

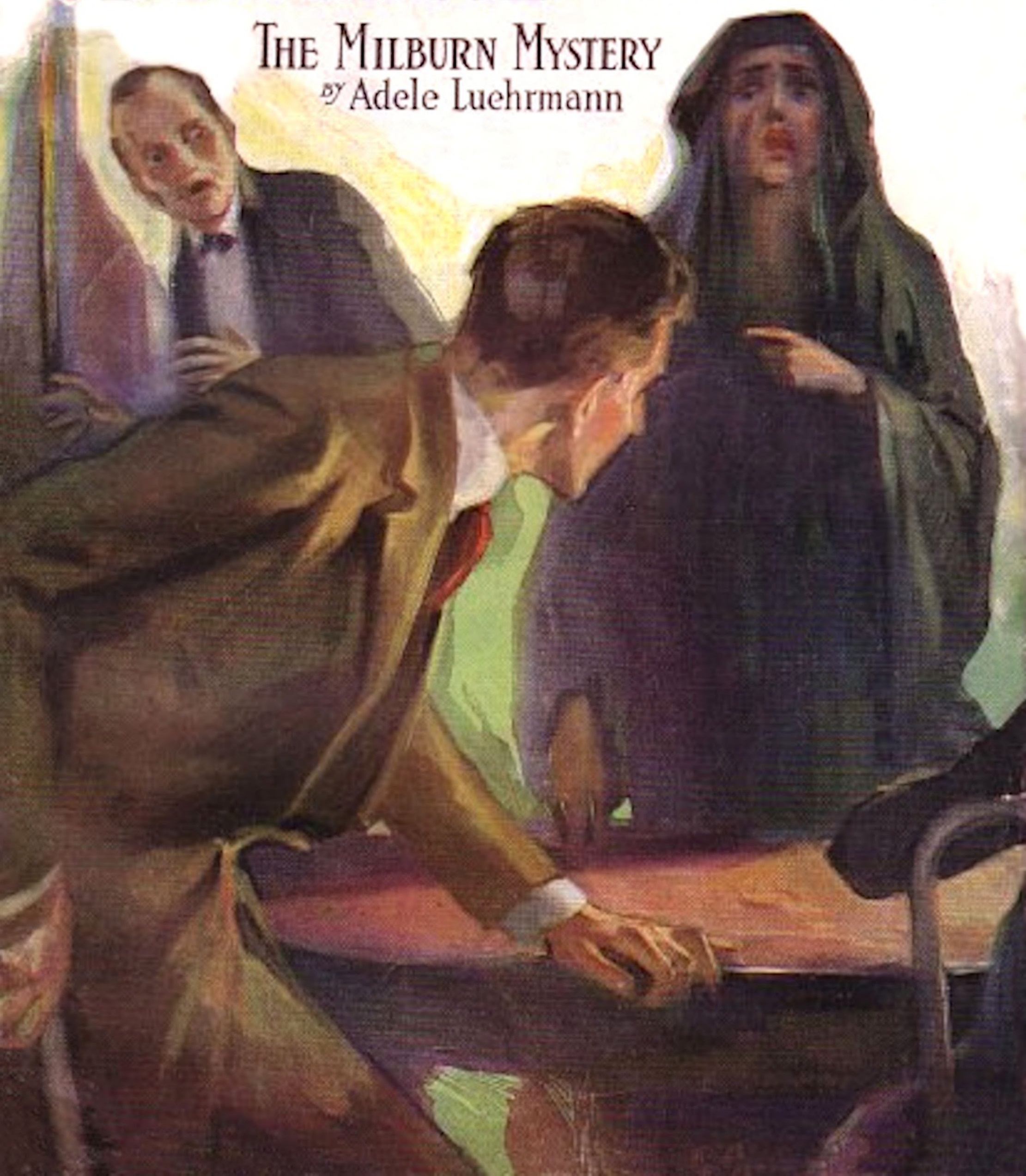
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MAGAZINE *EVERY WEEK*

THE MILBURN MYSTERY
by Adele Luehrmann





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Vol. XLII

July 23, 1921

No. 1

The Milburn Mystery

By Adele Luehrmann

Author of "The Girl in the Squirrel Cap," etc.

CHAPTER I.

RIPE OLIVES.

A LITTLE French place in the East Sixties," is perhaps as good a way as another to begin a description of Pigot's, although "a little French place" will doubtless suggest different things to different people. There are little French places in the West Forties, for instance, in low-ceiled basements of run-down lodging houses. Here the tablecloths are flimsy and frequently soiled, and here, more often than not, a black cat wanders about under the tables, or on them, for luck.

Pigot's, to be sure, is also in a basement, but a glorified basement, from which rises one of New York's highest and haughtiest apartment houses—an

apartment house so haughty, indeed, that the proletariat approaches at its peril, no safety zone for pedestrians being provided on the semicircular driveway that skirts the entrance. The approach to Pigot's is naturally more democratic. It looks, in fact, like a service entrance. New patrons probably glance twice at the modest sign at the top of the concrete steps that lead to the door of the restaurant before venturing to descend. Once through the door all doubts flee. There is no black cat there. Pigot is his own mascot and is seldom visible. He does not indeed believe in luck. It is for the lazy, he thinks—or did so think until an eventful day in March convinced him that bad luck, at any rate, exists for all.

What came of that day in March for

the little restaurateur began at the moment when he encountered Georges, one of his waiters, coming on duty for luncheon.

"*Mon dieu! Qu'avez-vous?*" asked Pigot, with a start.

Georges replied that he had nothing, meaning thereby that there was nothing the matter with him, that he was perfectly well. His appearance, however, belied his words, and his employer told him so. He told him, in short, that he resembled a dead man. Hereupon Georges reluctantly admitted that he had suffered during the night from a slight digestive disturbance. He insisted, however, that he had fully recovered. Pigot, for response, sent him home, declaring that no appetite could survive the sight of him.

The affair of Georges thus quickly disposed of, Pigot assumed that he was through with it. But this was a mistake, and he was not long in discovering it. Hardly had Georges vanished when Gaston appeared. Monsieur was wanted at the telephone.

"By whom?"

"A gentleman of *The Universe*."

Pigot stared inquiringly, but Gaston knew no more. The gentleman of *The Universe* had not stated his reason for requesting the ear of Monsieur Pigot.

"*Bien*," said the latter with a resigned lift of his fat shoulders. "One might think," he remarked to himself as he made his leisurely way to the telephone, "that these gentlemen of the newspapers would have at last arrived at the idea that it was useless to annoy me; one might suppose they would finally have comprehended my refusal to advertise my restaurant in their columns; one might even imagine that they would have perceived the disadvantage to an exclusive place like Pigot's of the indiscriminating patronage of the general public. But no! Not at all! The gentlemen of the newspapers arrive at no ideas, they perceive

and comprehend nothing." This soliloquy was enforced with the proper gestures.

"Allô?" he murmured into the receiver, carefully keeping out of his voice any reflection of his uncomplimentary remarks.

"Hello?" a brisk voice responded. "Is that Mr. Pigot? This is *The Universe*. Did Samuel Milburn and his party-take supper at your place last night?"

"*Pardon?*" Pigot had heard the question distinctly. He was merely indicating that he considered it a liberty.

"This is *The Universe*," repeated the voice in a louder and slightly impatient tone. "I asked you if Samuel Milburn had supper at your place last night?"

"Mr. Milburn?"

"Yes. Can't you hear me? Did Milburn eat at your joint last night?"

"I have heard you, monsieur." Pigot did not raise his voice in the least. "I regret that I cannot give you the information you desire. It is not our custom to——"

"What's that? You can't give me the information? Say"—with an abrupt change of tone—"maybe you don't know that Milburn's dying and his wife's already dead from something they ate at your place!"

Pigot had given a violent start. "*Pas possible!*" he exclaimed.

"What's that you say?"

"I say it is not possible," the Frenchman declared, controlling his voice with difficulty.

"Not possible! Don't I tell you it's so? Now, what I want to know is just what they had to eat and who were in the party. I know his daughter was, because she's sick, too. Who were the others, and what did they have?"

A faintness, the nausea of horror, had seized Pigot while he listened, but it was not caused by what he heard. He had suddenly remembered Georges.

Georges had waited on the Milburn party.

"I must ask you to excuse me," he managed by a superhuman effort to articulate. "I regret. I cannot speak more. I am very occupied. I regret."

He hung up the receiver and for a full minute sat motionless, staring at ruin. Then he rallied his faculties. What could it have been? The lobster? He must see Georges at once.

But Georges had gone, and on second thought Pigot was not sorry. It would have been a mistake, he reflected, to have questioned the waiter within sight, and, perhaps, hearing, of the rest of the staff who for the time being—until after luncheon, at least—need know nothing. Better to follow Georges to his home and have a little talk with him there, quite privately.

