect us tomorrow morning. But hang around the office until I give you another ring."

That afternoon Mrs. McKey, accompanied by Virginia, arrived at the Gander.

I had taken a suite and received her in the little, musty parlor——a stiff, sly little room, with a round, drink-stained table in the center; a half dozen stiff, cane-bottomed chairs; smoke-begrimed curtains; and garish chromo advertisements adorning the soiled, drab walls.

"What do you want?" Without waiting for any greeting, Mrs. McKey shot the question at me. "I don't remember ever meeting you."

"No, madame, you've never met me before, but you're never going to forget me as long as you live," I assured her, staring straight into her large, cold, greyish-blue eyes. She was a good-looking woman, with regular features and a small, well-cut mouth. Without make-up, as she was that day, there was nothing of the vamp about her. Clever, calculating, emotionless, she waited for the next move.

"You're leaving with me this evening for New York and you're bringing with you all the letters you received from Ernest Gordon," I said slowly. "I'm a detective; and if I don't find you at the station when the next train leaves in two hours, I'm coming for you with the chief of police, and place you under arrest."

WHEN I mentioned that I was a detective, I felt, rather than saw, Virginia give a start. My Jekyll-and-Hyde vis-à-vis, however, never turned an eyelash.

"How do I know you are what you say?" she demanded.

"Oh, I'll prove that easily enough—I'll have Mr. Gordon vouch for me. Just sit down until I put in a call to New York," I said, picking up the receiver. "Miss Curtis," I continued, turning to Virginia, "please go down and see that the operator doesn't listen in."

After she had left the room, I addressed my sphinx-like visitor:

"You're far too clever a woman not to know that the game is up, Mrs. McKey. Why a mother with two such beautiful children as yours should run the risk of making them outcasts, I can't imagine I wonder, too, what your aunt in Providence would think of it—don't you see that all the cards are against you? Better be sensible and come clean. I won't hurry you—but I'll expect you at the station."

Silent, without a trace of emotion, she listened as if she heard nothing. So we sat until the New York connection went through.

I instructed the telephone operator to put the call on both the parlor and bedroom extensions. I took the bedroom phone in my hand and explained to Gordon that Mrs. McKey, whom he had known as Bubbles Moran, wished to speak to him.

"I don't recognize your voice at all," was the first thing she said. "Tell me, what did you call me when you say you knew me?"

"Dimple Dumpling!" the silly pet-name came over the miles of telephone wire with a sardonic wheeze. It sounded so asinine! Yet it was a moment of terrific import to two families.

Much more there was—recollections of the disastrous flirtation, of the gay, mad hours which were exacting such a terrible penalty.

Finally, she hung up the receiver. When I reentered the parlor, she was tucking back a few tendrils of brown hair, looking critically in a small vanity miror. Though her expression was non-committal, her face had gone deadly pale.

"I'll expect you on the afternoon train," I repeated. "Bring all the letters. If you omit one, I'm going to have you arrested."

I accompanied her down-stairs.

"GOOD-BY, Mr. Petersen," she said, graciously extending her hand and smiling enigmatically. "I'm quite thrilled at the invitation to sing at Carnegie Hall, hut I'll have to take the matter up with my husband. Since it will be my swan-song, perhaps he won't object."

"Oh, I'm sure he won't," I said, and smiled back. "Remember! The train leaves in a couple of hours, so you'll have to hurry. Don't forget anything."

She was waiting calmly when I arrived a minute before the train for New York was due. She was dressed trimly in a tailored suit, with near-white batiste collar and cuffs. She wore snappy, high-heeled pumps, and displayed a good expanse of sheer silk hose. Nothing seemed to ruffle her.

I had managed to secure a drawing-room for her and Miss Curtis, so that she might have an opportunity to talk if the spirit moved her. It did. Shortly after the porter had served our dinner and withdrawn she started in to explain.

"It all started out as a lark, I thought," she said slowly, puffing nervously at a cigarette. "I love my kiddies, but my husband is such a slow dub he drives me crazy. Lord knows why I ever married him. Anyway, the man my brother lives with has some sort of a hold on him. He was the one who thought up the little scheme of my meeting men at that night club. He and my brother paid the head waiter so much. It seemed all right at first—then, drinking and so on, I got into a bad jam. They forced me to demand money from men and thought up all sorts of elaborate schemes for confusing the trail. You'll probably not believe me, but out of all the money I got this way, I received only a few thousands for myself. Now, what's going to happen, I don't know. They'll still hound me—and what can I do?"

"Well, I wouldn't worry over that," I soothed her. "The Federal men paid a quiet and unexpected visit to the Riverside Drive apartment, and your brother and his friend will be housed at Atlanta probably for some time."

"Thank God for that!" she exclaimed. "Now I don't have to worry any more about them!"

IT is an eleven-hour journey from Meadville to New York. When the train rolled into Grand Central in the early dawn, Mrs. McKey looked very wan and weary. She promised to call at my office at ten o'clock.

Mr. Hughes, Gordon, and myself were waiting impatiently for her when she arrived.

A transformation: the eyelashes were heavy with mascara, the small mouth was brilliantly rouged, and the brown hair burnished and curled. The eyes, which just a few hours before were dim and dry-looking, were sparkling.

She laughed at my surprise. "Oh, Napoleon there wouldn't know me without the war-paint on," she said, and giggled. "And he thought I never used cosmetics! Oh, Boy! Well, bring on the guillotine. What do you want me to do? Here are the 'poipers,' all just like a movie" She extended a package tied with a grotesque red band of satin.

While Gordon was examining and counting the letters, I rang for my stenographer.

"Now, I just want you to make a complete statement about your part in this case," I explained to her. "It is just as necessary as the letters."

For a while she demurred, but finally consented. It was short, concise, to the point.

Within a few minutes, it was brought back to the inner office—typed and ready for the signature of Bubbles Moran.

"I'd like to have a carbon copy of that," Mr. Gordon remarked.

"Sorry, but I never have carbon copies," I said curtly. "You might have your safe robbed, or leave it lying around, or your heirs might discover it years from now—it is impossible to foretell into whose hands it might fall. The finder, in his turn, might blackmail Mrs. McKey's children. This copy will never come to light again unless—" I glanced for the fraction of a second at Mrs. McKey, who had lost quite a bit of her jaunty manner—"unless it is necessary. Now, I think that will be all. I have another engagement, and I'm afraid either I'll have to leave you or you'll have to leave me."

They departed.

"My secretary will give you the promised check, Miss Curtis, and I want to thank you very much. If ever you want to be a detective—" I began, as I shook hands with my involuntary and temporary assistant.

But she shook her head.

"The check-room is enough excitement for mine," she said, with a laugh.

For a Chinaman's Gold

(*Continued from page* 59)

readjusting the place for my sole occupancy. I was still engaged in this at nine o'clock in the evening when the Sheriff came to see me, holding in his hand a reply wire from San Francisco. There was a trembling of his hand as he unfolded the telegram and laid it on my desk. Then he slumped into a chair.

"I guess I'm the fellow, Doc, that should have been shot."

I picked up the telegram:

Hold Frisco Irish Ignore Duplicate Paste Necklace Old Trick for Putting Authorities Off Guard Owner Increases Reward Now Fifty Thousand for Recovery of Pearls Five Thousand for Apprehending Irish Congratulations.

"Well, of all things," I declared, and I, too, flopped into a chair.

"Just to think," added the Sheriff, "that I saw fifty-five thousand dollars walk out of my office. Even told it to get out!"

DOCTOR BAILEY, who had been telling me the above story, paused, looked at his watch, and glanced out of the car window to observe that he was in Central Park, almost home.

"Well, what do you know about that?" I asked. "Oh, but of course Frisco Irish walked out with the fake pearls. Where were the real ones?"

"Why, Sing Ling had them. He, too, was an expert in regurgitation. He figured to play the same game Sam Wong had tried, before he was shot, and his stomach opened by Doctor Beecher. That's why Sing Ling and Frisco left town together."

"But why did the crook come to Sing Ling? Why share a quarter million dollars?"

"Well, he knew the police were on his trail."

"He could hide the pearls."

"He probably wanted to get out of the country with them. Sing could help him do that too. It probably looked like a better business proposition to pay Sing Ling his fee, doubtless a good price, for his services. It looked like a safe plan. On meeting revenue officers, or sheriffs, Sing could hide them for ten minutes, temporarily, by that trick of swallowing them, and then throwing them up, at will."

"So they left the Sheriff in the soup, eh?" I commented. "Well, Sing Ling was a shrewd old bird at that when he gave out that hint about Sam Wong, the laundryman, having probably stolen the pearls."

"Oh, yes, he knew what he was doing."

"And got away with it?"

"No, not quite," replied the Doctor. "That's the curious part of it. Right on top of what had happened at Stony Creek, Frisco Irish and Sing Ling themselves had a fight over the division of the spoils—out on the trail. We found them that very night. Apparently Sing Ling wouldn't—you know—cough up——"

"And they, too, shot each other to pieces?"

"Well, Sing Ling, perhaps feeling that possession was nine points of the law, evidently cut Frisco's throat—but Frisco plugged Sing before he died."

"And the pearls?"

"Oh, I—er—recovered them," said the Doctor, in his best professional tone. "So the Sheriff and I, between us, divided the reward. It was—er—my only experience in mining precious stones."

The Crime Without a Clue

(*Continued from page* 55)

have you that Mr. Calvert was strangled? I want to know. I have a reason for wanting to know."

He looked at me sharply. "You have?" His face suddenly grew hard. "What in the name of hell reason have you got?" (The Doctor used strong language on occasion.) He was on his feet, had stepped over and had yanked me to my feet before I knew what was happening. "Come on—what's on your mind, young man? Out with it!" He was glaring at me in so fierce a manner that I thought he had suddenly gone crazy.

It made me sore—sore clean through. I jerked myself away from him roughly and he backed up, obviously ashamed of himself, for the look I blazed at him brought him to his senses.

"Don't try any third-degree stuff on me, Doctor Purdy!" I said with suppressed anger. "If you think I had anything to do with Doctor Calvert's death, you go to the District Attorney and tell him about it. I came here for information, and if you don't want to give it, then that's all right—all you have to do is to say so."

I had reached for my hat and was going out the door when he caught up to me and called me back. I went back with him into his office and he acted like a different person.

"My boy," he said in his slow, kindly way, "now that I know what you're here for, and why, I'm only too glad to tell you. Mr. Calvert died from strangulation. There were purple marks on his throat, where the flesh was bruised, his lips were bluish, his face almost black, and both his tongue and eyeballs had protruded to a certain extent. These are the evidences of strangulation that every physician is familiar with. We found a somewhat congested condition of the throat and lungs and a considerable swelling of the tongue which usually accompanies it."

I left Doctor Purdy's office that day more than ever mystified. There had been a grain of doubt in my mind heretofore, a feeling that perhaps the old gentleman, past seventy-eight, had choked to death from natural causes, brought on by a paroxysm or attack of some kind, possibly unfamiliar to the doctors, and caused by weakness and old age. On the contrary, Doctor Purdy stated that Mr. Calvert had prospects of living perhaps another ten years, and that, save for the effects of the

stroke, from which he was getting better, he was constitutionally well.

THAT evening I went to see May. I told her I didn't care to go out anywhere and she said she felt the same way, so we stayed at home. I was glad of it, for I wanted to have a talk with her. We played double-handed pinochle and meanwhile Reggie called and took Mrs. Calvert to the theater. Soon after they had gone, the game palled. I lost interest. I had something else on my mind.

We were alone in the room and I said to May: "Your mother is intending to marry Carew quite soon now, isn't she?"

"To-morrow. They're making it a secret marriage," she replied in a low voice. "I know I shouldn't have told you, Arthur, but I can't help it. Mother told me in the strictest confidence and made me promise not to tell a soul—but I would have told you anyway."

"Why should they want to keep it a secret? There was a rumor some time ago that they were going to marry. The papers got hold of it somehow."

"I don't know. You know as much about it as I do. There is something queer about it all. I think that rumor came from Mother. I am sure a reporter questioned her about it and she admitted the truth, even though she had not told me."

"And then Reggie closed her mouth?"

"Yes. Have you noticed how Mother has failed in the last two months?"

I had noticed it and I admitted it to May. It had set me thinking some weeks before, and I had given it considerable thought.

"She is becoming more nervous every day. She goes about like a person in a dream."

"Listen, May," I said, "let's get down to facts. All of the three servants who worked for your father are still employed here with you. Two of them were not even in the house when the murder took place, and the third one—Ellen—wouldn't harm a fly. We know they are all innocent. It was proven that no one entered the apartment, and we know that no one could have done so. Then where does the responsibility lie?

"We were at the Newberrys' at the time. Stop and think. Certainly your mother loved your father. She could not do an act like that. There is but one person who could have done it—and recall that he has worked his plans so smoothly and cleverly that the stage is all set for him to marry your mother to-morrow—and who is there to stop him?"

"Who?" repeated May, as she looked at me with half closed eyes—enigmatically, I thought.

THERE was an inference there—and a touch of scorn, I felt. Did the woman I loved despise me, that I could do nothing? I half believed it. A few minutes later that evening I became convinced of it.

But—would she stand for me questioning her mother? I could get nothing out of Carew. That was natural enough. But it seemed to me that if he was guilty—and I was certain of it in my own mind—the police and detectives ought to have gotten something on him by this time. My private enquiry along this line had succeeded only in bringing out this pointed statement from a grizzled lieutenant of detectives: "We can't arrest this man without evidence. You give us some evidence and we'll arrest him."

I felt, however, in the case of Mrs. Calvert, that very little investigation had been made. On account of her prominence in society, and more probably because of her very evident grief, detectives had refrained from questioning her except in a very moderate way, immediately after the crime. I think, too, that Reggie's close connection with the Calvert family had helped greatly to protect him from certain methods that might have been applied.

But my thoughts kept returning to Mrs. Calvert. Her grief at the time of the crime was evident to all. And it was genuine. No one suspected her. All had sympathy for her. Yet the more I thought about it, the more it seemed evident to me that she must know something about it.

How could Carew have killed her husband and she not know it—when she was there with him at the time? Could he have excused himself and slipped out of the room for ten minutes? Certainly that was quite possible. Ten minutes would have been ample time—five minutes would have been ample time in which to strangle the old man in his bed—weak, and probably with his eyes closed, peacefully taking his afternoon nap (as was his custom), when the murderer had stealthily entered, and swiftly done his work. But—was this probable?

I did not think so. I felt—I had that feeling, and it had grown upon me as I had observed Mrs. Calvert closely during the last few weeks—that she knew what had happened. And she was keeping it to herself, and worrying herself sick. She herself felt guilty. And small wonder—if this was true.

May left unspoken the invitation to do anything I could to stop her mother in her mad decision to marry Carew. But I knew her mind. I knew she wanted me to stop it. A dozen little things that evening had told me, and I resolved to accept her invitation to stay that night. I had a plan in mind.

I RETIRED at eleven o'clock. Between my room and May's was Mrs. Calvert's room and I knew she did not lock her door. I did not undress, but slipped off my shoes, put out the light and lay down on the bed. It was two hours later—some time after one o'clock in the morning—when Mrs. Calvert came in.

I tiptoed to my door and listened. She walked along the hallway to get something out of her room and Reggie, who had followed her in, came with her. I could hear him talking to her in a low voice, but could not make out what he was saying. She snapped out the light and they both walked back to the sitting room.

For two long hours I waited at that door, afraid to go out into the hallway, yet anxious every passing minute—that seemed each like an hour—to know what was going on between them in that room. I could not risk their finding out I was in the apartment, so I waited—in an agony of suspense.

Finally he bid her good night, and left. As she went to the door with him, I struck a match and held it for an instant near my watch. It was twenty minutes after three! A nice time to be getting to bed on one's

wedding eve, I thought. What had gone on in that secret confab in the morning hours? I resolved to find out. I would save the mother of the girl I was going to marry, from sacrificing herself on the altar of a false love—if I was the only one who could do it. At least, I would make a try.

I waited, heard her snap off the lights in the sitting room, and then came the sound of her footsteps along the hall. I heard her enter her room and close the door. Then I stepped out. I thought I would not give her time to start to undress, but would go in upon her immediately.

But at her door, for some reason, I hesitated. The idea of walking in upon her in her bedroom at three-thirty in the morning, and she not even knowing that I was in the house, made me hold back a bit. It might give her too much of a shock. Then I decided suddenly and pushed open the door.

She was seated in a chair by her bed, her arms lopping down by her side, a dejected look on her face. She looked up and eyed me, mildly at first, then a look of amazement and disbelief crept into her eyes.

"What are you here for, Mr. Halleck?" The words came from her throat in a dry, expressionless tone.

I CLOSED the door and walked slowly toward her, then stepped around and leaning my arm on the foot-rail of her bed, regarded her in silence.

"What are you here for?" she repeated. "Tell me!" Her face was haggard. There were dark lines around her eyes and her dress and hair were rumpled. The once beautiful Mary Calvert looked like a wreck and there was no denying it.

"I am going to question you about the death of your husband, Mrs. Calvert," I said. "It is time someone did it and I have made up my mind that I am going to do it."

She looked up at me again and a slight smile played about her pretty lips. It was almost a sneer. Then in an even, quiet voice, as if speaking only to herself, and entirely ignoring me, she said: "A Broadway bum; that's what he was, a Broadway bum. The low-down cad! The white-livered *liar!*" As she spoke, she reached to a drawer in the stand near her, pulled out a revolver and raising it quickly to her forehead, fired. Her body pitched forward, face downward, then she slowly rolled over on her back.

I saw a vision of a newspaper head-line, naming me as a murderer, in the next few seconds, as I leaned over her. She was still breathing and I started out of the room to call May, but she was there before I was hardly straightened up. I grabbed the phone from off the stand where she had kept the revolver and called Police Headquarters and Doctor Purdy. This took a few minutes and meanwhile I could hear Mrs. Calvert's heavy breathing and May's sobs. We placed a pillow under her head, but did not attempt to move her.

The bullet had entered the side of her head, instead of her forehead as I had thought, and had cut off a part of her ear. But it did not appear to have gone deeply. When Doctor Purdy arrived and had made an examination, however, he stated that she could not live. We laid her on her bed

and a few minutes later, under a stimulant, she opened her eyes and whispered to Doctor Purdy that she wanted to make a statement.

That statement was that the afternoon of Doctor Calvert's death, Carew had induced her, under what virtually amounted to a hypnotic influence over her, in her mad love for him and her desire for marriage with him, to enter her aged husband's room and strangle him while he lay asleep. She said that immediately after, she was appalled by her act and that Carew had worked upon her fears to such an extent that she was completely in his power.

FROM that hour on he had forced large sums of money from her. She had believed until the last that he would marry her, but the very night she had shot herself, the end of her illusion had come. She saw him as he was—a devil incarnate. There was nothing left to her, not even her own self-respect—after that night. So, as she said, she knew there was no use trying to live any longer. The confession had come between gasps of pain, and with her last breath she cursed him.

The police did not get Carew. By some uncanny instinct he had seemed to sense the end had come, and how he got out of New York immediately after he left the Calvert apartment that early morning must remain a mystery. To this day his whereabouts is unknown, but it was ascertained that he got away with a substantial amount of the Calvert fortune, without having to go to the inconvenience of having to marry "the woman in the case." He was one of the cleverest criminals that ever fooled the New York police.

Carew had an "air-tight" murder plot—he committed the crime without leaving a clue—and everyone who knew the details of the case agreed on that. But it failed. The truth came out in the end.

But wherever Carew is, be sure that he has paid—or will yet pay.

Even the cleverest criminal, though he may fool the police and the most astute detectives, cannot fool his own soul—or change his fate.

The Murder at Pinehurst

(*Continued from page* 31)

and dispatched him to the city for Watson, our finger-print man, and to get our luggage. Little did I know how badly I should need Crane before he returned.

I next rang for Carson and instructed him to assemble the household in the drawing-room for questioning. While he did this I had a few more questions I wished to ask John Baintree. The old man appeared rested and eager to answer any questions which might assist in clearing up the mystery which clouded *Pinehurst*.

"You stated that you thought no one knew of the existence of the secret jewel safe, Mr. Baintree," I began. "Did you have it installed yourself, or was it in the house when you purchased it?"

"An art agent of mine purchased the whole thing abroad and it was brought to *Pinehurst* and installed under his supervision. Only two people knew about the safe—my agent and the man who helped install it, and both of them are now dead."

"Did your butler know about the existence of the safe?"

"No. Carson has been in my employ for many years, and I have explicit confidence in him, yet I kept from him all knowledge of the safe or the presence of the jewels at *Pinehurst*. No one but me knew that they were here."

I smiled. Evidently one other person knew it. "How long have you had the jewels in the safe?" I pursued.

"Almost twenty-five years."

"Twenty-five years!" I repeated, more to myself than to him. "Do you suspect anyone?"

"No."

"Did you ever remove the jewels from the safe and look at them when you thought that you were alone?"

"Very rarely."

"How long since you saw the jewels?"

"About a month ago—just before I summoned my relatives to *Pinehurst*."

"Before you were struck down did you get even a fleeting glimpse of the person who did it?"

"Yes, as I have already told you, for a brief second before the blow descended I caught a glimpse of a figure in dim outline, with upraised hand."

"It would be very difficult for anyone to gain entrance to your estate, would it not, Mr. Baintree?"

"Yes—it would be very difficult in the daytime, practically impossible at night. The stone wall which surrounds the estate is very high and has a spiked railing around it which makes it almost impossible to scale. The gates are always kept locked, and at sundown the dogs are liberated. They are very vicious and would scent a stranger long before he neared the house. Before dark Carson always goes over the house and sees that every door and window is locked, then he turns on the burglar alarm."

"WOULD it be possible——" I began, when a quick rap sounded on the door, and it was opened by Carson, terror registering in his face in spite of his attempt to appear calm.

"Pardon me, Mr. Hosmer," he said, his voice shaking until he could scarcely speak, "could I have a word with you outside, sir?"

Seeing that something unusual had occurred, I hastily excused myself and stepped into the hall, closing the door behind me. For an instant Carson looked at me helplessly, then he started to speak. A moment later he had fainted, and crumpled to the floor at my feet. I laid the man flat on his back and quickly summoned the doctor, who was waiting in the parlor. Together we removed him to the parlor and placed him on a divan. Soon he showed signs of returning consciousness.

"He'll be all right in a minute now," the doctor said. "Just fainted. What happened?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," I replied.

"But something happened to upset him."

Silently we waited. Finally Carson opened his eyes, and as the haze seemed to clear away he sat up stiffly on the edge of the divan for a moment, then rose to his feet, trembling like a leaf.

"Oh, God!" he stammered. "Oh, God!"

"What is it, Carson?" I asked, now genuinely alarmed at the man's actions. "What has happened?"

"Something terrible has—has—happened. I—I——"

"For heaven's sake what has happened?" I demanded sternly. "Where? Show us!" Taking the man by the arm, I half dragged him into the hall. The young doctor stepped forward and took hold of the other arm. "Now, which way, Carson? Quick—snap out of it!" I urged.

"The south wing—Mr. George's room. He—he——" The old butler slumped down again, too overcome to walk further.

"Look after him!" I called to the doctor as I dashed down the hall in the direction of the south wing. The house faced east, a long hallway with suites of rooms on either side of it, running north and south, and connecting the two wings. At the end of the long hallway I stopped, looking quickly up and down the short east and west hall. At the extreme east end of the hall I saw a door standing a little ajar. I hurried toward it, and not knowing what lay behind, I drew my gun, and giving the door a kick, I landed in the room at a single bound.

I had been a detective for many years before the Baintree affair, and a number of years have passed since then, yet I have never experienced anything like the shock and horror that swept over me at the sight which met my eyes.

Upon the bed, hacked and cut almost into ribbons, lay the body of a handsome young man. A feeling of faintness and nausea swept over me at the gruesome sight before me. I backed up against the door jamb and covered my eyes, trying to get a hold on myself. I had half expected to find the jewel thief crouched behind the door, or rising up from behind a piece of furniture, to shoot me down. The horrible sight which met my eyes, unnerved me. I heard someone hurrying down the hall, then close to my shoulder came a sharp, "My God!" and turning, I saw the young doctor slowly backing into the hallway, his eyes dilated in horror.

Without another look into the room, I closed the door.

"Please stand here and see that no one goes in," I said quickly, "while I call the police."

I TELEPHONED the police, then returned to the parlor to question Carson, who sat on the edge of the divan, his hands on his knees, rocking back and forth, on the verge of a nervous collapse.

"Tell me what happened," I said, sitting down by him. "How did you come to discover the body?"

"You told me to have the relatives and servants assembled in the drawing-room for questioning. I had been to Mrs. Hess' room, also to Mr. Frank's room, and both said that they would go down at once. I then went to call Mr. Giller, and the door was a little ajar, and after knocking and receiving no reply, I pushed it open and

glanced in to make sure he was not in the room, and—and——"

I did not question him further.

"If you feel sufficiently recovered, go and tell those assembled that I will be down directly. Do not tell them of the tragedy."

I then returned to the south wing, where the young doctor still stood outside the door. "I should like to make a preliminary inspection of the room before the police arrive," I said. "Will you accompany me?"

"Yes," he replied, "I am all right now. It was so sudden and so terribly gruesome it knocked me off my feet for a moment."

Together we entered the death chamber. I tried to look everywhere but at that mutilated figure upon the bed, but gradually I overcame my feeling of revulsion and forced myself to examine the body, being careful not to touch it until the coroner should arrive.

The man appeared young, not more than twenty-five or thirty years of age, although I later learned that he was thirty-seven; with jet black, wavy hair, the characteristic, stern jaw of the Baintrees, and a strong, athletic body. It would have taken a person of great strength to overpower a man of his build. The murderer must have struck the death blow while the victim slept. The body, clad in white silk pajamas, lay crosswise on the bed, in a cramped position, as though whoever committed the crime had shaken his victim like a rat, then released his hold, throwing the body back upon the bed.

THE wall near the bed was spattered with blood. One blow from the instrument of death—probably a hand-axe—had crushed the skull over the right eye; two similar wounds appeared in the chest, another in the abdomen. I searched the room carefully, but was unable to find the knife or axe—if an axe it was—which had been used to hack the man to death.

"If you will be good enough to remain on watch outside the door for a few minutes, Doctor," I said, after examining the room, "I should like to apprise the family of what has occurred, and see that they stay in the drawing-room for the time being. It will relieve the situation to be rid of them up here while we are conducting the preliminary investigation."

The doctor readily agreed to assist me by guarding the room until I should return.

I had not seen any of John Baintree's relatives, yet when I stepped into the drawing-room where they were assembled, and glanced about, I had no difficulty in identifying them. Mrs. Hess, a tall, stately woman well past fifty, with gray hair and the characteristic gray eyes and stern features which seemed to mark the Baintrees, sat on a divan sniffing a bottle of smelling salts. Beside her sat her daughter, Ethel, who also was tall, and had black hair, blue-gray eyes and red, red lips; a cross between a vamp and a flapper. In a chair to Ethel's right sat Frank Baintree. He was of medium height and very dark, almost foreign-looking in appearance, and lacking all of the outstanding Baintree family characteristics.

The servants sat apart, across the room from the family. They also were easily identified. Sitting stiffly upon a straight chair was Carson, still pale and shaken from his terrible experience. By his side sat a beautiful girl with blue eyes and copper-colored hair. This, evidently, was Mona Carson, the harpist. Next to her sat Kitty Haney, the housekeeper, a pronounced Irish type, with the most peculiar eyes I had ever seen. They were almost green in color and looked like a cat's eyes. Her lips were tightly closed; her gaze was fixed, and directed straight ahead. On a divan near the window sat Mrs. Cronk and her son, Robert.

All eyes were turned in my direction.

It seems apparent that one of the persons facing Hosmer committed the gruesome murder discovered a few minutes before by old Carson. Was it one of the servants? Was it one of Baintree's relatives seated there—Mrs. Hess? Ethel? Frank Baintree? Read in October TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES what happened when Hosmer began to dig into the mystery. Detectives—also—are subject to surprises. October issue on the news-stands September 15th.

The Man With Two Lives

(*Continued from page* 64)

wily cunning of a madman. And I was fighting at a disadvantage because of the surprise blow I had sustained at the very outset, a blow that had knocked my senses sort of galley-west.

Veering suddenly to the left, I aimed another vicious smash at the man's jaw. It was not a telling blow, however, and the maniac came back at me, in a flash, with another crack on the head.