Yes, he would go at once. He must know at once from which of the dishes, served at the Milburn supper, Georges had eaten. That determined, he would know on whom to place the blame. For the issue could not be evaded. If his telephone communication from *The Universe* was true he had heard only the beginning of the matter.

He found Georges just crawling into bed. Closing the door of the room carefully, Pigot sat down beside him and told him what had happened.

"What did you eat last night, Georges, to make you so ill?" he asked.

"Nothing, monsieur. I drank only a little coffee that was left in one of the cups."

"Coffee? But did not all take coffee?"

"All but Mr. Milburn, the father. I remember perfectly that he did not."

"Then it cannot have been the coffee that made him ill, nor you, perhaps."

"I took nothing else, monsieur."

"Your illness at that time may have been merely a coincidence."

"I am never ill, monsieur. Never,

at any rate, like that. I thought I should die. And I took nothing, monsieur, I swear it, except the half cup of coffee which mademoiselle left."

"Then she drank only half a cup and is now ill, and some who drank all are not. How can it have been the coffee, then?"

"I do not know, monsieur. I drank nothing else." And to this assertion the waiter clung.

Hurrying back to his restaurant Pigot saw it safely through the stress of the luncheon hour, and, that over, he went out again. The afternoon papers were on the news stands now, and his first glance at *The Universe* caught the name Milburn in a headline. Securing a copy he read as follows:

Samuel J. Milburn, well-known business man of New York, is dying at his home of ptomaine poisoning. His wife died early this morning from the same cause, and his daughter, Miss Elspeth Milburn, is also ill, though she is expected to recover. The family dined at home, having as guests Mr. Milburn's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Milburn. Later they all went to the theater where they were joined by two friends, Wallace Clarkson and Paul Udoff. After the theater the entire party had supper at Pigot's, a French restaurant in East Sixty-fourth Street, very popular with fashionable New Yorkers. Something eaten there, it is thought, and not at the Milburn home, must have been the cause of illness. None of the Milburn servants are ill, it is said, and one of the guests, who joined the party only for the theater and supper, Paul Udoff, an artist, is also under the care of a physician. Mr. and Mrs. Alan Milburn and Mr. Clarkson are so far in their usual health.

It was shortly after one o'clock when Doctor Hamilton Smith, the family physician, was summoned to the Milburn home. He found Mrs. Milburn in a comatose condition from which she never rallied, dying half an hour later. Mr. Milburn was suffering intensely, and Miss Milburn, though less ill than her father, was also in great pain. Today she is reported to be out of danger, but no hope is entertained of Mr. Milburn's recovery. Doctor Hamilton Smith has called several prominent specialists in consultation, and everything that medical science can do

is being done, but the end is considered to be merely a question of hours.

Mr. Alan Milburn, who has been in constant attendance at his father's bedside since being summoned from his Long Island home early this morning, stated that he was at a loss to understand the cause of illness, as he and his wife had partaken quite as freely as the rest of the family of all the dishes served, both at dinner and supper, and yet had not been in the least ill. He was of the opinion, he said, that the cause lay in something eaten at the restaurant, because illness had not developed until after supper, and because Mr. Udoff, who was also ill, had not dined with them.

Mr. Udoff's physician pronounced his patient out of danger. He could not say, he stated, what had caused the artist's illness. He had been called about half past one, he said, and had found Mr. Udoff suffering greatly from pain and nausea.

Mrs. Milburn, who, as has been stated, was unconscious when the doctor reached her and died shortly afterward, was the second wife of Mr. Milburn, their marriage having taken place about a year ago, in Paris. She was, before becoming Mr. Milburn's wife, an actress in musical comedy and was known on the stage as Cecile Bellaire. Famous for her beauty she was well known in artistic circles, having posed for a number of distinguished artists during her earlier professional years. Her marriage to Mr. Milburn came as a great surprise to his friends and is said to have estranged his family for a time.

An attempt to secure a statement from Jean Pigot, proprietor of the restaurant where the Milburn party had supper, resulted in failure, Mr. Pigot declining to discuss the matter.

Pigot read the account a second time, then put the paper in his pocket and returned to his place of business. There Gaston, who met him at the door, informed him that Mr. Wallace Clarkson was waiting to see him. Clarkson? He had been one of the supper party! "I shall hear something now," said Pigot, and lost no time in reaching his private room where the caller was waiting.

Mr. Clarkson was a tall, good-looking young man with a thin face and keen blue eyes.

"I am here at the request of Mr.

Alan Milburn," he said, speaking in a quick, businesslike way. "The specialists in attendance on his father have reached the conclusion that his condition is due to the eating of infected olives."

"Olives!" Pigot was taken aback.

"Yes, it is thought that the ripe olives served to our party here last night must have been infected. There have been a number of deaths lately from that cause, as you have no doubt noted in the papers. I have been asked to investigate the matter—very naturally, as I am a chemist and have made laboratory tests of bad olives a number of times lately. I should like to test some of those from which we were served last night."

"Certainly," Pigot replied. "I will fetch the bottle."

He went directly to the pantry refrigerator. Ripe olives were so seldom ordered by his patrons that he thought a bottle had probably been opened for the Milburn party and could hardly have been emptied. But he was mistaken. The bottle had been emptied, thrown out, and carried away by the garbage wagon that morning.

"Too bad," said Clarkson. "That leaves the question open. No blame attaches to you, however. The responsibility for infected olives rests entirely on the firm that bottled them. The infection occurs before the bottles are sealed. That fact has been fully established. So you need feel no anxiety, whatever."

"Nevertheless, I do, monsieur," returned Pigot. "I shall have the newspapers, the health department, even the police, perhaps, about my ears directly."

"No doubt," said Clarkson. "But they must all accept the conclusions of Mr. Milburn's physicians, who, as I have said, are of the opinion that his illness is due to olive poisoning. And that decision frees you of all responsibility. You might, it is true, be made

a joint defendant with the firm that issued the olives originally, were the Milburns disposed to claim damages, but they have no such intention."

"It will be imagined, however, that I buy inferior goods," Pigot lamented. "When, on the contrary, I buy always the best of everything."

"No one can doubt it who has the good fortune to be one of your patrons," replied Clarkson graciously. "The fact remains, however, that the illness of several members of our party is due to something eaten here, and you are unwise, it seems to me, to quarrel with a decision so favorable to you. If the olive theory were disproved another explanation would have to be found for Mr. Milburn's illness and his wife's death, and this might please you even less. Do you see?"

Pigot made no reply. Was he being threatened, he wondered. The cold, shrewd, young eyes, that looked into his, seemed to say that, if he knew what was good for him, he would leave well-enough alone.

"You needn't worry," continued Clarkson. "The newspapers may cause you some annoyance, but the Milburn family, I can assure you positively, will take no action against you. The responsibility, as I have said, lies with the firm that put the olives up. Whose olives were they, by the way?"

"Walters & Scott. There are no better ones to be had."

"Well, refer the board of health to them. Let them fight it out between them. And now, another thing. I asked to see the waiter that served our party last night and was told that he is at home, sick."

Pigot hesitated a moment, then, on a sudden decision, he replied: "Yes, monsieur, he was very ill last night—after the supper."

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yes, monsieur, and he had eaten no olives. He had eaten nothing. He had

merely emptied a demi-tasse that remained half full of coffee."

Clarkson's face changed at this announcement. It seemed to Pigot to grow tense, and his eyes to sharpen. "Coffee!" he murmured. "How could the coffee have made him ill?"

Pigot gave a shrug for answer.

"It could not have been the coffee," said Clarkson positively, "because Mr. Milburn, who is dying, drank no coffee. He never takes it at night." A pause, then: "You don't happen to know, I suppose, whose cup the waiter drank from?"

"From the cup of Miss Milburn, monsieur."

Again Clarkson's face tightened, but his voice betrayed nothing. "In that case," he answered, "it would seem that it might have been the coffee, since she, too, is ill. On the other hand, I, who drank a full cup, am quite well."

Pigot's shoulders rose again, but he said nothing.

"It was certainly not the coffee, whatever it was," declared Clarkson in a tone of finality. "But the fact that the waiter was also ill is additional proof, were any needed, that the cause of illness was something eaten here. In my mind it was unquestionably the olives. The olives were the only dish served of which all did not eat. I did not touch them, neither did Mr. Alan Milburn. His wife ate some, but her system was apparently able to resist the infection, which in olives is due to a germ and so meets with different degrees of resistance in different organisms. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Milburn were particularly fond of ripe olives and doubtless ate more of them last night than either Miss Milburn or Mr. Udoff, or were less able to resist the effects.