I saw a fresh burst of stars—thousands of them. Pain stabbed wickedly in my head and the world about me seemed to grow uncertain.

Fighting against the black tide about to swallow me, I made one desperate lunge forward with my whole body, at the same time drawing my gun. I butted the maniac under the chin with my bleeding head, and backed him against the thick hedge. Then, with almost unbelievable quickness, he struck the gun with that deadly club of his, knocking it from my hand. In almost the same instant, it seemed, there was a loud report. The gun had been discharged, but the bullet buried itself harmlessly in the soft earth.

I HARDLY know what happened next—I think I lost consciousness for an instant—but through a red haze I saw the gun in the maniac's hand and felt a hot and cold sensation of fear.

The bullet, however, missed me. In his other hand the madman clutched the big club menacingly, his breath coming in short spurts, like the snorting of an enraged bull. For one palpitating second, we stood glaring at each other.

It was a time when action was demanded first, reasoning afterward. Suddenly I dropped low, making a shoe-string tackle.

He rocked forward and another shot blasted its report through the air.

The bullet crashed into the ground dangerously near. By this time my maneuver had brought the man with a crash to the ground. I landed on him at the same time.

I felt his body stiffen and thought he was gathering together all his strength for one maddening effort to throw me off—but his hold on the gun suddenly relaxed. Then the club fell from his fingers and lay on the ground.

I had my man.

I located my hat, picked it up, and looked about me. I saw the housekeeper approaching, followed closely by the timid, frightened maid. Beside me stood the gardener, wide-eyed and tongue-tied. And then along the garden path came a strikingly lovely girl of seventeen or eighteen. She was dressed in a white riding-habit, and I knew that she must be the mysterious Nina Lee. She stood beside me a moment and looked down at the unconscious man. Would Nina Lee recognize him? She gave no sign. An instant later she turned without a word and walked toward the house.

My interest in Nina Lee Monroe had grown with every minute I had spent at her home. What was her connection with the disappearance of Thomas Monroe? Could it be possible that she was his daughter? The answer seemed irritatingly elusive, but I did not try to question her now. I knew that I could find her at this house whenever I needed her; and so I turned my attention back to my prisoner.

He lay motionless—suspiciously still, I thought. Had I killed him? I bent over him, caught by some trace of familiarity in his features. Did I know the man? I couldn't be certain, but I thought not, although, for a moment, I had entertained the hope that I had actually stumbled upon the long-sought Thomas Monroe. But I could see now that there was little similarity between his appearance and the descriptions and pictures of Monroe.

The frenzied eyes, hidden beneath closed lids, were sunken and hollow. The face was thin and drawn and of a sickly, grayish color. Was it from illness, I wondered, or was it the pallor of long confinement, in either hospital or prison? The man's hair seemed to indicate that he had been at liberty from either place for some weeks. Certainly it had not been acquainted recently, if ever, with the regulation close-cropped prison style.

It was altogether probable that the man had escaped from some asylum, I concluded.

THE housekeeper nodded toward the house and the gardener, now apparently alive to the situation, stepped forward to help me carry the unconscious man inside.

But I shook my head. "Kindly call an ambulance," I directed. "It will undoubtedly be best to get him to a hospital at once."

The housekeeper went briskly away to telephone, and I examined the man more closely. His heart was beating regularly enough, though somewhat weakly. His breathing, too, was light, but apparently unobstructed. There was, however, something decidedly peculiar about the man's

condition. I had seen knock-outs often enough to realize that here was no ordinary case. There was something of the comatose, something more like the lethargic unconsciousness of an anesthetic. I was distinctly at a loss either to describe it or to understand it.

I looked carefully through the man's pockets, but found nothing to help in identifying him. Besides an empty coin purse there were only a few headless matchsticks, and, in the loose pocket of his coat, a bit of soiled paper, wadded tightly into a flat block. This I transferred to my own pocket, intending to examine it thoroughly when I should have opportunity.

The man remained in the same state of coma when the ambulance clanged its way off the busy highway and into the white graveled drive. In a few moments he was resting on the comfortable cot in the ambulance, and I took the chair at his side. I meant to keep a close watch on the man until I had learned what I desired to know as to his identity and probable motives. Later I would go again to Oak Terrace and endeavor to have a few words with the young lady.

The unknown man on the ambulance cot was at present the center of my puzzlement. Who was he, and what had been his errand at the home of Nina Lee Monroe? It didn't seem to me that the housekeeper's surmise that he was there for the purpose of kidnaping her charge could be the right one. He had appeared openly, as if determined to accomplish something definite—some deed which did not necessarily require caution or stealth. A kidnaper would work under cover, careful to keep his identity unknown.

I felt that I was rather up against it. I had started out to learn whether or not the heart of the vanished Thomas Monroe had sheltered more than one love, and I had plumped up against a barricade, barbed with mysterious persons and questions I seemed unable to answer. Eventually, though, I would hurdle the barricade. I must not become impatient.

I left my man in the surgeon's care at the hospital and went down to Police Headquarters, where I found the Chief courteous and helpful. I looked over the rogue's gallery, but it did not contain the likeness of the man I had left at the hospital.

NEITHER did the Bureau of Missing Persons. In one or two cases there was some slight resemblance, but not enough, I thought, to warrant any investigation in that direction.

I then directed my efforts to the sanitariums located within a radius of fifty miles of the city. No luck there. No escapes were reported. The man would probably die and the mystery of his identity remain forever unsolved.

I returned to the hospital and found the emergency ward where I had left my man, empty. A nurse told me then that he had been removed to the operating room, and that the surgeon had left a message requesting me to come up.

I took the elevator and was soon outside the door of the operating room. In a few minutes the surgeon came out.

"He had no chance whatever—" he began.

"You mean he is dead?" I interrupted.

The surgeon proceeded calmly, as if I had not broken in: "A fracture of the skull had partially mended, with a blood-clot underneath, which pressed a tender tissue and would have resulted in death in a short time. There was one chance out of five that the clot could be successfully removed. I took the chance I think he will live. Did you find out where he belongs, or who he is?"

I shook my head, feeling that the cold eyes of the surgeon were rating me a flat failure as an investigator.

Suddenly, then, I remembered the shapeless wad of paper I had taken from the man's pocket. I spread it out carefully, but found that it had been water-soaked and the writing made illegible. With chemicals procured from the hospital dispensary, I prepared a liquid that would make the ink-stains stand out more clearly.

My best efforts made it possible to decipher only a few words. The first was "Uncle"; the second was entirely obliterated. Then I spelled out "Mother dead," followed a space of missing words, then "threatens"—"must have money this week," and indications of other missing words, but it was impossible to distinguish them. What had evidently been the signature was now only a blur.

But this was enough. I began to believe that I *did* know something about the man. I hurriedly dispatched a telegram to Mrs. Monroe. Then I went out to eat.

That night I sat at the bedside of the sick man, waiting. But he didn't babble. He didn't talk at all. Toward morning he roused and looked inquiringly about. The nurse at once administered a sedative and he fell asleep. In that short interval of consciousness, however, I had quickly noted that the frenzied look had gone from his eyes. The man was no longer insane.

TOWARD noon he awakened. Still drowsy, he looked unseeingly at the persons in the room, among them, his wife.

Then, at a word softly spoken, in a woman's voice, he snapped into sudden interest. That word was—"Thomas!"

"Edith," he said, smiling weakly as Mrs. Monroe touched the bandage about his head, "they mighty near got me, didn't they?"

Then, as if it had taken place only the night before instead of two months previous, he described the brutal attack on the lake shore road. He had been slugged, and then had known no more until the chilly waters of the lake restored him to consciousness—semi-consciousness, it must have been, since he was unable to give any account of his actions thereafter, up until that moment.

The man had probably succeeded somehow in dragging himself out of the water where his assailants had thrown him, no doubt believing him dead. I had heard of cases where a blood-clot, sustained through a severe blow, or some other kind of shock, had caused the victim to lose his memory. But this was the first time I had come upon a case first hand. No one could possibly estimate the man's suffering throughout those weeks while the blood-clot pressed upon his brain. It had been of intensity severe enough, however, to so change his appearance as to make him un-

recognizable to any save those who knew him intimately.

Then a dark-eyed, dark-haired girl who had been sitting silently at the end of the room came to the side of the man's bed.

"I am Nina Lee," she said quietly.

Monroe regarded the girl approvingly. "I am your uncle Thomas, child, and this is your aunt Edith," he said.

The girl looked from one to the other, nodding briefly.

Then the man resumed: "It was your mother's father's orders, Nina Lee, that no person bearing the hated name of Monroe should come near you. He made your mother use her maiden name, and he was determined to bring you up as his own daughter. That's why we have, until now, been strangers. Your father, my brother, died shortly after your birth. His life insurance was left in my care, to become yours in a few weeks now—on your eighteenth birthday. But when I received your letter, saying your mother had died and that you were threatened with grave danger unless a certain debt was paid immediately, I drew on your heritage in advance——"

"But I wrote no such letter," the girl broke in.

A glance told me that Monroe understood the situation.

"A well-laid scheme to get hold of that money," I commented.

He nodded. "They got it all right, I guess."

THE girl started up. "You mean you drew out that money to help me?"

"Yes, I was bringing it to you Ten thousand dollars——"

The thing seemed unbelievable, and yet it explained all that had happened. Monroe had had, as he believed, a mission to fulfill. And he had persisted, albeit through the darkness of semi-consciousness, until he had reached the goal. In his half-dazed condition following the attack he probably could not, had he been asked, have named the task upon which his mind had been set. And the money, of course, was gone—but his legs had functioned more or less automatically in carrying him to his destination. He was guided, I suppose, by some remnant of reasoning power. I feel certain that he walked every step of the way. How the suffering man managed to obtain food to hold body and soul together—and how he managed to tramp those weary miles—is beyond my comprehension.

BUT I had a bit further to go before I should have fulfilled my own commission in the case. I had been asked to find whether or not there had been another woman besides his wife in Thomas Monroe's heart. I couldn't drop the matter now. A week or so later, when the patient had been moved to his home in Cleveland, I went to see Monroe alone and I showed him the memorandum book and the picture, asking if he claimed ownership.

He shook his head. "Never saw either of them in my life," he declared.

"Well, then," I persisted, "can you recall exactly what kind of suit you wore the last day you spent in the Toledo office, before removing to Cleveland?"

He thought a moment. "Why, yes. It

was blue serge. I discarded the suit that night for a gray one. My wife packed the serge away and I haven't seen it since. What's the idea, anyway?"

"If you will ask Mrs. Monroe to bring me that suit, I think perhaps I can explain the matter satisfactorily," I said.

Just as I had expected, the coat and trousers were not mates, though both were of blue serge.

"When you picked up somebody else's coat in your office in Toledo that day, it's rather queer you didn't notice the mistake," I remarked. "Why, man, this coat is at least two sizes too small for you."

Monroe grinned. "Maybe it's not so queer after all, Mr. Fox," he answered dryly, "considering that the day was beastly hot, and I didn't put on the coat at all, but threw it on the seat and drove home in my shirt-sleeves."

And that, it seemed, was that.

As far as I know, the Ruth Eastland case is still down on the records as suicide.

I did not try to track down the men who had robbed Monroe—I left that to the police. But the chase was not a hard one. The note that I found directed suspicion to the household of Nina Lee, for it showed a close knowledge of her affairs. The actions of a new chauffeur caused him to be suspected: and a careful shadowing of him and his associates resulted in three arrests, followed by confessions. About $4,000 of the stolen money was recovered.

"Night-Life Polly"

(*Continued from page 27*)

tell the truth, I had somewhat exceeded my authority. But I was pleased with the way I had lined up the evidence. The lawyer's turn of mind is as strong in me as that of the detective, and I often wish I had studied for the bar.

A few minutes later, an assistant district attorney arrived at the house, together with the captain of the precinct and a detective sergeant from Headquarters. Sigerson was questioned all over again, though nothing new was brought out. He was then placed under technical arrest and removed to the Tombs.

Guilfoyle, Baker and I, before separating, conducted an exhaustive search for the dagger with which the killing had been done. We failed to find it.

THERE seemed to me little doubt that Gilbert Sigerson was the murderer. The newspapers had already hinted that there had been trouble between him and his wife, and that a divorce had been imminent. He was a morbid, violent old man, who, failing to win the love of his child-bride and suspecting that she had married him for mercenary motives, was just the type to end the situation by destroying her. Mary Powell's admission that they quarreled frequently, that she had overheard them wrangling even before Polly retired to bed on the last night, could not be ignored by judge or jury. But it would be difficult to gather enough evidence to convict. The fatal dagger was all-important. Where had it been obtained? How had it been disposed of?

Reflecting that the weapon was probably an antique, I had the inspiration to visit the studio in the West Sixties where Sigerson had once conducted his movie classes. The place was a top floor with skylight windows. During my earlier investigation into the morals of the students, I had observed a storeroom in which theatrical "props" of all sorts were kept. I did not know whether these had been carried away since the closing of the school, but it was worth the time to find out.

The janitor of the building, Abraham Friedman, informed me that Sigerson was still paying rent on the studio and that the furnishings had not been removed.

"Has Mr. Sigerson been here recently?" I asked.

"I haven't laid eyes on him for months. But he has keys, and can go and come when he chooses. I'd not be likely to see him," replied Friedman.

"I've got to look through the studio. Let me in with your pass-key," I demanded.

Strictly speaking, I should have had a search-warrant. But I flashed my badge on the janitor, and it was enough to impress him.

The discovery I made in the storeroom of the abandoned school was decidedly interesting. The props included a dozen knives, dirks, and stilettos of ancient patterns. They lay on the top of a wooden chest, and the condition of the accumulated dust showed that they had lately been shuffled over. While there was no three-cornered dagger among them, what was more reasonable to suppose than that such a one had lately been removed from the heap by Sigerson himself?

MY next move was to go to see Mrs. Caroline Benton, Polly's mother, who, since the wedding, had lived in a luxurious apartment on West End Avenue maintained for her by Sigerson. I arrived at eleven o'clock, just as the earliest extras describing the murder were being screamed by newsboys up and down all the streets of the neighborhood. I found the woman—naturally—in a hysterical state. She had been notified by telephone of her daughter's death, but had lacked the courage to go and look at the body. A doctor was attending her.

When it was made clear to her, however, that I was a detective from Headquarters, she rallied surprisingly and took my breath away by trying to wreck my whole conception of the case.