"So you see, Mr. Pigot," Clarkson concluded, "even if we had not the opinion of the specialists who are attending Mr. Milburn, we should still,

by a process of elimination, arrive at the olives as the cause of illness. This is fortunate for you, as I have already pointed out."

He went away, and Pigot, a few minutes later, hurried off for a second talk with Georges whom he was relieved to find much improved. Again he questioned him. Was he quite sure he had eaten nothing last night when he removed the dishes of the Milburn supper party—not even an olive, for example?

Georges made an involuntary grimace. The olives served had been ripe ones, the taste of which he could not endure. Certainly he had not eaten any.

Pigot nodded. "I was sure of it," he said.

The expected visits from the health department, press, and police were in progress when he again reached his restaurant. He suffered them with patience and with tact, repeated to the investigators Clarkson's remarks on the case, and sent them away at last with unopened bottles of ripe olives, bearing the label of Walters & Scott. After all, he said to his conscience, he did not know as much about the matter as the distinguished physicians who had pronounced upon it.

The remainder of the day passed without further developments, but, from the conversation that crossed his dinner and supper tables concerning the Milburn affair, interesting gleanings reached his ears through the waiters.

The elder Milburn had been jealous of his wife who had given him ample cause. This bit of gossip was the one most often repeated. Others were that Miss Milburn had been engaged to Clarkson and had broken the engagement for love of the artist Udoff; that Mrs. Milburn had been in love with Udoff; that Mrs. Milburn had been in love with Clarkson and had caused the breaking of his engagement to her step-

daughter; that Miss Milburn was completely under her stepmother's influence; that Miss Milburn hated her stepmother and tolerated her only for her father's sake; that Alan Milburn had for a long time refused to allow his wife to meet his stepmother, but that his sister had brought about a reconciliation; that the reconciliation had been due to Clarkson who was a cousin of Mrs. Alan Milburn; that Samuel Milburn had threatened to cut his son out of his will unless he changed his attitude to his stepmother. And so on and on, until it was impossible to know what to believe.

One thing alone seemed clear: there had not been entire harmony in the Milburn family.

CHAPTER II.

PARISIAN PERSPICACITY.

ON the following morning Samuel Milburn's death was announced in the papers and attributed definitely to infected olives. From the nature of the case and the prominence of the Milburn family it was inevitable that much space should have been given to the tragedy in the press, but, as Clarkson had predicted, the storm center was not Pigot's, but the firm of Walters & Scott. These gentlemen protested vigorously against the conclusions drawn in the affair, and it was evident that a conflict between them and the Federal health authorities would be the outcome. Beyond that Pigot heard nothing. The case gave way gradually to fresher news, and he thought he had probably heard the last of it when, at the end of the week, as the luncheon hour was waning, Henri Lacasse, by walking into the restaurant and demanding its proprietor, opened the second chapter.

Lacasse, though short and decidedly stout, was nevertheless of impressive appearance. With more black than

white in his thick, crisp hair, a complexion still youthfully fresh, bright eyes, and an almost rakish mustache, he would never have been suspected of being a grandfather. Yet it was solely for the purpose of bestowing his blessing on the daughter of his daughter, wife of a former American soldier, that he had crossed the Atlantic. Having satisfied himself that all was well with these loved ones he was on his way back to Paris to resume the duties of an inspector of police. He had that morning arrived in New York and, with a few days to spare before sailing, was looking up old friends.

This he explained in a sentence to Pigot who had been a boy about the same time and in the same French village as himself, but whom he had not seen in many years. It had been, he added, the happy accident of seeing Pigot's name in a recent newspaper that had made possible their reunion.

From this remark to the Milburn case was so direct a transition, and the affair was still so fresh in Pigot's mind, that he must almost certainly have brought it up for discussion, even had his visitor not been an inspector of police. Lacasse being just that, the story flowed into his ears as inevitably as a river flows into the sea. He received it in attentive silence, nodding responsively now and then, but saying not a word until Pigot had reached a full stop and with a gesture demanded a reply.

"What is the present status of the case as regards Walters & Scott?" Lacasse asked at once.

Pigot made a face expressing commiseration. "They are not happy, naturally. Their plant is being investigated, I believe, and, if the result of the investigation is to their credit, they will not suffer, except in public estimation."

"I see," murmured Lacasse thoughtfully. "It occurred to me that it might

be worth while—however that can wait. It is evident that you do not accept the olive hypothesis. What then remains?"

"That of the coffee," returned Pigot promptly.

His companion looked skeptical. "Let me talk to the waiter, Georges," he said.

Georges came, a robust young man with an intelligent face and the air of being honest and of taking life seriously.

"The coffee, monsieur?" he repeated, replying to the first question put to him. "No, monsieur, I noticed nothing about the taste—no bitterness—nothing unaccustomed. I gave it no attention at the moment, however."

"You are sure that Mr. Milburn, the father, declined coffee?"

"I recall perfectly that he did so, monsieur. The gentleman who sat next, his son, I think, remarked the fact, and the father replied that he would sleep better without coffee."

"The father and son sat side by side, you think?"

"Yes, monsieur. There were four gentlemen and only three ladies. Naturally two of the gentlemen sat together."

"Naturally. It was a round table, I imagine?"

"It was, monsieur."

"And how were the rest of the party seated?"

"As to that I do not recall, monsieur."

"Well, let us see." Lacasse thought a moment. "The two gentlemen, whom we have seated, have not their own wives beside them, that is certain. It is also improbable that mademoiselle was seated beside either her father or brother, since there were two unmarried gentlemen present. We conclude then that the elder Milburn had his daughter-in-law next him, and the son

his stepmother. It remains then only to discover which of the two bachelors had the honor of the chair on the right of madame, the hostess. You do not know that, Georges?"

"I regret that I did not observe, monsieur."

"Did you, perhaps, hear anything of interest in the conversation?"

"No, monsieur, I regret."

"Was the supper party gay, or otherwise?"

"Gay, monsieur, though not too gay."

"Very well." He dismissed Georges.

"And now, my friend," continued Lacasse, "let us consider the question of motive. You suspect a crime, that is clear, of which this young Clarkson is the perpetrator. If a crime has been committed there was a motive for it—a very strong motive, one may conclude."

"Assuredly," agreed Pigot.

"And what was that motive? Money, love, or revenge?"

"Money." Pigot seemed to have no doubts on the point. "Who gains by the two deaths that have occurred?" he demanded rhetorically. "The son and daughter. And if the daughter had died, also, as was evidently the intention of the murderer, no one would have gained but the son who would then have inherited his father's entire estate."

"It is young Milburn then, not Clarkson, whom you suspect?"

"I suspect both. Those two and the wife of one are the three persons who have not been ill, you will observe."

"I have observed it." The tone of Lacasse was noticeably dry, but his companion was too engrossed in his argument to detect the fact.

"Revenge may also have played a part," Pigot went on. "The marriage of Milburn to a young woman of the theater, so soon after the death of his first wife, was not, it is said, agreeable to his children. But love, no! In my

opinion love had no more to do with the affair than—than olives!"

"I shall not contradict you until I am better informed of the facts," replied Lacasse genially. "It is hardly wise, however, to leave love out of one's calculations where men and women are concerned. It is the master passion, remember."

"A man does not attempt to murder two women for love," Pigot protested.

"One only is dead," returned Lacasse quietly. "The weakness of your theory, my friend, lies in this, that it disregards the illness of the artist, Udoff."

Pigot was silent.

"I have still to-day and to-morrow in New York," Lacasse continued, "and it will interest me to glance into this affair. I shall first go and have a look at these two young men."

"On what pretexts?"

"To Clarkson I shall pretend that I have olives which I wish to send to his laboratory to be tested. The pretext for Milburn requires careful thought, as it must open for me not only the door of his office, but of his father's home, the home of the beautiful woman who is dead. She interests me, that lovely lady. I desire to see her portrait. There must be portraits of her in her home. A beautiful woman, who is the friend of artists, must have been painted many times. There will, of course, be a portrait, if not two or three, in her home. I wish to see them. I desire to look into the eyes of this woman."

"*Cherchez la femme!*" exclaimed Pigot with a laugh.

"Laugh, if it pleases you," returned Lacasse, his good humor unruffled. "I, an inspector of police, do not laugh. I am experienced. I have also a nose for these things. And I say to you that if we could recall from the dead the spirit of that woman it could tell us something of this affair."

"Recall it, then!" said Pigot. "Why not? It is at present the fashion to return from the dead. Without doubt the lady will be ravished with the idea. It is so chic."

Lacasse rose. "I perceive, my dear Jean, that I must teach you a lesson," he said, nodding his head sagely. "You are still the same Jean Pigot who would not believe the earth moved because he could not see it do so, until the cure explained the matter with a switch."

CHAPTER III.

A DRY POINT AND PAINT.

THE Clarkson laboratory proved to be a small, but very workmanlike, place which obviously did not expect, nor desire visitors. Entering it, Lacasse found himself intruding on the privacy of a red-haired youth occupied in arranging a large array of bottles on a shelf.

"I wish to see Mr. Clarkson," said Lacasse in the excellent English that was one of his professional assets.

"He's out," said the youth.

"When will he return?"

"He didn't say."

"I have been told that you make tests of olives," Lacasse continued. "When shall I find Mr. Clarkson here?"

"In the morning, usually, but, if he's not here, you can leave the olives with me. What kind are they?"

"I do not recall the name on the label."

"The reason I ask," said the youth, "is that we've tested out a lot of the different brands since this olive scare started, and, if you knew your brand, I might be able to satisfy your mind without your having a test made. Come along, I'll show you."

Lacasse found himself presently facing a tier of shelves on which were ranged dozens of bottles of olives.

"These are all right," said his guide, indicating the main line of bottles.

"Those are not. I'll show you." He reached for one of the second and smaller group as he spoke, and frowned when it failed to leave the shelf at a touch. They're all stuck up with paint," he explained, loosening the bottle by force. "Shelf wasn't quite dry when they were put there. Now you see"—uncorking the bottle and holding it to Lacatte's nose—"the bad ones generally have a funny smell that you can tell if you know it. Do you get it?"

Lacasse sniffed attentively. "There is an odor, certainly, but I am not sure that——"

"Well, it's hard to tell if you don't know it." The bottle was returned to its place. "See any like yours there?"

Lacasse shook his head.

"Well, bring 'em in and we'll test 'em. But I guess they're all right. The bad ones have mostly been put up at home."

"Ah, indeed!" Lacasse pricked up his ears.

"Yes, under unsanitary conditions. Can't blame anybody for being careful, though, after the Milburn case. Read about that?"

Lacasse nodded.

"Well, it's a funny thing," the youth went on. "Mrs. Milburn was scared to death of something like that happening because she and her husband were eating ripe olives right along. So she came here and got us to show her which were all right and which were not, and she even wrote down the names of the different brands so she wouldn't forget. Stood right here and copied 'em down. And, after all that trouble, she died from eating bad ones. Funny, wasn't it?"

"It was indeed strange," agreed Lacasse, with a flattering air of interest. "The lady, I am told, was very beautiful?"

"She sure was. Used to be an actress, you know."

"I have heard so. You have often seen her here?"

"No, just that once. But Miss Milburn, her stepdaughter, you know, used to come here a lot when she and Mr. Clarkson were engaged. But now——"

He checked himself, suddenly conscious, apparently, that he was talking too freely to this agreeable stranger. He stopped just in time, for, as he murmured something about getting back to his work, the laboratory door opened, and his employer entered. "That's Mr. Clarkson," he said to Lacasse.

The latter turned at once to meet the newcomer, glad that this unexpected arrival would save him the trouble of another visit. Lacasse repeated his little tale about olives and studied the strong, keen face before him, as he spoke.

"Very well. Send your olives in. I'll give you a report on them," said Clarkson when Lacasse paused.

"What will the charge be?" Lacasse asked, for the sake of prolonging the interview.

"Nothing," was the answer. "The laboratory is a private one for experimental work. We make tests for outsiders now and then, merely as an accommodation."

"Thank you." Lacasse went his way.

His next port of call was the office of the stock-brokerage firm, Samuel Milburn & Co., and, by the time he had reached it, he had contrived a satisfactory pretext for his visit. The card he sent in to Mr. Alan Milburn was a personal one, bearing only his name, and the young man greeted him by it with a cordiality that left no doubt that he thought he was welcoming a prospective customer.

Alan Milburn, Lacasse saw at a glance, was not the equal in any respect of his friend Clarkson. If there existed a guilty pact between them the

latter was without doubt the brains of it.

"My errand is unusual," said the Frenchman, while he measured young Milburn. "And I regret that it reopens a painful subject. I refer to the death of your father."

At this preface the young broker's welcoming smile faded. He stared in wonder, waiting for his caller to continue.

"I am a friend of Mr. Pigot—of the Restaurant Pigot," Lacasse explained. "Mr. Pigot feels much distress because of his unfortunate association with this sad affair. He feels that a cloud hangs upon him."

"But that's absurd," returned Milburn. "Nobody blames him. It was a terrible thing, but he was not to blame for it and shouldn't feel that he was."

"He does not—that is precisely the point," Lacasse replied quietly. "He does not believe that the olives served in his restaurant were the cause of the illness and deaths that followed."

"It was something else served there, then," declared the young man.

"Why are you so sure of that?" demanded Lacasse. "Why may it not have been olives eaten by your father and madame, his wife, in their home. They were, I am told, very fond of olives."

"Yes, they were," the son admitted frankly. "And they ate olives at dinner that evening. But we know that the cause of their deaths was something eaten at supper, because Mr. Udoff was also ill, and he did not dine with us."

"His illness may have been due to quite another cause. Its occurrence that night may have been a coincidence merely. Life is full of such coincidences. For example, the waiter who served you was also ill, but not from the olives, as he ate none. May I ask if the olives in your father's home have been tested?"

"Why—no."

"Ah!" Lacasse was delighted at this reply. "But was that quite fair—fair to Pigot?" he asked. "Should not a test have been made in justice to him?"

"It wasn't anything eaten at dinner," Alan Milburn returned emphatically. "None of my father's servants were ill."

"Perhaps they ate no olives," Lacasse argued. "It is not a universal taste. Have they been questioned?"

"I don't know whether they have or not." There was more than a hint of impatience in the tone of the reply. "But I can't see why Pigot should worry. It isn't going to hurt his business. And we're not going to sue him or anything."

"Assuredly not! I understand that very well. But you will not object, I suppose, to the servants being questioned—by me, for example?"

"They're not there any more. The apartment's been closed, and my sister is living with me."

"How unfortunate!" Lacasse made a little gesture of regret. "But there remain, perhaps, some of the olives that were served at dinner?" he asked hopefully.

"Maybe so. But the apartment, as I've told you, is closed. There's nobody there." The young man spoke curtly, taking out his watch as he did so.

At once his caller rose. "I see that I am detaining you. I regret," he said courteously.

"That's all right." Milburn rose also. "Just tell Pigot not to worry. We don't hold him responsible."

Lacasse shrugged hopelessly. "I have already assured him of that, monsieur," he responded. "But he does not listen. He talks always of the injustice that has been done him. He wishes, in fact, to write a letter to the newspapers."

"The newspapers!" Milburn was startled. "What for?"

"To vindicate himself, monsieur. He thinks it was not his olives which caused the death of your father and of madame, but those which they had eaten at dinner. And I had the idea that, if any of those remained and could be tested, it would perhaps satisfy my friend that no injustice had been shown to him."

"I see." Milburn frowned thoughtfully. "I don't know whether there are any olives there," he went on in an irresolute tone. "But we can go up and see, if you like."

"I should be very glad to do so, monsieur."

"Well, all right. Want to go now?"

"When you like, monsieur."

"All right, then." The young man's tone was still hesitant, despite his words, but he turned to his desk and took from a drawer a bunch of keys. Then he put on his overcoat and hat.

The trip uptown was made in the subway where the noise makes conversation almost impossible, but, even after they had emerged and were walking through a quiet side street toward Park Avenue, Milburn seemed indisposed to talk. To his companion's remarks about the superiority of the winter climate of New York to that of other large cities of the world he replied in an absent-minded way, and it was obvious that he was thinking about more personal matters.

Suddenly he stopped. "I've got to telephone—forgot something," he said. "Mind going back to that drug store?"

They turned and retraced their steps, but had hardly entered the drug store when Milburn wheeled. "Guess I won't. It can wait," he mumbled, and they continued their walk. The excuse, however, did not deceive Lacasse. He attributed the change of mind to the fact that the public telephone in the drug store was not in a booth, but in the open, making privacy impossible.

The apartment house, in which the

elder Milburn had resided, was large and high and imposing, only a trifle less so than that which towered above Pigot's. An elevator carried them to one of the uppermost stories, and there young Milburn unlocked a door and led the way across the threshold.

"Think I'll have to phone, after all," he said, as he closed the door behind them. Opening one across the hall he invited his companion through it, adding politely, "If you won't mind?"