"You cops are putting the blame on Mr. Sigerson," she shouted. "It's a wicked lie to say he killed my Polly. He loved her."

"We aren't accusing anybody as yet," I replied soothingly. "We're looking for the facts. Can you help?"

"I tell you Mr. Sigerson is no murderer."

"It's fine to be loyal to your son-in-law, Mrs. Benton. But you can't deny that he and Polly quarreled a lot."

"Only because she was a baby who didn't understand about married life. That's no reason to say he'd kill her."

"Do you suspect any one else?"

"Why don't you go after those girls who were jealous because Mr. Sigerson married Polly?" she countered. "I'm not saying who they were. I don't want to be arrested myself. But I'll talk when the proper time comes."

And in the obtuse way of ignorant people, she stubbornly refused to be specific about anything, while persisting in making vague accusations against unnamed girls and, indeed, against the whole population of New York City, excepting Gilbert Sigerson.

I did not put much stock in her raving. My judgment of her character led me to think that she defended Sigerson because she shrank from what she regarded as a monstrous disgrace. To have lost her daughter was bad enough, but to be convinced that Polly had been murdered by the aged husband to whom she had practically sold her would be ten times worse.

Nevertheless, by the time I met Guilfoyle and Baker later in the day to compare notes, I had decided it would be well to check up on Helen Costigan and Gertrude Heinholz, the two ex-protégées who were suing the millionaire for breach of promise.

MY colleagues had nothing valuable to report. We arranged that Guilfoyle should interview the girls mentioned above, that Baker should work through contact with the servants of the Sigerson household, and that I should concentrate on the clue of the missing dagger.

But a detective's life is full of surprises. Events broke in such a way that our plans were entirely disorganized.

Early the next morning, one of those voluntary witnesses who are a feature of every murder mystery, appeared at Headquarters, in the person of Selma Todd, a hostess at a Broadway dance hall. This woman had an important story to tell, and it was confirmed by the testimony of a dancing instructor she brought along with her.

Three days before, Helen Costigan had publicly threatened Polly Benton. The girl's rage had attracted the attention of those near—and they later remembered her threat. The incident took place on the floor of the dance hall, where the two girls had apparently met by accident. Polly was being escorted by a youth unknown to the establishment. Helen had spoken to them and, to quote the hostess, Polly had "high-hatted" her former rival. She had smiled contemptuously and turned her shoulder without replying.

"The Costigan girl started to use bad language, calling Mrs. Sigerson a 'gold-digger' and a 'love-thief' and worse," Selma Todd declared. "Mrs. Sigerson answered then, but I couldn't make out what she said. 'I hate you and I'm going to kill you, so help me God!' said the Costigan girl."

Now, when a murder case is being built up on circumstantial evidence, a threat made in advance of the crime simply cannot be ignored. The moment we were through with Miss Todd, the Chief of the Homicide Bureau turned to me and ordered:

"Kinsella, drop everything, and go bring in Helen Costigan."

I ventured to remark that Guilfoyle was supposed to be on her trail

that morning, but the Chief shook his head.

"Never mind about that. You go get her," he repeated.

An entry in my note-book reminded me that the girl, who was an orphan, had roomed on Lexington Avenue near 100th Street at the time of my first investigation. I hurried up there, rang the bell, and asked for her. The landlady stared at me for a good many seconds before replying.

"Yes, Helen Costigan still has a room here," she admitted slowly at last. "But she hasn't been home since the day before yesterday."

"Do you know where she works?"

"She had a job in a furniture shop on Third Avenue." The woman gave me the address. "But I've telephoned there. They haven't seen her, neither."

Only then did I begin to give weight to the possibility that Helen might have been the slayer of Polly Benton. The threat uttered in the dance hall had not convinced me. I had put it down to shallow feminine spite. But she had not slept at home the night of the murder. She was hiding out. That looked pretty bad.

I formed a mental picture of the girl. She had done rough work all her life and was strong. I remembered having noticed what muscular forearms she had. She was physically capable of dealing a powerful stab with a knife. And her hair was a dark yellow. The hair I had found on the curtain might have fallen from the head of the maid, Mary Powell, as she went about her work, but it might equally well have been left by Helen Costigan if she had crawled through the window and brushed the curtain in passing.

"We need that girl down-town as a witness," I said bluntly, showing my credentials to the landlady. "Will you let me search her room without making a fuss about it?"

Whether the woman guessed I was working on the Benton case, I do not know. Without a word of comment, she turned and led me up-stairs.

The contents of Helen's trunk and bureau drawers furnished me with only one clue—but it was of great interest. I discovered a set of photographic prints, showing Sigerson's movie class in rehearsal costumes. One of these "stills," as they are called professionally, was a close-up of Helen Costigan, dressed as a gypsy, about to launch a mimic attack upon another girl. In her upraised right hand she held a three-cornered dagger!

IT was practically certain that this was a picture of the very weapon which had later been used on Polly. The opportunity to study it was precious. The blade was about eight inches long, and the grooved side, which faced outward in the photo, had a very fine chasing around the edges. A round knob topped the hilt.

Here was visible proof that Helen was familiar with the dagger. The idea that it could be employed to kill had been put into her head by her work before the camera. She had had excellent chances to steal it. Where was it now, however? And where was she?

I took a taxicab over to the Third Avenue furniture shop. The proprietor confirmed the statement that she had not reported for work for two days. But it was then Saturday, and the help received their wages at noon.

"I expect she'll be dropping in to collect her money," he said. "There's four days' pay coming to her."

I felt there was a fifty-fifty chance that she'd run that risk, since she was probably short of cash. So I sat and waited in an inconspicuous place behind the cashier's desk.

At ten minutes past twelve, Helen Costigan walked into the store. I allowed her to get her money and leave quietly, myself at her heels. I have seldom seen any one turn as white as she did when I took her by the arm, half-way down the block. She recognized me instantly.

"Oh, my God! I didn't kill Polly," she gasped.

"Well, where were you the night she was killed?"

"I— I went to a show on Broadway," she stammered.

"Shows don't last much beyond eleven o'clock. Where did you go afterwards? Why were you away from home all night?"

The girl fell into a mulish silence from which it was impossible to shake her, even after I had taken her down-town and she had been put through a stiff grilling. She as good as acknowledged that she had no alibi, and although, of course, she persisted in her contention that she was not a murderess, we all felt that a little more detective work would result in pinning the crime on her.

I'VE got that Benton case listed in my diary as "The Case of the Tangled Clues." My luck in finding the photograph showing the dagger, as well as my quick success in arresting Helen Costigan, had made me quite pleased with myself. I enjoyed in advance the lion's share of the credit, and I dreamed of promotion. But my satisfaction was short-lived.

Late in the afternoon, Guilfoyle came in with a prisoner whose significance at once overshadowed the two other suspects. He was Thomas Shaw, identified as the youth who had been Polly Benton's escort at the dance hall on the occasion of her quarrel with the Costigan girl. Shaw had been arrested at his home in Brooklyn and on the premises had been found a three-cornered dagger stained with blood.

I was not present when Guilfoyle made his report to the chief, but I got hold of him immediately afterwards.

"How on earth did you connect Shaw with the case?" I demanded.

"Sigerson himself put us wise to him," he answered. "It was after you went out this morning. Sigerson said this here Shaw had been Polly's boy friend before she was married. He said she was damn fool enough to keep on seeing Shaw, though the kid had threatened to 'get her' unless she'd agree to run away with him."

"Did Sigerson know about the rumpus at the dance hall?"

"He sure did—mentioned it without being asked. Polly had told him the story. He said, 'Helen Costigan's threats were a lot of hot air, but that Shaw boy is a bad one.' So I was sent out after Shaw, and I got him."

"Can he account for his movements on the night of the murder?"

"He cannot. Says he went to Coney Island in his car, and got home late. But the family didn't hear him come in, nor yet go out the next morning. They didn't see him until noon."

"Where did you find the dagger?"

"In some tall grass near the backyard fence."

A COMPARISON of the dagger with the one in the picture I had found, indicated that they were one and the same. Possession of this weapon certainly made Thomas Shaw appear to be the guilty person. I thought so myself, though the case was not iron-clad as yet. His alibi would have to be checked up, and the facts arrayed in such a way that a confession might be forced from him.

I wonder what the reader's opinion is at this point. Perhaps he has the same doubts that assailed me after I had slept another night over the Polly Benton murder. There was much that was still obscure in the motives and actions of the three suspects.

Old Sigerson had had sole access in recent weeks to the studio where the dagger had been obtained. Helen Costigan knew about the weapon, and might have stolen it earlier in the game. It had been found, nevertheless, at the home of Thomas Shaw, who had never been connected with the movie classes or the studio.

All three had possible motives for wishing to kill Polly Benton. Was one guilty and the others innocent? Or, was it possible that Helen Costigan and Thomas Shaw were confederates? Perhaps—especially in view of the coincidence that neither of them could satisfactorily explain their whereabouts on the night of the killing. Yet Helen was supposed to have hated Polly because she had married Sigerson, while Shaw loved her. The boy might have murdered her on his own account, but it was wrong psychology to imagine that he would have cold-bloodedly accepted the help of a jealous enemy of hers. Rancors so different in origin are never pooled.

I feared that no matter who might be convicted on circumstantial evidence in this affair, there would be grave danger of a miscarriage of justice. So I decided to go at the case all over again.

"Suppose," I said to myself, "there had been no hint of a three-cornered dagger in the evidence. Suppose Gilbert Sigerson had been a lily-white husband, and the names of Helen Costigan and Thomas Shaw had never been mentioned. How would I have set about finding the unknown slayer?"

I mulled over the few clues I had noted in Polly's bedroom. And suddenly it came to me that we had all failed to give sufficient importance to the crumpled, coffee-stained paper napkin found on the floor. Why, it was not at all likely that a cheap paper napkin would have been used in a millionaire's home! Sigerson possessed an ample stock of linen napkins.

THE theory rapidly formed itself in my mind, that the murderer, on his way to commit the crime, had stopped in some restaurant, presumably near the house.

He then, after wiping his mouth, had nervously slipped the paper napkin into his pocket as people often do when they are thinking of something else. It had fallen unnoticed to the carpet, as the killer stooped over Polly's body.

That the above could be proved was, of course, a mighty long chance. But I was encouraged by the fact that the paper napkin was of a peculiar pattern, stamped with interlocked horseshoes and edged in blue.

I took a subway to the vicinity of Sigerson's home and made a careful canvass of the lunchrooms near by. There were only two all-night places within a reasonable distance. I had no luck at the first one. The second set my heart to jumping, for I had no sooner entered it than I saw a pile of napkins of precisely the pattern I was seeking.

The night attendant of the week before was now on day duty, so I lost no time in locating him. He proved to be a slow-witted German who experienced the greatest difficulty in remembering as between one night and another. But I worked hard on him, and he finally straightened himself out.

"Ya, ya!" he said. "Now I know. Dot was the night my baby to home was sick."

"All right. Can you tell me whether you had any customers in here between three and four in the morning?"

"The slowest hour of the night! Dot should be easy," he commented slowly. "Ya, ya! One man only was in. He was a very nervous fellow."

"You are sure there was no woman here?"

"No—no woman. Just one man."

I did not ask him for a description. Instead, I handed him pictures of Sigerson and Shaw. "Was it either of these?"

"Ya," he replied without the least hesitation. "The old gentleman, it was. I couldn't help noticing him. A nicely dressed gentleman with a soft voice, but nervous as hell."

This shifting of the whole burden of suspicion back on to the shoulders of Gilbert Sigerson staggered me considerably. I could see how events *might* have broken, however, and I hastened to try out my theory. I returned to Headquarters, and with the permission of those above me I put the millionaire through a brief third degree of my own.

"Sigerson, you have sworn that the night your wife was murdered you left her at midnight, went to bed, and slept until you were awakened and told that she was dead. In making that statement, you lied," I asserted bluntly.

HE drew himself up. "How dare you——"

"What's the use of bluffing?" I cut in. "You'd decided to kill Polly, but the job was hard on your nerves and you went out for a walk between three and four in the morning. The man in charge of the Cosmos Lunchroom has told how you dropped in there for a cup of coffee. This is the napkin you used. I found it beside Polly's body." And I held up the clue on which I was gambling.

Sigerson paled to a ghastly white. "That proves nothing," he managed to say, "except that you're trying to railroad me."

"Doesn't it? The napkin is covered with finger-prints of yours."

He broke down then and confessed. There had been no finger-prints, really, on the napkin, but the assertion had seemed fatally plausible to him.

His earlier attempt to plant the crime on Thomas Shaw had been part of a carefully worked-out plot, he admitted. He had himself driven out to Brooklyn the night before the murder and thrown a dagger into Shaw's backyard.

"I had two of those three-cornered daggers—exact duplicates," he said. "I stained the one intended for Shaw with blood from a cut on my own cheek, made while shaving."

"Where is the weapon with which you killed Polly?"

"I dropped it from my bedroom window into an ash can standing on the sidewalk. The street cleaners took it safely away at dawn."

The most curious side-issue of the trial that sent Sigerson to the electric chair, was the confession wrung from Helen Costigan. She was a bad little egg who had been out with a "boy-friend" the night of the murder, and had then hidden out because she feared she would be accused of murdering Polly, whom she had openly threatened.

Had I not obtained the dope on Sigerson, however, Helen could never have saved her skin by telling her perfectly true story. For her boy-friend had been none other than Thomas Shaw, and the finding of the dagger would have placed the murder on him and made her an accessory to the crime.

Such are the perils of circumstantial evidence.

The Gambler With a Heart

(*Continued from page* 51)

more you read about them the less you know and the more anxious you are to play them—and go broke. Tell me, who's that fellow over there in the corner, mooning?"

Ivory laid the paper on the table and turned around so that he could see.

"Him? Oh, he's all right, Gil. He's a good, steady feller—stone-cutter. Got a job in the marble-works right down here on Webster Avenue, so he told me. Quiet guy; minds his own business, has his little glass of cider going home of an evening, and that's the last you hear of him that day. He's in one day, misses a day or two, and then maybe in again, like that, ever since I opened the joint."

Old Gil accepted Ivory's explanation without comment, as did the others. They were undemonstrative and, except for banter and exchange of experiences among themselves, they were untalkative.

But this time Hymie the Hyper—so called because his game was "hyping," or short-changing—wasn't satisfied.

"What's the matter with the goof now, Ivory? Did he bring a load of hard stuff

in here, thinking he can sleep it off?"

"If he's drunk, then I'm the ghost of William Jennings Bryan. Looks to me like he's all broke up over something—maybe lost a sweetie and won't learn to let women alone."

Here Ivory cast a sidelong glance at old Gil, to see how he took the last remark. For Ivory, that was a wise-crack that held the wisdom of years of experience. Old Gil merely smiled and blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"What's his name?" Izzy wanted to know.

"George Washington Alabaster Zurch, for all I know," replied Ivory as he left the table to take a look into the cash-drawer in the next room.

Three minutes or more went by, and Ivory's efforts to increase the total of his money by counting and recounting it had met with no success. The cash on hand amounted to six dollars and forty cents, and none of Ivory's schemes of high finance could make it a cent more. He slammed the drawer shut, and sat down with his paper again.

The street door opened, and Ivory turned to see what new client—as he called his patrons—had come to swell his profits.

FRAMED in the panels of the swinging door stood a woman delicate of feature, decidedly easy to look at. In other circumstances the men in the stube would have thought her pretty beyond the average, and would have lost no time taking a second glance. But now they were moved only to pity.

For a moment the woman stood hesitant, while she dabbed the rims of her eyes with a handkerchief. Then, seeing Ivory seated at a table, she walked toward him. Even before she came up close, Ivory noticed that the third finger of the hand that held the handkerchief was circled with a plain gold band.

All other conversation stopped when the woman said to Ivory:

"Are you Mr. O'Toole?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Have you seen Jim—Mr. Callahan?"

"Can't say as I know who Jim is," replied Ivory. And he spoke the truth. He had never heard the name.

"Oh, you must know him. He stops in here quite often. He's spoken of you many times, Mr. O'Toole. He thinks very highly of you."

Ivory heard a scraping of chairs in the the back room. Several heads turned.

The man who had sat "mooning" jumped to his feet, and rushed wild-eyed toward the front room. Old Gil, who had been quick to sense a connection between the man and the woman as soon as he heard the woman's voice, left his chair and caught Callahan by the shoulder. The stone-cutter was powerfully built, but old Gil held him easily.

A man as wise as Gil Hawkins waits until he understands a situation before he allows it to come to a head—whenever he gets the chance. It was not in his nature to allow Callahan to rush headlong into he knew not what. He held the stone-cutter steady, and clamped a hand over the fellow's mouth, while he waited to hear what would follow in the room outside.

Ivory saw the struggle in the back room,

but the woman missed it. Her eyes were fixed on Ivory.

"You must know Jim," the woman went on. "He's about as tall as I am and he's always in his working clothes when he comes here. Have you seen him to-day?"

Ivory followed Gil Hawkins' lead, and played dumb.

"Oh, yes," he said. "I know who you mean now. Stone-cutter?"

"Yes!" The woman seemed to throw off a physical weight. "Has he been here today?"

"No, ma'am. I haven't seen him in nearly a week."

"Oh!" The shoulders slumped, the body swayed as if the woman were about to fall. "Oh, Mr. O'Toole," she said, speaking in a low tone, "if he comes in, will you send him home? I don't care about the money—but I'm worried about him. What if he's been killed or hurt? Oh, he may be needing me this very second, and I—I don't even know where he is!"

Ivory is chary of women in any circumstances. He is overshy. Just now he spoke the only thought in his mind:

"That sure is tough!"

The woman sobbed once—a broken, dry intake of breath—then quickly she turned away and disappeared through the folding doors.

"There's a real woman!" Eddie declared simperingly. "If only my missus was like that, now, I'd be at my club right this minnit sippin' champagne in my soup an' fish, 'stead o' drinkin' Ivory's cider. But it's good cider at that." And he tilted his glass.

"You christened the cat's pet canary, brother," Izzy told Callahan. The tension in the room relaxed.

Ivory lost no time getting into the back room.

Old Gil stood before a chair, where he had plumped down his captive.

"Fine specimen you are, to worry a woman like that," he was saying. "She's a thoroughbred, she is. What kind of a snake are you, anyway? Come on—don't snivel. What is this all about?"

Gil Hawkins stands a good five feet ten. His ample girth seems to enhance his height, giving the impression of great physical strength, which indeed he has. Few men take chances with him when he's stirred out of his customary calmness of manner, and Callahan was no exception.

"I haven't done a thing," he said, with a show of spirit. "Only I'm in a jam—I'm at the end of my rope, that's all. I was ready to kill you a minute ago, but I ought to thank you for not letting her see me."

"Your wife, isn't she?"

"Yes. And there's not a better woman alive."

"I FORMED my own opinion as to that when I heard her talk. What did she mean when she said she didn't care about the money? What money? Have you taken anything from her, you——"

"I don't see what business it is of yours. Just let me and my affairs alone. Who do you think you are, to——"

"It's my business to set a thing right when I see it's wrong, and it's every man's business to help a woman when she's in trouble."

Callahan searched Gil steadily from a pair of small, steady eyes.

"You can't do anything about this," he said. "I'm sunk, and that's all there is to it. I can't go home, and I have nowhere else to go. Best thing for me to do is to find the river and end the mess."

"Any more talk like that and I'll hit you a crack that'll break your jaw. I'll give you something to cry about. Where's your backbone? You must be first cousin to a jelly-fish. No more nonsense. What's the trouble?"

Hymie and Izzy and stout Eddie Gorman had come up close with Ivory. Callahan scanned their faces and read sympathy rather than antagonism in them. Reassured, he ran the back of his hand across his mouth, then told them:

"My wife and I are about to buy a house. Or, at least, we were. Been saving for it these ten years back. Last week I met a fellow who knew about it. He told me he had a sure way for me to double my money within seven days."

Callahan paused, and Gil gave a significant glance toward the group.

"What was this bird's proposition?" he asked.

"He was a play producer. Said he had a vaudeville act all ready, with bookings arranged, but he needed capital to buy costumes and pay salaries to his company, and a lot besides. Anyway, without telling my wife, for I wanted to surprise her, I drew our money out of the bank last Thursday—three thousand dollars—and let him have it. He was to meet me this morning and give me back my three thousand, with another twenty-five hundred for saving him his act. He didn't show up, and when I checked him up I found he never had an act, and he's not known to any of the booking-agents in town."

Old Gil shook his head.

"You birds who live on the level never will learn to be satisfied with six per cent. on your money. You should know that any proposition that promises a killing is crooked. Why, this is as plain as if I had been in with you from the go-off. This bird is a petty-larceny thief, a low order of con man. He took you for all you had."

"I BLAME myself for not looking him up before I gave him my money, but he was introduced to me by a man who used to work at the marble-yard——"

"Don't blame yourself. If you'd looked him up, he'd have given you good credentials. That's part of his game. But get to the point—what about your wife?"

Callahan brought one hand up to his forehead; with the other doubled into a tight fist he thumped the table-top so that Ivory started. The owner of the cider palace expected to see his table in splinters when he heard the blow.

"That's where it hurts," said Callahan. "We were to make the first payment on our house to-morrow. She found out what I had done when she looked into the bank-book this morning. I had to tell her the truth—and when I found I'd been swindled, I couldn't face her. I couldn't. Why, we've done without clothes, and shows, and all the things a woman craves, just so we could save for our home—and now it's all gone!"

"You'll never see that money again. And the chances are that you'll never meet the guy who got away with it."

Old Gil left the table, nudging Eddie Gorman to follow him. Off to one corner, out of ear-shot, Gil said to Eddie:

"Well, we can feel proud of ourselves, we can," he said. "We're grifters, it's true, Eddie. But we never yet have taken a dollar from a man who didn't show us he was ready to take ours. We've never gone after a man who showed us he was on the level. Why, that poor sap over there is as honest as the day is long. Good, steady, hard-working man. The crook who took him didn't make a play with a clever scheme. He just robbed the man. I'd just like to have him here for a few minutes. I'd choke the life out of him. I have an idea who it was, and I'm going after him with some real confidence-game that will take every dollar he has. But that's not the point now. Eddie, you're thinking the same thing I am, aren't you—about that little woman?" Eddie nodded. Both knew that there was but one thing to do.

"Nothing else to do, Gil. We'll make up a purse and save the home for her. That what you mean?"

"I knew you were *there*, Eddie. I'm starting with five yards."

"And here's five more."

Each of the stout old grifters took out a bank roll of staggering size, and counted off several bills. Gil knew he'd make up the five hundred he was donating, the next time he went after a sucker. And five hundred meant little to Eddie, the race-track book-maker.

"HOW about the others?" Eddie wanted to know.

"All the boys will want to get in. You better save the poor simp's pride by getting him out of here, Eddie. Take him for a walk. Tell him the air will do him good, and hand him a cheerful line of talk. While you're gone, I'll talk to the other boys."

So it was arranged. Old Gil had the thousand dollars, the nucleus of a home for Mrs. Callahan, in his pocket. Eddie went over to Callahan and whispered in his ear, The two left the place together.

"What do you say?" asked old Gil, as he motioned the others to join him at the table they had vacated.

Hymie the Hyper and Ivory followed him over.

"Where's Izzy?" he asked, missing the little pickpocket.

"That's funny. He was here a minute ago," Hymie volunteered. "I guess his bank roll is not very strong."

"He could do his bit," replied old Gil. "I'm surprised that anyone should run out in a case of this kind."

Ivory had walked outside and looked up and down the street.

"Can't see him," he reported as he returned.

"Well, boys, you know a good, steady man has been taken by a dirty cur who hasn't brains enough to trim the people who are out to rob him. And this Callahan's loss means just about everything to that fine little lady who was in here to-night. Eddie and I have started a fund to make good their loss, with five hundred each. What do you say?"

Both made their contributions, and sums of various sizes were also solicited from "Honest Willie" Wittick, Artie Rybeck, the card-sharp, Harry Regan, the "wire-

tapper," and all the other regulars. Then Izzy the Itch blew in.

"Here's mine," he said, tossing a roll of money at Gil.

All the mob looked at him in surprise.

"I was clean, so I had to step out and hustle a roll," Izzy explained, in answer to the inquiring glances. "Up the street here I bumped into old man Hermann, the tightwad who owns half the houses in this end of town. He's a rent profiteer and has no more heart than a cop's club. I thought it a good idea to ask him to contribute—but I didn't let him hear me asking. But I got his roll, all right—cut through his overcoat and ripped his bank-roll pocket."

"Well, the money may be tainted, but it will help buy that house just the same," commented old Gil as he annexed the roll.

Eddie returned with Callahan. And old Gil explained that they had been able to recover the stolen money.

Callahan appeared befuddled, and it was not a difficult matter to make him believe that the money had been returned for him.

As one in a trance, he left the place. He rushed up the street toward home—and the faithful wife.

Then the boys settled down around a big table for a game of stud poker. They were at peace with the world and all mankind—for a little while.

Play had progressed for an hour or so, when the door was crashed open, and in rushed a cop and two plain-clothes men. Chips and money swiftly disappeared, but none of the three men who had just entered seemed to have any interest in the game.

"Say," said the cop hurriedly, "any of you fellows here seen a man who calls himself Callahan? He was here a minute ago, wasn't he?

The players looked at one another questioningly.

"Why?" chirped Ivory, who seemed to be the only person who could find his voice.

"Why? Don't sit there and ask why!" broke in one of the plain-clothes men. "He's one of the slickest con men that ever cut loose in this burg, an' I want to get my claws on him just once!"

There came ominous pause.

"I saw him around here," persisted the cop. "Did he come in here? Come on—was he here?"

"Nope," said Ivory, and the rest shook their heads.

What was said after the door was closed can't be printed here.

The Mystery of the Vanished Car

(Continued from page 39)

"NOW, Watson," he says, his hand shaking, he was so keen to tell me about the case, "the car will be right around that bend. I got the clues from the papers and from what we know about this railroad track. Walker was murdered. And he was known here, and his people would expect to hear from him when he went back to Bridge City. So he was put on the track to make it seem he had been killed by the train. Then that train left Weston with a car of copper aboard and got to Bridge City without that car. And it was on at Piedmont, and the train never stopped again until it hit Bridge City. And it was on time at every station. Then the long down-grade here, with the spur track running into the main line the direction the train was coming, is the only place I know where the car could be dropped out. Besides, this is where Walker got killed. So all them facts is the clue, Watson."

"That's the most mixed-up clue I ever heard of," I says.

"That's all I had to go on," says Jim, "and I solved the mystery, as I always do. You recall my case of the Missing Dispatch Case? And the affair of the Red-Headed Man?"

I said I recalled them, to please him, though the only case he ever had was a case of mumps, and we both had it. Then I thought about how it said that the freight was fast and hadn't lost a minute of time between stations anywheres, and I see Jim was all at sea.

"Look here, said. "That train didn't lose any time between Avondale and Marshy Hope, and if it had stopped, Alec would have reported it, or the Marshy Hope operator would."

But Jim, he just looked at me cool and easy-like, and grinned.

"Really, Watson," he said out loud, forgetting to whisper, "that's the simplest part of the whole affair. I must ask you to think out an easy problem like that yourself. It will be good practice for you."

WELL, I was so mad at Jim for acting high and mighty with me that way that I pretty near landed on him right there, but thought better of it for one reason or another, and didn't do anything. They's nobody can rile me like Jim can, and I like Jim, too, but he can be mighty trying at times, as Aunt Sue says about me. There that old freight had batted through at top speed, going down grade, and yet Jim was telling me that a car had been snaked right out of the middle of the train, and that it was the simplest part of the whole affair. And I could see where a car had come along them rails, too. But shucks! It might of been a switch engine run in there for something. I got to hoping there wasn't a car in there at all, and then Jim would look foolish.

"Come on," I says. "I'll bet your old clue is no good and that the car ain't down there."

I forgot about being thirsty and so forth and felt in a hurry to see for sure, and Jim, he felt the same. So we kept to the bushes and sneaked along down by the side of the track, keeping hid as well as we could. Toward the end the brush got thicker and all we could see was the old track, with the grass growing up between the ties. So we slunk along, close beside it, until we got clean to where it ended, right up against a high gravel bank.

And the car wasn't there at all.