"Not at all," answered Lacasse. He might truthfully have said that he would be delighted. For the room which he faced was, he saw, the salon, and, as he had expected, the portrait of a woman hung above the fireplace. He let it wait, however, while he listened to Milburn's steps receding down the hall, the opening and closing of a door, then the young man's voice. He could make out no words and was tempted to go nearer, for he suspected that the telephone call was to Clarkson. He would have liked exceedingly to hear what Milburn said, but there was no rug on the parquet floor of the hall, and he feared his steps would be heard. Dismissing the idea, therefore, he turned his attention to the salon.

The beautiful room had apparently been left exactly as it was before the tragedy that had befallen the household. After the double funeral the servants had gone, and the key had been turned in the door. Doubtless for months that silent figure on the wall would look down upon silence, broken only by the street noises rising from far below.

"A real beauty painted by an artist," Lacasse declared after a brief inspection of the portrait, and, with a Frenchman's passion for beauty and art, he forgot for a moment everything else. Then, recalling abruptly why he was there, he studied the face in the canvas more critically. How long ago had it been painted, he wondered. It was not

the face of a girl. Those dark eyes were too veiled, the mouth too consciously alluring. She had known love, that woman—and sin.

"Ah, madame," he apostrophized her silently, "I think I was not mistaken when I said that if you could come back you could solve for us the riddle of your death!" And, having thus summed up his impressions, he turned aside to examine a second, smaller portrait of the same subject, hanging above a cabinet on the adjacent wall.

This was a dry-point etching, obviously of much later date. Plainly an idealization, with every line softened by reason of the flattering medium in which it was done, it still betrayed the fact, which it strove to conceal, that the magic of youth was gone from the face it pictured. Beauty remained, for all that, and charm, if not truth, in the delineation of it, and Lacasse was interested to note that it was signed "Paul Udoff."

"I think I must pay this Monsieur Udoff a visit," he thought. "An artist for whom a woman has posed may be trusted to know her. Besides, he was of the supper party, and he was ill after it. It will be interesting to see if he can be made to talk of the affair. And if not—that, too, will be interesting."

He glanced about and finding nothing more to claim a closer view he paused a moment at the hall door to assure himself that Milburn was still at the telephone. Then he walked to the rear of the salon and softly opened the door to see what lay beyond. The adjoining room was much smaller and contained among its furnishings a woman's writing table. On the table there was a telephone instrument. At sight of it, without an instant's hesitation, he crossed the room and picked it up. It must be, he thought, an extension of the wire on which Milburn was talking, and, in fact, he heard a voice the mo-

ment he lifted the receiver from its hook.

It was Clarkson's voice, he recognized at once, businesslike and composed. "Just follow my instructions and don't worry," it said. "Good-by," and a metallic click followed.

Lacasse set the instrument back in its place and left the room quickly, closing the door after him without a sound. At the same time he heard Milburn returning and hastily posed himself before the fireplace, his eyes raised to the portrait over it.

"A charming portrait," he exclaimed in a tone of enthusiasm, as Milburn's step sounded in the doorway. Receiving no reply he looked around. To his astonishment he found the young man's eyes off the picture of his stepmother, and in them was an expression of the most intense hatred. The next moment he spoke, and the evil expression in the eyes had vanished.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," he said with studied affability. "If you're ready now we'll go and hunt the olives." Taking assent for granted he strode down the room and entered the one adjoining. Following him closely, Lacasse saw his glance encounter the telephone on the writing table and, from his startled look, inferred that he had forgotten its existence. He passed it with a frown which still lingered when, after traversing the dining room, he came to a halt in the pantry.

"The olives are here, if anywhere," he announced, as he opened the doors of a wall cabinet and brought into view a lavish stock of food in a great variety of bottles, glasses, cans, and jars. "I see some," he added, pointing to an upper shelf, "but they have not been opened."

"There is an open bottle here," said Lacasse, pointing to a lower shelf, and his companion took up the bottle indicated. "There aren't many olives

in it," he remarked, "but I guess there are enough."

"Quite," Lacasse agreed.

"Enough for both of us, I mean," Milburn explained pleasantly. "I'm inclined, you see, to think you may be right in suspecting that the trouble may have been due to olives eaten here. I'm going to have a test made to satisfy myself. Pigot can do the same."

He reached for an empty jelly glass and, having removed the lid, opened the bottle of olives and tipped it to pour a part of the contents into the glass. As he did so Lacasse gave a start. Fortunately his companion, behind whom he was standing, did not observe it. Recovering himself Lacasse thrust his head forward for a nearer view of the olive bottle.

His first impression, he found, had been correct. The white coating on the bottom of the bottle was paint.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE TITIAN STUDIOS.

A FEW minutes later Alan Milburn and Lacasse separated at the entrance of the apartment house, the former carrying the bottle, containing his share of the olives, which he intended, he said, to take at once to Clarkson to be tested, the latter to bear his olives to Pigot, whose restaurant was only a few blocks away.

As he covered the distance on foot Lacasse considered all the possible bearings of his recent discovery. That the opened olive bottle, found on the Milburn pantry shelf, had come from the laboratory of young Clarkson he considered beyond reasonable doubt, and that it could not have got there without the coöperation of some one of the household was equally certain. But, if the deaths of the elder Milburn and his wife and the illness of Miss Milburn had been due to the olives eaten at their home, what had caused the illness

of the artist, Udoff, and of Georges, the waiter? The coffee? If so, Miss Milburn's illness must also have been due to the coffee, for it was the half cup left by her that Georges had drunk. And as Mrs. Milburn, according to Georges, had also drunk coffee, her death might have been due to it. But not her husband's! Georges had been positive that the elder Milburn had not taken coffee.

From all of which one conclusion, at least, was certain. Whether accidental or deliberate, two forms of poison, not one, had been at work. And, while the presence of one might reasonably be held to have been an accident, to suppose it of both was to go beyond the limits of probability.

Quickening his pace Lacasse soon reached Pigot's. Having explained to his friend his arrangement with young Milburn he gave him the olives and asked that he take them immediately to be tested at any laboratory he liked, other than Clarkson's. He said not a word, however, of the paint on the bottle from which the olives had come, nor of Milburn's disturbed, suspicious manner, nor of the telephone conversation with Clarkson. Pigot would wish to discuss these points, all of which supported his theory of a plot between the two young men, and Lacasse had no time for discussion.

Lingering only long enough to find the address of the artist Udoff in the telephone directory, he was off again. No time could be better, he thought, for a visit to an artist's studio than late afternoon, when the waning light made work impossible and conversation a pleasure. Having seen Udoff, he must next contrive to catch a glimpse of the two surviving women of the disastrous supper party and learn, if possible, what the present status was between Miss Milburn and her former fiancé, Clarkson.

The building, before which his taxi-

cab halted after a short drive, had an Italian façade and bore the inspiring name of "Titian Studios," but the swift-running elevator, into which he stepped upon entering the door, was wholly American. American, too, was the concrete floor of the corridor into which he emerged a moment later. But, when Paul Udoff opened his door, the New World disappeared as if by magic, and the Old took its place.

It was a beautiful room, quite what might have been expected as the background of a fashionable artist, and Lacasse was not surprised to find the artist himself picturesque in appearance and charming in manner. A man of medium height and slender frame, he had a pale, thin face and wavy light-brown hair which he wore brushed back from his low forehead. His age was perhaps thirty-five, but hardly more.

Lacasse had his story ready. His name was Durand, he said, and he had come to consult the artist about a portrait that he purposed having made of his daughter. He had heard of Mr. Udoff often, but had seen none of his work, and naturally he was anxious to do so before placing a commission. If he would not be in the way he would look about.

"Certainly," returned Udoff graciously and, leaving the visitor to wander about the room as he pleased, he turned to a table, on which a quantity of sketches were strewn, and began to gather them together.

"*Vous parlez Français, monsieur, n'est ce pas?*" asked Lacasse after a momentary pause.

"Naturally," returned the artist, also in French. "I am Russian. All educated Russians speak French."

"That is true," Lacasse replied. "And, of course, you studied your art in Paris."

"No, I had not that good fortune," said Udoff. "Outside of Russia I studied only in Spain."

"Indeed! Your work has quite the French air."

"You flatter me, monsieur."

"On the contrary. I admire very much what I see here."

"You are too amiable."

"Not at all, I assure you."

With these polite exchanges the conversation, still in French, got under way and presently turned to Russia and the transformation wrought by the war. Udoff, it appeared, had not been in his native land for ten years, but he was deeply interested in all that transpired there.

While they talked, Lacasse continued his circuit of the room, in search of something to furnish an excuse for introducing the subject of the dead Mrs. Milburn, and at last he came upon a drawing of her head, similar in pose to the one which he had seen shortly before in her home. Desiring to lead up to the topic gradually, he crossed to the table where the artist was still sorting his sketches and asked to be allowed to look at them.

"Ah, charming!" he exclaimed with a show of enthusiastic admiration, as Udoff handed him a small drawing that he happened to have in his hand at the moment. "Spain, or course?"