Well, me and Jim come out on the track and set down on it. Jim never said nothing, and when I seen his face, all sad and kind of done-like, I didn't have the heart

for to twit him with his mistakes, because I seen he took it pretty hard. I put my arm around his shoulder. He didn't look at me or nothing, or say a word for the longest time, but only set there with his chin in his hand. I knew Jim was studyin' where that darn car could be. It sure was a puzzle!

"Gee whiz, Jim," I says after a bit. "It ain't your fault. That car should be here. It's been in, right enough, just like you said. Only, they've snaked it out again."

"Something's been in," he says, very sad. "But I guess it must have been a switch engine; or some freight side-tracked a car with a hot-box and then another train took it out. I dunno. I'm fair beat. that's all there is to it. It should have worked out the way I figured it, though. The clues all solved out right, as clear as could be. Only the car ain't here, that's all."

AND it was enough, too. There was our case all shot to pieces, just like we'd never had one. I thought then the detecting business sure was a discourager, and not worth a fellow's worrying his head over. Better to be an engineer or even a conductor. Just sit in the engine or the cars, nice and easy, and not wear yourself all out thinking, and ending up in a gravel pit.

And then I happened to notice the rails and I saw where the car had been on them, for there the rust was, all smashed down and yellow, instead of the dark color of the sides. And I said to Jim: "Well, she was here, anyhow, even if she is gone now. See where the rust is scraped off right to the gravel."

I only said it to kind of cheer him, and he only glanced at it so I'd think he was interested in things, and not so much down in the mouth. Then he looked at me, and I could see his face light up.

"They wouldn't push a car with a hot-box off a train away down here," he says. "The car that came here was our car—the one with the copper. Look!" He pointed at the gravel bank. "There's been a fresh cave-in of gravel that buried it! Why didn't I notice that before!"

For a minute he was all excited and started to dig at the gravel. Then he stopped and looked sick.

"They couldn't bury a whole car," he said.

Well, I seen right off they couldn't. It was too big. And then I said, "Perhaps they burnt it."

Now, I didn't think when I said that. But Jim was looking so done-up, I just said the first thing I could think of, to cheer him. It just came out, natural-like—nothin' but words, far's I was concerned.

But Jim, he grabbed me, all excited, and shouted, "That's what they done!"

Then we sure did dig in that old gravel. We got some pieces of wood and made that stuff fly. And we hadn't scraped away more than ten minutes, I guess, before we uncovered some twisted iron. Then we come to what surely was the end of a car-truck.

"No need digging any more," says Jim, throwing down his stick. "Here's all that's left of that car."

"Where's the copper?" I asks. "In there too?"

"In there nothing!" says Jim. "A gang

like Moriarity's don't leave copper around. It's been took away, naturally." He run along the edge of the gravel slide, which had caved in the whole end of the pit. "And here's how it's been took—by truck."

Sure enough, there was deep, broad wheel-tracks in the gravel, and it was plain enough the trucks had been loaded heavy.

"Come on, Watson," yells Jim, racing off along the ruts.

We followed along the wheel-tracks and come clean out of the pit up a sloping steep bank into a little old country road, and along that about a mile until we come to an old farm where the tracks turned in. There was a tumble-down old house and barn, but the place hadn't been used for land knows how long. Me and Jim knew it well, and in the Fall we used to go up there and get apples from some apple-trees so old they looked like they was there when Columbus come over. The apples wasn't much good, really, and we had lots better ones in our own place at home. But this farm was supposed to be haunted, and that made all the difference, of course. An apple is good anywheres, but one that comes from a haunted place seems to have it all over one of the ordinary kind, if you go and get it yourself, especially in the early evening.

When those tracks turned in there at that old farm, they turned in all alone so far's me and Jim was concerned. We kept right on going along the road. We didn't dast hardly look at that farm, in case somebody was looking out one of the broken windows. We did take a few peeks, not stopping nor nothing, but just looking slantways and back ahead again in a hurry. When we got well past there, Jim pulls me into the bushes side the road.

"We can't pass the place again going back," he says. "They might get suspicious and run out and grab us."

"Do you think they're in the house?" I whispers.

"Maybe, and maybe not. But I ain't taking a chance." Then he recollected as how Sherlock Holmes would have walked right in and said, "Ah! My old friend Moriarity!" or something like that, I guess, because he added after a bit, "I'm sorry we left our revolvers at home, Watson. This should be a lesson to us. In future we go armed. But as it is, I guess we'll send for Lestrade and some men from Scotland Yard."

I SAID that so far's I was concerned we certainly would. Then Jim got to thinking that this was no way for a detective to act, running away from there and not finding out if the desperate criminals was there, and he was all for sneaking up and looking at the house. We argued around, and the more I talked against it, the braver Jim got. That's Jim for you. I was fair mad at him, I can tell you.

"I wouldn't go near that place for a hundred dollars," I told Jim. And I meant what I said. It looked still and lonesome-like—as if a murder had been committed there.

Jim said I was scared, and I told him I wasn't scared, exactly, but there's a limit in all things, as Aunt Sue says to me sometimes when I've about reached it. Then Jim said as how he'd go alone; I let him go, too. I was fair out of patience with him. It was fine playing detective, and even all right in the gravel pit when we didn't know for sure there was anything there. But this was the real thing, and no mistake, neither. So I let him go on.

He started out to circle the house and come up behind it. He crossed the road and slid into the bushes until they nearly hid him. All I could see was his head now and then. And somehow, as I saw the last of him, I wasn't mad at him any more for being so foolish. And I got to thinking, "Suppose this is really the last time I'll see Jim alive. Suppose he gets killed in there, all by himself, and me letting him walk to his death alone!"

I crossed the road and looked in through the bushes, and whispered, "Jim! Jim!" And not a sound from him. And not a sound anywheres except a thumping inside me, like when I've been running too much and get all tuckered out. I was just fair sick. I couldn't leave him in there, and I didn't want to go in after him, and I guess I stuck in them bushes for a long time, trying to figure what to do. And all the time Jim getting further away from me.

I thought of all the good times we had together, and how nothing would be any good no more without Jim. And when I thought how we'd always shared everything we had, and stuck together at school and all that, it just seemed kind of trifling and mean for me to desert him at the end. So I said out loud, "All right, I'll *get* killed, then," and I lit out in a hurry to where I'd last seen him.

I DIDN'T go soft and careful. I just ran along, looking everywhere for Jim. And I felt a lot better than I felt out there in the road, too. All I could think was that I shouldn't have let him go off alone, and that I had to find him. I did find him, too, right on the edge of the orchard. Pretty nearly tripped right over him lying down and looking through the grass and bushes. He glared at me, mad as anything, and whispered, "What do you want to make all that racket for, you blundering old cow!"

I just wished I'd let the crooks get him, that's all. I was that disgusted. That's all the thanks I get, as Aunt Sue says to me every now and then. It sure took the tucker out of me, and I felt like pounding him right there and then, only for the noise. But that's Jim for you. No gratitude nor nothing.

So we lay there together in the deep grass, and if Jim had crawled along another foot I'd have let him go it alone—that I would. But he didn't move. He just watched. We lay there the longest time, and not a sight or a sound from that old house and barn. I was thinking the men had been there and gone, when all of a sudden we heard a loud sneeze, a regular ripper!

The next minute——

Have "Sherlock Holmes" and "Doctor Watson, Jr." stumbled onto a real clue? Who is the party in the deep grass, near them? They are due for a surprise, and the account of their experiences that follow will hold you tense with interest—in October TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES, on the newsstands September 15th.

acquaintance and assured me that everything in the hotel was at my disposal.

"Except my bank roll." He released the old gag with a wheeze that seemed to inflate with little ripples every crease in his accordion-pleated throat, as he finished his florid acknowledgment of the introduction.

At that instant I heard a boy paging my name.

"I have a luncheon engagement. That is probably my host," I explained, glad of the opportunity to break away from the cloying conversation.

"Oh, I did hope that we might have lunched together, and discussed old times," Miss Criswell said, with a pout, as she focused a naughty little wink on the broad back of the flamboyant Eddie, who had turned to call out to the page.

"I would have enjoyed it much more," I lied, "but this is a family friend—sort of a duty-lunch, you know. But won't you take tea with me this afternoon?"

She eagerly accepted the invitation, and had just finished telling me that it was all right for me to bring my dog to the hotel when I took note of the man. The boy had just returned to him for his tip. Past middle-age, he seemed—with a fringe of white hair, much massaged features, and a luxuriant mustache. He was an example, sartorially, of what the smart "sugar daddy" should wear: rather baggy, light-gray suit, a conservative cravat, black shoes half concealed by spats. On his rather heavy, strong nose a pince-nez was perched securely—and was anchored by a black silk ribbon which encircled his neck. He looked jolly enough. But I had noticed a shrewd gleam in the old gentleman's eyes.

For a second I surprised an appraising, swift look in my companion's face. This was instantaneously suppressed, but there was a faint tinge of mockery in her voice.

"Some sugar daddy! He sure looks the goods! You better run along and meet him. Hope you have a nice time."

AS I shook hands with my "boy friend" I noticed that his grip was not in keeping with his unctuous manner and oily voice as he greeted me:

"How the girl grows!" he exclaimed. "I would hardly have known her at all."

This, I naturally thought, was for the benefit of possible listeners, but there was something vaguely familiar about the man that sent a little ripple of apprehension quivering in the base of my brain, as I made some trivial reply. With a smile, I asked him to excuse me a moment, and I went back up-stairs to change my dress. I had not expected such a "fashionable" caller.

When I returned, Mr. Innes, led me to a waiting motor-car. It was an expensive-looking machine, dark blue, furnished with elaborate silver-plated accessories in the interior. I entered and, after giving some directions to the chauffeur, he followed.

"You don't remember me?" he remarked after a few minutes' silence while the car was making its way through the congested traffic. We had passed all the principal restaurants, and I was just on the point of asking our destination when he put the question.

"In some sort of a way, I do," I

whose ample avoirdupois was swathed in a bulky fur coat. Her bulging, China-blue eyes expressed mixed feelings of fear and belligerency.

"Oh, I hope Toto didn't hurt you," she said in a high, infantile voice, as she came over to where I stood. "He's so playful."

I then noticed that she was dragging along a wicked-looking Pekinese, which had squatted on the floor and was regarding me with solemnity and vindictiveness in its large goggle-eyes.

ORDINARILY, I would have felt inclined to wring the little wretch's fat neck, for I knew that he had ruined a pair of my best cobwebby hose, even if his sharp teeth had not penetrated my skin. This time, however, I could hardly keep from gathering up the spoiled pup and hugging it to death! For this woman and this dog might be very useful to me in making the acquaintance of Joyce Millar. Her fondness for her own Pekinese—left in the tender care of Fanny the Fake—had been shown in many ways. And as men easily become acquainted over a highball or some common business topic, so do women dog-lovers break down their natural reticence over their admiration of a pet.

All this flashed through my mind in an instant. And too, I remembered Browne's instructions, to smile—always *smile*. I quickly suppressed the angry ejaculation which had risen to my lips, and *did* smile, though a bit painfully.

"Don't mention it—it's all right," I said in my most pleasant manner. "I have a little Peke of my own, which I left at the kennels, as I was afraid the hotel wouldn't let me keep it here——"

So for a moment or two we stood chatting about Pekes. I explained that I was in the theatrical business and she confided that she was an ex-professional herself and made her permanent abode in the hotel.

"They don't really like to have guests keep pets in the hotel," she told me, "but what are we going to do about the little darlings? I always say if Toto can't stay, I won't, and that's flat. I'll speak to the manager, dearie, and I'll promise he'll let you bring your little Peke to the hotel."

The room clerk, a hard-featured, oldish young man, stoop-shouldered and snappily clad, was waiting impatiently for me to finish signing the register. My would-be benefactor and myself exchanged names and room numbers. With an ostensible yawn, he handed a key to the bellhop, and turned back to the ledger in which he had been writing when I approached.

It was a third-rate hotel. The parlor, bedroom, and bath which had been reserved for me by wire from New York, was rather a dismal suite and looked out on a court.

Evidently Dude had not yet managed to separate Joyce from much of her money, for he was a high-flyer. This was not the type of hotel which he usually frequented. This was auspicious for our case in one way. Once the forger, who was an inveterate gambler, got his hands on the cash, it would be lost to us. Large as the amount was, it was no greater than certain sums which he had been known to lose in one night over the gaming-tables. However, his failure might make my work more difficult and dangerous. With so much money within his reach, I could easily imagine that he would be a very disagreeable and ugly person to live with, if it were withheld from him; and there was no telling what he might do when he and his dupe came to grips.

I WAS unpacking my dressing-case and placing the toilet articles on the vanity table when my telephone bell rang. When I responded, I expected to hear my lobby acquaintance's voice. Instead, it was that of a man.

"Miss Ray Hanson?" it asked, giving the name I had assumed on this job. "This is Charles Innes, a friend of Mr. Browne's. I wondered if you would take luncheon with me to-day?"

"I'd be delighted," I replied. "Shall we make it twelve-thirty?"

"That'll do beautifully. I'll meet you down-stairs."

This Mr. Innes, I surmised, correctly, was an operative connected with the Chicago branch of Mr. Browne's agency. During our luncheon engagement he would give me the latest and fullest details concerning the couple I was engaged to watch.

Right at that time there was nothing for me to do but wait. So far, luck had been with me. I had recognized in Miss Charlotte Criswell the type of retired professional who has at her finger-tips every atom of gossip connected with the hotel where she lives. She democratically makes "friends" of chambermaids, bellhops, clerks and guests alike. At the end of each day she has enough information to fill a good-sized country newspaper.

By the time I had hung up my dresses in the closets and dispatched to the laundry and cleaners such wearing apparel as had become mussed on my transcontinental journey, the time for my appointment had arrived. I was rather disappointed that Miss Criswell had not called me up, for I wanted to purchase that Peke pup right away. Somehow, I had a hunch that it was going to have a quite important part to play in the drama of separating Joyce from her ill-gotten gains.

As I left the elevator at twelve-thirty, however, I ran into her in the lobby. She came up to me at once.

"I want you to meet the manager, dearie," she said, as she greeted me effusively. "I've told him we're old friends—that we played in the same companies. That was just to make it all right. You don't mind?"

"No, indeed," I answered with a laugh. "That was very good of you."

WHILE I was talking, a big, genial, red-faced man, with a tonsure of gleaming red skull surrounded by a sparse fringe of reddish hair, came up. Gold gleamed in his teeth; tiny diamonds twinkled in his shirt-studs. His finger-nails positively scintillated. A huge diamond blazed on the third finger of his right hand, which was raised elbow-high when he reached us.