"Yes, these are all Spanish. I am selecting a number to sell to a man who wishes to use them in a book he has written on Spain. They need cleaning up a bit. Here are several studies of a dancer that I think effective."

Lacasse agreed heartily, as he took the sketches handed him, and one especially seemed to delight him. He laid it aside, and, after having inspected a score of others, he picked up that of the dancer and expressed a desire to purchase it. The artist agreed readily, payment was made, and the transaction completed.

"I will clean it for you," Udoff offered then.

"Thank you, it is not necessary," answered Lacasse, rolling up the drawing. And then, knowing that a man is always in a good humor after making money unexpectedly, he ventured to say boldly: "I was struck by that head on the wall there. May I ask who the lady is?"

"Yes, certainly," was the answer in an unmoved tone. "It is a drawing of Mrs. Samuel Milburn."

"Milburn?" asked Lacasse, as if the name were a familiar one which he could not instantly place.

"Yes. You must have read of her death a week ago. She and her husband were poisoned by olives which they ate at a restaurant."

"Ah, yes," murmured Lacasse, feigning vagueness. "I think I do recall something of the kind."

"It was a terrible affair," declared the artist calmly. "Such a beautiful woman! She sat for me a number of times. Her stepdaughter also sat for me. This is she." He moved to the other side of the room to point out an etching of a young girl with soft hair and wistful eyes. She was not beautiful, but quite appealing.

"Charming!" pronounced Lacasse.

Udoff inclined his head in assent, while his eyes rested on the face before them. "Beauty is easy for the artist if it is a matter of lines, as in the case of madame over there, but charm, as here, is another matter," he said. "It is an elusive thing one feels, but cannot see."

"True," replied Lacasse. Then, as if the recollection had that moment come to him, he said: "Ah, I remember now that affair of the olives. It was a supper party, was it not?"

"Yes, at Pigot's. Perhaps you know the place."

"I have heard of it." He glanced back at the picture on the wall. "Mademoiselle was also ill, I think?"

"Yes, and so was I. I was one of the guests, you know."

"You, monsieur!" Lacasse was greatly astonished.

"I narrowly escaped death," said Udoff, frowning. "And, when I reflect that had I taken one more olive I might now be dead, I cannot restrain my indignation. In my opinion Pigot's should be made to pay. But, when I talk to Mr. Milburn, the son, about the matter he answers that it was an accident for which no one can be held responsible. Of course one finds it difficult to complain of an event which has made one a rich man.

"However, all this is of no interest to you, monsieur," the artist said in a more matter-of-fact tone. "I must apologize for speaking of my personal affairs, but I feel very greatly the loss of my good friends and patrons. We will talk now of something else."

The something else was naturally the contemplated portrait of the imaginary daughter whom Lacasse—alias Durand—had mentioned on his arrival. After a discussion from which the inspector of police derived a very high opinion of the artist's business ability—higher in fact than of his art—the visit terminated.

Returning to his hotel Lacasse put the drawing he had bought carefully away in his trunk, safe from the prying fingers of the chambermaid, and sat down for an uninterrupted period of thought. Before him in the twilight, in which everything in the room about him had grown shadowy, rose the sweet young face of Miss Milburn as he had seen it in Udoff's picture of her. She was the heroine of the story, he was sure, a true heroine of tragedy. Of such gentleness and wistful charm had all the women been for whom strong men had fought and killed each other since the beginning of the world. Udoff was in love with her, his eyes had said as much, and she had been en-

gaged to Clarkson, so he had loved her, too. Was it on the artist's account that the engagement had been broken?

Leaving this question in the air Lacasse dismissed the girl from his thoughts. No need to consider her: she had been merely a pawn. And her brother, if concerned in the crime of all, had been Clarkson's tool. But what of his wife? It might be well to have a look at her.

However, it was the dead woman who gripped his attention more strongly than either of the living. He found his thoughts returning to her again and again. Although she had been, somehow, a victim, she had not been a pawn. Of this he was certain. She had been an active factor in the case, not a passive one like her young stepdaughter. To be passive had not been her nature, her face showed that. And besides, there was her visit to Clarkson's laboratory and the olive bottle that had come from there and had somehow reached her pantry shelf.

"If you were only here, madame, how interesting it would be to have a little talk with you!" exclaimed Lacasse half aloud. As he spoke the vivid figure of the painted portrait above the fireplace in the Milburn apartment appeared before his mental vision. So vivid was it, indeed, that for a moment he had the startling illusion that an actual person, a living, breathing woman, was in the room with him. "I'm dreaming," he said to himself and switched on the light.

Over a solitary dinner in the restaurant of his hotel he continued his reflections, and, when he had finished a cigar, he put on his coat and hat and went out. No very definite plan was in his mind, but it had occurred to him that it might not be wholly a waste of time to stroll over to the Titian Studios and, if possible, engage in conversation with the elevator man who could be trusted to know something of the habits

of the tenants of his building and the identity of their most frequent visitors.

It was not a long walk for a fair night, and Lacasse took it leisurely, not fully resolved as to his method of approach. His first care must be to assure himself that Udoff was out. If the artist were at home it would be wiser to give up the idea, since otherwise he would run the risk of encountering him, and that he wished to avoid. With this thought in mind he walked down the block, on the opposite side of the street, and was pleased to find the windows on the third floor of the studio building, which were Udoff's, dark. Then he continued to the corner, crossed, and came up the block on the proper side.

As he neared the building again he slackened his pace, so as to have ample time for a survey of the interior of the entrance hall before he reached the door, and a moment later he had reason to be glad he had done so. A man, whom he had noticed approaching from the other direction, turned in suddenly, and, as the light from the door fell on his face, Lacasse saw that it was Clarkson.

Involuntarily he stopped, then went on. Clarkson entered the studio building, stepped into the elevator without a word of inquiry, and was borne aloft. Where was he going? To call on Udoff? It would be interesting to be sure of that.

Acting on this thought Lacasse hastened to the door, entered, and, seeing no one about, went quickly up the steps that ran alongside the elevator shaft. Hardly had he reached the first landing when he heard the elevator door clang shut and the car begin to descend again. It had gone only to the third floor.

Treading silently he went on up the stairs. When he emerged at the third floor the hall was empty. At the head of the steps he listened and, hearing nothing, ventured to tiptoe to the door

of Udoff's studio. With his ear against the crack he listened again. There were sounds within, some one walking about, stopping, walking again. A drawer was opened and closed, another was opened, papers rustled, the drawer closed, and another opened. This sort of thing went on for some time, then there was walking again, and the opening of more drawers. At last, after more walking, there was a long silence. The person within must have left the studio to continue his search—for it was plainly a search that was going on—in another room.

Half an hour passed, a tense half hour for Lacasse. The inspector had not only to listen for sounds from within, but also from without, and to conceal himself on the stairs whenever he heard the elevator ascending, and remain concealed until it had gone down again. Finally, about to emerge from this retreat for the third time, he drew back again. Udoff's door had opened. Peering through the iron grille of the staircase he saw Clarkson come out, lock the door, put the key in his pocket, cross to the elevator, and ring the bell, all as deliberately as if he had been leaving his own rooms.

As soon as he could do so unseen Lacasse made his way out of the building. His plan of interviewing the elevator man had slipped from his mind, now absorbed by a new problem.

What had Clarkson been searching for in Udoff's studio?

Lost in thought he strolled slowly back to his hotel. He had in his pocket a ticket for the opera, but the fact was forgotten. What had Clarkson been searching for in Udoff's rooms? And where had he got his key to them?

Suddenly Lacasse stopped short, his face illuminated by a startling idea. "I have been stupid!" he exclaimed to himself the next moment. "I should have guessed the truth at once." Quickening his pace he walked on.

CHAPTER V.

THE TENTACLES ARE SPREAD.

NEXT morning Lacasse canceled his passage to France. Before doing so, it should be stated, he had a short, but very satisfactory, interview with the New York representative of Walters & Scott. The little idea of picking up a few American dollars before returning home, which had suggested itself to him instantly on hearing the inside story of the Milburn case from Pigot, had ripened into action. Those American dollars, he had been assured, were waiting, even asking, to be picked up.

From Pigot he had heard that the laboratory report on the olives was favorable. They were perfectly harmless. This report Alan Milburn had also received concerning those he had had tested. He had hastened with the announcement to Pigot and had expressed himself as hopeful that the latter was now quite satisfied that no injustice had been done him. Pigot had replied that he was.

"I expect no developments for a week, perhaps longer," Lacasse told his friend then. "My tentacles are all out, however. We shall have results eventually. Meanwhile, I shall take advantage of the unavoidable delay to say farewell again to my dear children."