"This is Ed Dalton, the finest gentleman that ever stepped," my "old" friend's childish treble announced. "Eddie, this is Miss Ray Hanson, one of the brightest rising stars in musical comedy. I want you to do everything for her that you would do for me."

Eddie chortled his delight to make my

sand the girl has?" asked Lennox. "Let me have it so I can help you—I assure you you'll get the credit. I'm working for dough—not glory."

I laughingly suggested a wild scheme that had come into my mind.

"Just how we can work it, though, I don't know," I confessed. "But it does seem to be the only way——"

"Excellent!" he chuckled. "Now you just keep that clever little head working, and I'll try and take care of the foolish little heart. Now we'll go and buy your dog. And by the bye, look out for Eddie Dalton, the hotel manager. He, through his blonde Juno, will try to find out who and what you are. They still have an idea that the Federal authorities are suspicious."

"She and I are on very friendly terms," I said, "and without her asking, I'll tell her that I have come to Chicago to have a famous plastic surgeon remove this mole from my otherwise flawless complexion." I grinned.

"You're not going to sacrifice that precious beauty-spot, are you?" he teased.

"No, indeed. I wouldn't sacrifice it for a couple of Rolls-Royces and an income for life thrown in," I said, with a laugh, as I got up from the table. "Incidentally, I've a teaing engagement with the blonde, so we had better get my small hound without more delay."

THE Peke was purchased and we drove back in state to the hotel. I was instructed to let the world surmise that "Mr. Innes" was a large-hearted gentleman friend of mine and that he was leaving town for a few days and had placed his car at my disposal.

In a few moments, I had changed into a spiffy little afternoon frock, and at four o'clock made my way to a somberly lighted salon where an orchestra of four pieces was rendering, somewhat carelessly, music to which three couples were swaying on a small dance floor.

Miss Criswell was seated on one of the leather wall-lounges before a small, round table. With her was a pale-faced young woman, richly but unbecomingly gowned in a heavily beaded, peacock-blue crêpe de Chine frock. Her eyes were hidden by the narrow-brimmed cloche she wore, but her beautifully molded lips drooped wearily, and there was an air of tragedy and melancholy about her sagging figure. She was smoking a cigarette feverishly.

Miss Criswell caught sight of me at once and left her companion. She came towards me, with a bright smile flashing from her dazzling teeth.

"I was just coming out to look for you," she said in her high, childish treble, as she took hold of my arm. "Do you mind, dearie, if Mrs. Lewis joins us? Poor darling, she has the blues terribly. I'll tell you about her later—awfully sad."

Mrs. Lewis! That was Joyce Millar. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lewis were the names under which, we had been informed, the Dude and his dupe had registered.

After all my trouble of purchasing the Peke hound! I almost laughed aloud. Well, it wasn't necessary for me to be too exact in reporting how I managed to make my subject's acquaintance.

Naturally, I expressed myself as being delighted to have Mrs. Lewis join us. In

answered slowly, "but I am certain I never saw you looking as you do now. I never forget faces, though names often slip——"

"Lennox—does that recall anything?—The Boulevard Blackmail Case?—where you roped the little lady; and then, when we had her hipped, you wanted us to let her go instead of turning her over to the man from the D. A.'s office!" The unctuous tones had disappeared. They had been replaced by the short, clipped, sharp-voiced tones of a regular hard-boiled sleuth.

"But that's only three years ago," I stammered. "You've certainly changed——"

"I don't believe you really remember how I looked," he said, and chuckled. "You only saw me once and you were so fussed then, that I don't suppose you registered me at all. But I'm wearing a wig over my auburn hair—it's lucky my eyelashes are so sandy that they look white with this make-up—and I've had my face so steamed and clayed and massaged that I feel as if I had just come from the hands of the embalmer. That, and a little padding over my midriff, has transformed me from a tough guy into a soft-hearted Cinderella man."

"Some disguise!" I granted. "But why?"

"Well, not so long ago the people in your hotel were under suspicion of being dope distributors, and I had to pay a little call there. When Mr. Browne wired me to put you wise to all we had on the Millar woman, I didn't wire back that they knew me there; instead, I decided, for the first time in my life, to use a disguise. I tried it on our own office force first, and, when they fell for it, I felt pretty safe."

IT certainly was a marvelous make-up. When we were seated at a table in a smart restaurant, somewhere in the outlying suburbs of Chicago, it was only with a decided effort I kept my eyes off the shining false dome which covered his own sandy hair. I wanted to touch it and convince myself that it was really false—even though I knew without a doubt that the man was the person he said he was.

And while we ate a deliciously cooked meal, he "wised me up" to Joyce Millar and her crooked Lothario.

"Dude's been spending the last three nights at Eisenberg's gambling-joint and seems to have been sleeping all day. He's a 'snow-bird,' you know, and I have an idea that he's taught the girl to 'sniff a bit,' too. We may be wrong in that. She's got her money in negotiable bonds in a box she rented at the bank. As soon as we got the tip that she and Dude were here, we put a woman in the hotel with them, but the Millar girl flocked by herself when she wasn't with the Dude—she seems to be a difficult sort of person to rope in. During the first part of this week, Mendez was very devoted, but I guess they had a quarrel over the jack or something—she seems to have been moping round the last day or two. That'll make it easier for you."

I told him about my scheme for getting acquainted through her love for her Pekinese, and of my encounter with the ex-actress.

"That's a good idea," he said. "Let me think——"

For several minutes neither of us spoke. His face slipped its mask of benevolent old age. The eyes, with their blank inscrutability, contrasted grotesquely with the artificially puffed and massaged cheeks—as did the firm-lipped, cruel-looking mouth.

It was true that the first and only time I had met Lennox, I had not paid very much attention to the man—but later on I learned a great deal about him. He is one of the most extraordinary characters in America. A brilliant, but strangely distorted mind is his. The underworld hates and fears him—many times, gunmen have laid in wait to bump him off, but he always managed to escape untouched.

He is hated not because he is a detective, but because he has frequently planned crimes—and double-crossed the men he used to do the dirty work. District attorneys and most of the largest detective agencies have paid large sums for his services from time to time. He is not a stool-pigeon, but a really excellent investigator with an imagination and analytical ability that would make Sherlock Holmes look like a kindergarten sleuth. Lennox is only one of his many aliases. Exactly who he is, nobody knows.

THOUGH he is as crooked and cold-blooded as a snake, he has the reputation of being trustworthy when working on the right side of the fence. However, be that as it may, I couldn't help feeling uneasy. It seemed to me that no man with such a warped intellect could be counted on, if a big enough opportunity to steal a march on his employers presented itself.

"Say, you're a bright kid, all right!" Suddenly Lennox's sardonic voice broke into my uneasy thoughts. I glanced at him in alarm. If he were a mind-reader, he certainly would not be flattered at my thoughts. "I mean—about the dog," he finished, with a wry smile. An ironical leer, like an evil little imp, danced for an instant in his eyes.

"You have the making of a crackerjack operative," he continued, quite seriously, his hawk-like eyes once more blank and expressionless. "But you have one great drawback. You look on your subjects as human beings. You ought to think of them impersonally—as chairs or tables or pretty, glossy-leafed poison-ivy! You are ready to turn tail and be disloyal to your employer just because your silly little heart rules your head. Now, for heaven's sake, don't go and get attached to this Joyce Millar."

Unconsciously, I bridled at his unwarranted criticism. It was Mr. Browne's privilege to call me down and make mock of my idiosyncrasies, but this Lennox man's position, I felt, was like my own—he was merely an operative.

"Oh, by the bye, Browne sent a telegram to the office for you. I forgot—here it is."

He extracted a dispatch from his inside pocket and handed it over to me.

Until further orders, work under Lennox; report directly to him. I am leaving town. BROWNE.

After I had finished reading it, I kept my eyes glued on the paper. I hated the thought of working under this man—I mistrusted him—but I didn't want him to see how I felt. And he certainly had an uncanny way of staring with his blank, soulless eyes, as if they penetrated to the inmost corners of your brain.

"Have you thought of any scheme whereby we may annex that hundred thou-

sand the girl has?" asked Lennox. "Let me have it so I can help you—I assure you you'll get the credit. I'm working for dough—not glory."

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a short time we three were sipping rather badly made tea, and nibbling at *petits fours*.

It wasn't long, however, before I found that Mrs. Lewis didn't exactly seek or appreciate either our sympathy or our company. Miss Criswell and I carried the whole burden of the conversation—which was light, frivolous, and easily kept up. Talking is no effort to me, and words flowed from Miss Criswell's lips like water from a bubbling spring trickling down a mountainside. And all the while I kept smiling at Mrs. Lewis. Finally it had its effect, and she began to thaw out and become friendly.

DAYS passed without my having anything much to report. I was very careful not to appear in any way anxious to become intimately acquainted with "Mrs. Lewis." Miss Criswell's attempts to become chummy with her, made an excellent foil for my casual acceptance of her whenever she actually joined us at tea or at dinner. It rather amused me to see the blonde roping in my subject.

Because I remained somewhat aloof, Mrs. Lewis finally became a little bit attracted to me. Here my Peke, Mimi, was useful after all. We met in the beauty parlor once or twice, and one day we went shopping together.

On that occasion I made my discovery.

We had left the hotel shortly after breakfast. Mr. Lennox had instructed me to do my utmost to keep her out of the hotel for as many hours as possible and to watch her closely.

As an excuse for my not having had the operation performed on my beautiful mole, I expressed nervousness at the idea of facing the specialist and I commented on the fun I was having in Chicago—racing around in my friend's car and being entertained by other men friends in his absence.

I took Mrs. Lewis to one of the smartest shops and we looked at imported evening gowns. Models paraded before us for over an hour without my finding anything that suited me. We went to several other exclusive places and repeated the performance.

I invited Mrs. Lewis to have lunch with me at one of the swagger hotels. As we were eating, I discussed the frocks we had seen.

"There wasn't a thing that is my type at all," I complained. "It's funny how it is like that sometimes. If you had been looking for something, now, there were dozens that would have suited you to a 'T.' With your tall, slender figure, dark hair, and wonderful complexion, you'd be stunning in that midnight-blue chiffon velvet we saw in that second shop. Why don't you have your hair bobbed, Mrs. Lewis?" I asked abruptly, and I smiled admiringly at her. "You have all the natural beauty in the world, only you don't bring it out like you could."

I saw that she was rather flattered and pleased with the idea I had put in her mind. But if we bought that dress, I knew instinctively that our shopping tour would be at an end. I guessed pretty accurately how much it would cost—and what the effect of that price would be on my companion.

"I've often thought of bobbing," she said thoughtfully, "but I've never been able to make up my mind to it—it does make a woman look much younger, doesn't it?"

"Much—of course!" I spoke very decidedly. "The result is that when so many women are bobbing their hair, it makes the women with long hair look much older than they really are. Besides, your natural beauty——"

She considered this thoughtfully. Mimi was curled up on her lap, for by this time we had finished our luncheon and were dawdling over the table, smoking cigarettes; she kept caressing the pup's ears gently.

"The woman's a thief—an embezzler—the friend of a cheap crook—and, worse than all, a darned fool!" I reminded myself, angrily, when I found myself pitying her.

"Another thing, if you'll excuse my mentioning it—why do you dress so old? Judging by your face and figure, you can't be over twenty-four or twenty-five," I lied, for she looked every day of the thirty years which was probably her correct age. "But you dress like a woman of thirty-five or so. Your clothes are beautiful—exquisite—but they're too old for a girl like you."

And so on and so forth, I blarneyed, all the while smiling and jollying her along. The upshot of it was that when we left the restaurant it was with the matter all threshed out. Mrs. Lewis was going to bob and buy more youthful clothes.

I directed the chauffeur to drive us to a certain famous hair-dresser who makes a specialty of bobbing women's hair and "setting" it in waves under strong arc lights. She wouldn't hear of undergoing a "permanent." The thought of being strung up on dozens of tubes attached to a fixture which would imprison her in her chair, made her nervous, she said. I could see her shudder at the idea.

Anyway, I congratulated myself; though she would not be imprisoned in a chair, she would have to sit on one for over an hour while the wave was setting.

I did not have much difficulty, either, in persuading her first to have a facial, as I was having one myself.

Altogether, we spent over three hours in the beauty parlor. I had been so much interested in the work that was being done to myself that I had not paid much attention to Joyce. After all, she was not my prisoner, and my instructions had been to keep her away from the hotel as long as possible—only that and nothing more.

When, finally, I went over to the chair where the hair-dresser was putting the finishing touches to her new bob, I gave a gasp of admiration.

"Why, Mrs. Lewis, you are simply exquisite!" It was honest, heartfelt tribute to her beauty.

PLEASED to hear commendation, the man handed the girl a mirror. She glanced in it without much interest. This surprised me, for she had been very enthusiastic when we entered the place. A sharper scrutiny of her features showed me that she was very pale—a sort of waxen pallor.

"It's frightfully hot in here," I remarked, as she stepped from the chair and joined me.

"Y-e-s. Let's get out quick. I feel faint!"

There was a querulous, sharp edge to her voice that I had not heard before. Without saying anything further, she paid the cashier, and the two of us left the beauty parlor. Once out in the corridor, she seemed to go all to pieces. Though she bit her lip, she failed to control the muscles of her face. It didn't take me more than an instant to realize what the trouble was. Joyce Millar was a drug addict.

Without appearing to notice her condition, I walked over to the elevators and rang the bell, keeping my back to the girl. This gave her an opportunity to take "a sniff." That she took advantage of it was manifest a short time later. Her nerves were under control before we entered the automobile, and when I suggested that we return straight to the hotel she wouldn't hear of it.

"You said you had no engagements until evening," she said gaily. "So let's round out the afternoon. I want to buy a few of those dresses. But first, if you don't mind, I would like to go to my bank and get some bonds from my strong box to take to my broker. If you want to make a quick turnover, buy Cantbeat Candy; it's due to go up ten points within the next few days."

A visit to her bank in her company was a thing I had greatly desired but scarcely dared hope for.

"I expect to get some money soon," I told her, "but there is so much red tape and that sort of thing about opening an account. I'm nervous about approaching the officials——"

She smiled at my obvious unsophistication. Probably she had heard Miss Criswell tell of my sugar daddy.