And this he proceeded to do. For ten days his most important occupation was rocking his granddaughter to sleep every afternoon. The feat accomplished, he went out and bought a copy of a New York newspaper. Returning on the tenth day with his paper he found a cablegram awaiting him. Instantly he was a changed man. The cable was from Paris and in code. Hurrying with it to the privacy of his bedroom he deciphered it with the aid of a key. The contents appeared greatly to delight him. His eyes grew brighter and brighter, and at the end he

gave vent to his feelings in an exclamation of complete satisfaction. Then, from his translation of the message, he copied three names in his notebook, and with one of the names an address.

That night he left for New York, arriving the following forenoon, and, as soon as his hotel arrangements had been made, he stepped into a taxicab to be driven to the address in his book.

The place was in Brooklyn, a long ride—so long, indeed, that he was beginning to think the driver was taking advantage of his ignorance to make some easy money, when the cab suddenly drew up at the curb before a respectable-looking apartment house. A minute later Lacasse had entered the house and was pressing a bell button, over which stood the name Latour.

A negro maid opened the door. Her mistress was at home, she said, and, without waiting for a card, she admitted him to a small reception room, then disappeared, leaving him to look about him unobserved.

The room was an unattractive one, decorated with Oriental draperies and bric-a-brac that were conspicuous without quite dominating the commonplace modern American furniture. The effect was discordant and unpleasing. Some cards in a salver on a side table attracted his attention, and he went over and inspected them. "Madame Latour," he read, and under the name: "Psychologist." Below that was the information that "Instruction—class or private," was given by appointment.

"Psychologist!" he exclaimed, but was not able to continue his speculations. At that moment Madame Latour entered. She was a tall, thin woman, with coal-black hair, very abundant, and dressed high on her head. Her dress was a flowing mantle of purple silk, partially confined by a girdle of silver, and across her forehead she wore a silver band. Neither young nor handsome, she was a striking figure.

With a gracious gesture she motioned her visitor to a chair and seated herself, her dark gaze meanwhile, as Lacasse did not fail to remark, covering him from head to foot.

He still had in his hand the card he had found on the table and took his cue from it. Her profession was now plain to him. She was a fortune teller of some kind, but, fortune telling being an illegal means of livelihood, she called herself a psychologist and gave "instruction" instead of sittings.

"I have come, madame, to consult you in an affair of the highest importance," he began impressively.

Madame Latour inclined her head half an inch, but made no other reply. Her black eyes had narrowed a trifle.

"I desire your assistance in discovering a person who has disappeared," Lacasse continued.

Madame's eyebrows rose. "Some one whom I know has disappeared, then?" she inquired in a tone of surprise.

Lacasse smiled to himself. The woman was no fool, he thought.

"Some one whom I know has," he answered, "and I desire your assistance in discovering where she is."

"My assistance?" Madame's eyebrows were so high now that they almost touched the silver band on her forehead. "By clairvoyance, do you mean?"

Lacasse nodded. So clairvoyance was her line! "If you will have the goodness," he said.

"I regret that I cannot oblige you." Her tone was very firm. "I do not employ my power of clairvoyance commercially. For a friend, yes. Or a pupil, perhaps."

"It will be to your advantage to make an exception in this case, madame," he answered quietly.

"Indeed!" She stared at him. "Why?"

"Because of the circumstances," he

answered. "I seek a woman of the name Hortense Joulin."

Madame Latour gave a start, then she thrust her head toward him, her stare sharpening. "Why?" she repeated.

"Because——" He broke off to glance at the open door into the hall and finished his reply in French. "Because I desire from her information concerning a certain crime."

"Who has sent you to me?" She was on her feet, her dark eyes gleaming excitedly.

"I received your address from Paris," he answered, also rising. "It had been obtained there from Marseilles."

She caught her breath. "Why?" she asked. "Why?"

"Because"——with lowered voice——"I have found Georges Dupuy."

"Ah!" She threw up her arms and clasped her hands together above her head, as if thanking Heaven for some great boon. Then she quickly crossed the floor and pushed open the door into the adjoining room from which she had entered.

"Come, monsieur," she said. "We must talk more privately." Following her, Lacasse closed the door behind them.

Half an hour later he emerged and, returning to New York, went directly to the office of Alan Milburn. The card he sent in to the young man on this occasion bore the impressive words: "Inspector of Police," and he was not surprised to find the recipient staring at it when he entered.

"Good morning," said Milburn, looking up to scrutinize him in turn.

"Good morning," said Lacasse briskly, taking the chair to which a gesture invited him. "I regret the necessity of again disturbing you, but this time I come not as a friend of Pigot's, but as a member of the Paris police force, and in that capacity, monsieur,

it is my duty to inform you that your father was murdered."

His hearer gave a violent jump. "What do you mean?" he demanded.

"What I say, monsieur. In fact I mean even more than that, since your stepmother also was murdered."

"I don't understand what you're talking about," said young Milburn, frowning at him.

"I will explain," said Lacasse pleasantly. "Your father gave a little supper party recently at the Restaurant Pigot, at which seven persons were present, five members of his family and two others. After the supper four of the seven persons were very ill, and two of them died. Now I think I can explain the cause of these deaths. But I require your cooperation."

"My cooperation?" asked Milburn, taken aback.

"Yes. You desire, do you not, to expose the murderer?"

"Of course—if there is one."

"As to that there remains no question, I assure you."

Milburn was silent for a moment. "Who do you think it is?" he demanded in a challenging tone.

"I know who it is, monsieur," answered Lacasse quietly, "but the proofs, which I have to offer, would not perhaps convince you or a jury. It is necessary that I secure the assistance of another voice, stronger than my own."

"What do you mean?" asked the younger man after another pause. "Whose voice?"

"A voice from the dead," replied Lacasse. "I will explain," he went on at once, when only an amazed stare came from his companion. "I know a woman possessed of the power to communicate with the dead and to recall their spirits to earth. With your approval I will secure her services. You will then assemble the persons who remain of the seven. They will seat themselves about a table—exactly as

they sat at the supper, and in the vacant place of madame, your stepmother, Madame Latour will sit. Then—well, we shall see, monsieur."

"See what?" There was a faint smile of scorn in Milburn's eyes.

"Ah, who shall say that?" asked Lacasse.

"What's the idea? That this woman should try to bring back my father and his wife and make them tell what killed them?"

"Exactly, monsieur."

"Do you think they'd know?"

"Why not? The father of *Hamlet* related to his son the story of his murder, although at the moment he was asleep and could not have seen what took place. Is it not so?"

"That's a play. We're talking now about real life." Alan Milburn regarded his caller curiously. "Say, do you really believe in this spiritualistic stuff?"

Lacasse looked surprised and pained. "You do not, then?" he inquired.

"I think it's bosh—or fake," declared the young man.

"Ah, do not be too sure!" protested Lacasse. "It is easy to condemn what one does not understand, but it is not always wise to do so. However"—with his quick shrug—"if you are not interested in this plan I must give it up and try another, since I can do nothing without your assistance. But I regret the necessity, because for another plan I shall be obliged to request the assistance of the New York police, and I should prefer to keep the affair in my own hands alone." He rose to go, but, as he expected, Milburn stopped him.

"Just a minute, please," said the latter. "I'd like to ask you, if you don't mind, just what your interest in this case is. You come here as a member of the Paris police, you say, and you tell me that my father was murdered. I don't believe it, but, even if he was,

how does it concern you, or the Paris police?"

"It does, I assure you. That is all I can say at present," replied the Frenchman, again moving to rise.

"Just a minute," Milburn repeated. "As I say, I don't believe my father was murdered, and I can't imagine how you ever got such an idea in your head. But, if he was, I want to know it, of course. I'm open to conviction and willing to cooperate with you in any way you like. Just where were you planning to have this séance—or whatever you call it? At Pigot's?"

"No, not there, certainly. We must have perfect silence and also darkness."

"Where, then?"

"I thought in the salon of your father's home. I have seen it, you remember. There is a round table, I think, which will serve. Besides, you will then be quite assured against what you call 'fake.' You will assemble there madame, your wife, and mademoiselle, your sister, also the two gentlemen, and I will join you with Madame Latour and, with your permission, the waiter who served you at supper that evening. In a way he was of the party and may assist in securing the necessary *rapport*, as we say in French."

"All right," said Milburn. "When is it to be?"

"To-night, if possible," replied Lacasse.

"Well, I'll have to call up first and see if that's convenient for everybody. What's your number? I'll let you know."

Having furnished the desired information Lacasse departed. As it was now the luncheon hour his thoughts gravitated to his friend, Pigot, and in a short time he was with him. A few words sufficed to explain the interval of absence, and then he inquired for news. Had Pigot heard anything more of the Milburn affair?