"Oh, that's all right," she said. "I'll introduce you to the vice-president. Of course, I don't know you well enough to act as a reference if you decide to open an account," she amended shrewdly.

"Couldn't you say I was your secretary or something—I would like to be taken for a business girl rather than an actress."

She was inclined to demur at this and made light of what she considered my lack of worldly knowledge. However, she was by that time completely under the influence of the cocaine, and felt in a benevolent mood. She finally agreed. To be brief, she not only introduced me to the vice-president of the bank, but also to her broker, as her private secretary. And by keeping my eyes and ears open, I learned that she was putting all her bonds temporarily in the hands of her broker.

LATER, we had tea. Generous as she was, however, with her introductions, and her tip on the market and her advice, she was as stingy with her money as any pinchpenny. Knowing the purchasing power of money, she refused to throw it away for such sterile investments as afternoon tea in some ultra-expensive restaurant. On the many occasions we had been together, she never spent a cent on entertaining.

This amused me. Dude had not reckoned that in this one point he had an almost insurmountable obstacle to overcome. With him it was easy-come, easy-go. Joyce, I believe, even counted her pennies. Probably it was not altogether loneliness, nor a liking for my society,

that made her accompany me. My automobile saved her car-fare! Anyway, that's how I figure it out now.

At the time, I realized that she took me for a silly little fool, who didn't know the value of money—though she never made any objections to my treating her! And herein was "the foolishness of the wise, which is so often confounded in its own conceit!" I felt so complacent with my accomplishments late that afternoon when we returned to the hotel, that I celebrated by permitting that quotation to escape—in the privacy of my suite.

THAT evening "Mr. Innes" paid his second call upon me at the hotel. When I saw him standing in the foyer, I knew that we were nearing the crucial point of the tangle.

At one of those restaurants where the blare of the orchestra drowns conversation—and thus renders it private by building about it a one-foot acoustic limit—I reported the progress I had made.

"That's fine!" he said. "Much better than we expected. It puts the game in our hands." He seemed to concentrate on a problem that he did not care to discuss. At last he spoke. "I have a swell lay already planted for Joyce, and you have made the whole thing easy."

I looked at my *vis-à-vis* curiously, but I didn't ask any questions. I knew he was a close-mouthed individual.

"You see, little girl, I'm taking care of your heart for you. Which is better—for her to be bamboozled by Dude or us?" he said teasingly. "Now, here is where you come in. Take these little pills"—quietly he passed me a small box across the table—"and feed them one at a time to that goggle-eyed pup of yours. It'll make her a bit squeamish—just enough to make her look woebegone. Above all, don't seek out the Millar woman. Let's hope, however, that she is around when you take the dog for one of its airings. Speak about its being sick—you know all that sort of thing better than I can tell you. Well, there's a wonderful 'vet' whose name and address is written on a piece of tissue paper in that box. His place is rather far out and is quite a distance from any other house—the dogs make so much noise, and so on. Bring Joyce and the dog there as soon as you conveniently can. That's all."

The following morning I did not see Joyce at all. I didn't give Mimi her pill until afternoon. Then, when I joined Miss Criswell for tea, I mentioned the fact that I was worried about my pet. She looked at it sympathetically, and suggested that I take it to her dog doctor. I told her I would the next day if Mimi wasn't better.

"Have you seen Mrs. Lewis to-day?" she asked me. I shook my head. "Well, do you know what I think? I believe she's simply breaking her heart over that waster husband of hers. If you ask me, I believe she has taken to drink, and is probably lying up-stairs paralyzed right now. I'm sure you've noticed how nervous she is at times?"

I said I hadn't, but that I myself was of a very nervous temperament. In fact, as I had told her before, I was being treated by a nerve specialist in order to prepare me for the operation on my face.

And speaking of operations—well, Miss Criswell was launched on her favorite topic. She chattered on for an hour or so, until I left her to take Mimi out for some exercise. Another woman had joined us and I took care to excuse myself when the conversation was at one of its most engrossing points.

I had observed Mrs. Lewis crossing the hotel lobby. It seemed, I was quite sure, accidental when I joined her at the entrance. She looked a wreck.

"I see your friend got back last night," she observed listlessly. "You'll miss his car!"

"Well, I won't be able to use it all the time," I laughed, "but I can still have the use of it occasionally. I'm going to call up now, and, if it's in the garage, I'm going to run Mimi out to a noted vet for treatment."

It was a shot at random—like many I had fired during our acquaintance. Some had taken effect; others hadn't.

"Are you going alone?" she asked. I knew she referred to Miss Criswell, whom she had grown to detest and carefully avoided.

"Yes, Miss Criswell is busily engaged in the discussion of that popular subject—'when I had my operation'," I said, and chuckled. "Like to come along?"

"Yes, if you don't mind," she said tonelessly.

"Then just wait until I call up and see if the car is there. Do you mind walking Mimi up and down?"

I knew darned well the car was there, but I went into a telephone-booth and ordered it around.

When we had both donned our wraps and were passing out of the hotel, Joyce observed wistfully:

"You seem to have such a good time always. I'm surprised to see you alone so late in the evening."

"It's not late," I objected. "Just around half past five. Anyway, if Mimi's sick, nobody can drag me away from her to-night. I hope, though, that it is nothing but a little indigestion——"

During the hour which we spent in reaching the address given me by Lennox, I carried on the burden of conversation. Joyce barely spoke. She sagged in the corner of the limousine, despondency in every line of her drooping figure and beautiful, pathetic lips.

WE left the city behind and rolled smoothly through a suburb on the outskirts of which stood the house which was our destination. An attractive place of the bungalow type, it was approached by a rather long drive. Several dogs started barking as the car crunched over the gritty surface.

A large buxom woman, dressed in a nurse's uniform, opened the door. Her back was to the light, leaving her features in the shadow. A pleasant smile parted her lips, but I felt, rather than saw, that the eyes were hard and forbidding.

I always feel nervous when a crisis approaches—fortunately, however, this nervousness quickens my wits rather than stampedes them. What plan was Lennox trying to put over, I wondered.

Before I had finished the thought we had entered the comfortably furnished combination living-room and foyer. A

cheerful fire burned in an open grate. Lennox, in his guise of veterinary, rose to greet us.

Immediately she saw him, Joyce's eyes lost their daze—they opened to their widest extent. She seemed to sense danger at once, and turned towards the front door. The woman who had let us in was standing with her back against it.

"The veterinary?" she said, in a choked voice. "We've come to see the veterinary about a little sick dog——"

"There isn't any veterinary, Mrs. Lewis," I said coldly. "That was merely a stall——"

"Oh! Dude warned me to be careful. He didn't trust you. . . . What do you want with me?" Evidently the woman was so buffaloed that her brain—her educated, clever brain—for the time being, anyhow, was numbed.

"Oh, just those stocks and bonds you deposited with your broker," I forced myself to say airily. "Mr. Lennox will explain."

"Why—you're a thief!" She looked at me in amazement. "How could you do such a thing——"

She really looked so virtuously indignant that I felt an hysterical inclination to laugh aloud.

A loud, long peal at the door-bell interrupted us. Joyce opened her mouth, but, quick as lightning, before the scream which we anticipated burst forth, Lennox had reached her side and placed his hand over her mouth. A whiff of chloroform reached me, and I saw the woman go limp. He picked her up and carried her out of the room.

The woman in nurse's garb opened the door. A man burst in. It was Dude.

"Where's my wife?" he demanded of me. His eyes glared wildly, as he seized me roughly by the shoulders. "I told her to look out for you, you little devil. Somewhere, I've seen you before——"

"Cut out the rough stuff, Dude; the little girl was simply working under my orders. I recognized 'Mrs Lewis'—she worked in a bank where I did a little business once—and I just wondered how she came to have so much jack."

Lennox, *sans* make-up, had reappeared on the scene. He stood regarding Dude with an amused smile on his lips, a deadly automatic in his hand. The forger's face went white with rage.

"Really, your coming here is quite opportune," Lennox continued. "It will save us quite a few complications."

"Slick Lennox!" Dude muttered, with a string of oaths. He knew Lennox's reputation. "You're not going to get away with this!" he sputtered after a long minute's cold silence. "I don't know exactly what you're up to——"

"OH, I'm going to give you all the details in good time," Lennox answered smoothly. "In fact, I have an idea you are going to help us. And, by the bye, I purloined a few of those checks you had signed all ready for distribution. Come on, now, up-stairs, where we'll have a little chat. I know you never carry a gat, but there is something else I would like to frisk you for. I can't do it in the presence of this little lady. This is what you get for butting in—now march!"

Dude took no chances. He marched.

A lithe, dapper, meticulously dressed chap is Dude, with dark, romantic eyes which effect deadly work on susceptible ladies. Before becoming a forger he had been a very successful he-vamp—that, however, had never interfered with his mania for the gaming-tables.

When the two men left the room, I turned to the nurse, who had gone up-stairs during Lennox's encounter with Dude, but had now returned and was seated at the fireside, tranquilly crocheting.

"Oh, I do hope that poor kid won't suffer very much," I said, half to myself, for I certainly didn't expect to find responsive understanding in the hard-featured woman.

"Oh, don't worry about that, dearie," she said, heartlessly. "She'll suffer, of course, but I'll help her a bit. When I was a matron in the Raymond Street Jail I got lots of 'em. That flossie up-stairs managed to inhale a good-sized 'drift' before I got to her. She's laughing now—defiant and all that sort of thing—but just wait a few hours. I took away all she had on her——"

Another peal at the bell! This time two long-drawn-out peals!

Without showing any evidence of agitation, the ex-matron got to her feet with a lack of effort astonishing in one of her bulk, and went to the door.

I heard the murmur of voices. Then the door was closed. The woman, who now introduced herself to me as Mrs. Watson, returned and complacently resumed her crocheting.

Nor did the sounds of someone working on the door perturb her. She offered no explanation, and so I asked who had rung the bell and if she heard some one scratching on the door.

"Oh, yes, that's a man come to take down the vet signs," she said, "and to take away the dogs. I'll say that showman Delasco ain't got anything on Mr. Lennox for setting a stage."

Lennox came down about half an hour later, and told me to return the following day.

"You ve done great work, kid," he congratulated me. "The rest is going to be easy."

"But won't they miss Joyce Millar at the hotel?" I had been worrying over that part of the scheme.

"No, not until the day after to-morrow, anyway," he said. "She doesn't usually rise until late, and 'someone' will see that her bed is mussed up as if she had been sleeping there. Dude stays out all night quite often, anyway. Now run along and have a good rest and come back to-morrow."

I WAS glad to get out of the place. Away from the house where I knew the unfortunate ex-secretary was facing the sudden withdrawal of her drug, I might be able to banish from my mind the agonies and tortures beyond description which she would undergo.

The matron was, of course, remaining overnight.

It was around two o'clock in the afternoon of the following day before Joyce gave in and promised to follow instructions. Mercifully, I was spared the sight of her sufferings. It was the Dude, to whom the money meant far less than it did to the "financial wizard," who caved in first.

Lennox sent me a typewritten note signed by Mrs. Frederick Lewis and directing that her bonds be delivered to me—her "secretary."

"Mrs. Lewis is leaving town," I explained at the broker's. "She is going back to New York and she has received a tip that there was a mistake about Cantbeat Candy. She is going to hold on to the bonds she has for a little while."

I tried to be very ingenious about it and handed them a check to cover the charge for their services. It was signed by Mrs. Lewis, but the amount had been left blank. I think I put it over very well, but where so many thousands of dollars are concerned, brokers are canny customers. They carefully compared the signatures of the letter and check with Mrs. Lewis's signature which they had on file. Then, before handing the bonds over to me, they called up the hotel and asked for Mrs. Lewis.

This didn't faze me in the least, for the last thing I had done before entering the broker's office was to telephone the hotel myself from a public booth near by to make sure the girl operative we had planted in Mrs. Lewis's room was there to answer in Mrs. Lewis's peculiarly artificial accents.

Lennox let Dude go as soon as I returned with the bonds. Dude didn't dare betray Lennox, and reprisal wasn't in his scheme of life. But Joyce was kept. Her "husband" didn't want to be encumbered with her, anyway. What would have happened to her, heaven only knows, if Mr. Browne had not directed her removal to a sanitarium for drug addicts.

WE found that Joyce had been speculating a little, and that the value of her bonds was $105,000. The difference was spent, with Menken's approval, for curing Joyce of the drug habit. "But won't she suspect that, since we kept the exact amount she stole, we must have been working for Menken?" I asked Mr. Browne, for usually he covered every possible contingency.

"No, she really thinks the bonds were stolen from her," he said, with a smile. "That hard-boiled police matron acted the part of a benevolent—even if criminal—soul. She really nursed the girl very kindly. Then, when Miss Millar was in a condition to listen to reason, Mrs. Watson told her of a sanitarium where she could pay for treatment by doing some kind of light work."

"And how did the sanitarium people come to play up?"

I was still puzzled.

"Oh, with them also Mrs. Watson played a little part. Told them that she was a relative of Joyce Millar and that if the young lady knew how expensive the treatment was she would refuse to take it. Also, that work should really be her salvation—and it will be."

Mr. Browne was right. Joyce Millar entered the sanitarium three years ago. With her innate gift of taking on the tone of her surroundings, she became intensely interested in the work and, when she was cured, entered a hospital as probationer. She is now great friends with Mrs. Watson, and leads a happy, useful existence.

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Exact reproduction of a real pistol: actually fires Real BLANK CARTRIDGES of miniature size. Illustration is actual size. 1¼ inches long, with ring at end for attaching to watch chain. Looks like a regular pistol. Pull the trigger and it goes off with a loud bang. Pistol is break-open type; illustration shows position for loading. Made entirely of high grade steel, nickel plated, octagon barrel, handsomely engraved handles, complete in box with cleaning rod. **PRICE $1.75.** or with **pearl handles. $2.50. BLANK CARTRIDGES 50c** box of 25.

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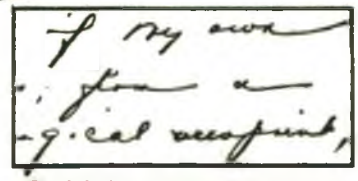

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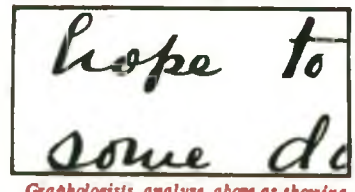

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