Pigot had not and was well pleased

to say so. He considered himself fortunate in being through with that puzzling business, though truth compelled him to admit that the publicity attendant upon it, distasteful as it had been to him at the time, had done his restaurant no harm. Indeed, if he had anything to complain of, it was a sudden increase in patronage.

"And this I owe to you, my friend," he exclaimed gratefully. "If only I could do something for you in return!" "Perhaps you can," said Lacasse surprisingly.

"What, then? You have only to name it!" declared Pigot.

"I may ask you," said his friend, "to lend me Georges for this evening."

"Georges!" Pigot's eyes flew open.

"Do not question me!" warned Lacasse. "I shall tell you nothing. Only this, I have a little plan that I think very well of and for which I require the services of Georges."

"But certainly, my dear Henri! Georges is yours!"

"Thank you, my dear Jean. I shall take excellent care of him," replied the inspector of police.

CHAPTER VI.

"ENOUGH FOR ONE NIGHT."

ON returning to his hotel after luncheon, Lacasse found that Milburn had telephoned and left his number. Calling in turn, Lacasse was told that the sitting with Madame Latour could take place that evening, though not until half past nine, as Mr. Clarkson had a dinner engagement which would probably delay him until that hour. If agreeable to Lacasse, Milburn added, he and his friends would assemble as agreed at that time.

Accordingly at nine-thirty, accompanied by the waiter, Georges, Lacasse rang the bell of the Milburn apartment. Alan Milburn admitted them.

"Madame Latour will be here very

soon," Lacasse explained. "She arrives late for a purpose. She wishes the room to be already darkened and silent and every one to be seated at the table when she enters, so that she shall not see the face nor hear the voice of any person. To do so would distract her and delay results. It is not, you know, with the physical being that she is concerned, but with the spiritual."

"All right," returned the host, quite unimpressed by these remarks. "I hope she won't keep us waiting. We're all here."

He led the way, as he spoke, into the long room upon which the lovely eyes of the dead Mrs. Milburn looked down from the wall, and, as Lacasse entered it, followed by Georges, his glance met that of Paul Udoff who was standing near the fireplace, just under the portrait. The artist's handsome face took on a startled expression when he recognized Lacasse, but he ignored their previous meeting, merely bowing when they were introduced.

Mrs. Alan Milburn and Miss Milburn were not in the room, but Clarkson, the fifth survivor of the fatal supper party was. He was by an open window, opened by himself that moment, for he explained the action as Milburn turned to him to present Lacasse.

"Thought we'd better have a little air; the place has been shut up so long," he said in the brisk way of speaking that Lacasse remembered. Then, looking at the Frenchman, he added: "I've met Mr. Lacasse," and he offered his hand.

He was in full evening dress, which suited his tall, well-built figure, but his blue eyes had the same keen, absorbed expression as when he had been intent on the boiling mixture in the retort. After a glance at Georges, who had lingered near the door, he looked again at Lacasse, and, to the latter's surprise, he addressed him in French.

"It gives me pleasure," he said, "to meet at last, face to face, an inspector of the Paris police. I spent a year at the Curie Laboratory, but had not the good fortune—or ill fortune, I should say, perhaps—to make the acquaintance of the Paris police. From what I have read of them, however, I am led to expect a very interesting evening."

"I shall endeavor not to disappoint you, monsieur," replied Lacasse gravely.

"You have made a very serious charge," continued Clarkson in English. "You have charged that the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Milburn were due, not to accident, but to intent—intent, one must infer, on the part of Mr. Alan Milburn, Mr. Udoff, or myself. You will therefore pardon my asking if you are prepared to sustain your charge?"

"I think so."

"You think so? Then you think, too, I take it, that you are at this moment standing in the presence of a murderer?"

"As to that, monsieur, I have no doubt whatever."

The eyes of the two held together for a moment of silence, and it was the younger pair that first moved. "You hear, Alan? And you, Udoff?" Clarkson inquired, challenging his companions. "One of us is a murderer, and *Monsieur l'Inspecteur* is going to prove it. He is going to prove it by evidence from another world which he will secure in our presence with the assistance of a spiritualistic medium. And, by the way, where is madame?"

"She hasn't come yet, Wallace," put in Alan Milburn with an anxious glance at his friend. Milburn's anxiety did not escape the alert eye of Lacasse. "We're to get everything ready and turn out the light, so that she won't see our faces."

"Madame desires to remain quite detached from her surroundings," explained Lacasse. "We shall require a

small light only—one of those on the wall.”

“Hadn’t we better begin?” asked Milburn, addressing Clarkson, and, at a nod of assent from the latter, he removed the articles that lay on a sizable gate-legged table, lifted the sides, and, with the aid of Georges, who seemed relieved to find occupation, placed the table in the center of the room and drew up seven chairs around it.

“We’re to sit just as we were at Pigot’s that night,” he explained to Udoff. The artist had been listening and watching with a puzzled intentness that told Lacasse he was just now learning at what sort of an affair he was about to assist. “You were on one side of my sister, and Clarkson was on the other, I think?”

“That is so,” answered the artist, “and Mrs. Samuel Milburn was on my other side.”

“Yes, and I was between her and my father, with my wife next. That makes seven. Now, Madame Latour wishes to sit in my stepmother’s place, I think you said?” This to Lacasse.

“Yes,” the latter said. “And, since she is to enter after we are all seated, the chair nearest the door would perhaps be the most suitable for her.”

“All right.” Milburn drew out the chair indicated. “Now Udoff, if you and Wallace will find your proper seats, I’ll go and bring my wife and sister.”

He hurried away, and, in compliance with his request, Udoff moved round to the chair next to that reserved for the medium, Clarkson taking his stand at the second from the artist, and Lacasse at the second from Clarkson. Georges, meanwhile, had stepped back from the table and was standing motionless against the wall, watching the unusual proceedings with as impassive a countenance as he was accustomed to show to the patrons of the Restaurant Pigot.

A medley of steps heralded the ar-

rival of the ladies on the scene, young Mrs. Milburn leading the way. She was a very small person, with a dainty, erect figure, who sailed in like a highly seaworthy little boat that had no doubts of itself. She was not a woman, Lacasse decided instantly, to accept without a struggle what she did not like, as, for instance, the lady of the portrait for a mother-in-law. If she had yielded to that necessity, and apparently she had, she had been forced to it by a superior power—probably her father-in-law’s—certainly not her husband’s.

Behind her, lagging a little, came the girl of Udoff’s drawing, looking not so much like a young woman as a very tall child. Her soft blond hair covered her ears and flowed back to a flat coil at the base of her round white neck which her simple mourning dress left bare; her lips were half parted, as though she were breathing rapidly, and, after one swift glance about the room, she held her eyes fixed on the back of her sister-in-law’s modishly dressed brown head. When presently forced to remove them to bow to Lacasse she gave him an alarmed stare, then dropped her gaze to her hands, clasped tightly together. She favored neither Udoff nor Clarkson with a greeting, not even when, at her brother’s direction, she took her place between them at the table, and, as she seated herself, Lacasse, who was watching her, noticed that she drew her arms together, as if to avoid any possible contact with her neighbors. The next instant the door-bell rang, and she gave a violent start. Her nerves were plainly on edge.

“That is Madame Latour,” said Lacasse. “If you will permit I will open the door?”

“Certainly,” Milburn answered. “Shall we darken the room now?”

“If you will be so kind. Georges will assist you. All but this one light beside the door, if you please.”

He left the room, and the others strained their ears for sounds from the hall. They heard the opening of the outer door, then steps, but no voices. Georges was moving noiselessly about, turning out the lights.

"Close the window, Alan, there's a draft," Mrs. Milburn complained sharply. She did not approve of the affair upon which she was engaged and felt it necessary to make the fact known. "I don't see why it has to be so dark," she went on when her husband had closed the window and returned to his seat.

"Sh!" he warned, as steps sounded again in the hall. "We're not to talk."

"I think it's all perfectly silly," she declared.

No one heeded her, for at that moment the hall door opened, and Lacasse reëntered. The light without had been extinguished and, save for the single bracket lamp still glowing faintly in the room, all was darkness.

Lacasse came quickly over to Alan Milburn. "Will you be kind enough," he said, "to take the chair next madame's?" He indicated the vacant chair between the young man and his wife. "Madame Latour desires your place."

"Mine!" exclaimed Milburn. "Why?"

"Not so loud, monsieur, if you please," begged Lacasse, his own voice lowered. "Madame has made the request; I do not know why."

"She wants you next to her, of course," snapped Mrs. Milburn to Lacasse. "I told you it was all a fake," she added to the company at large.

"If madame will speak more softly," implored the Frenchman in a whisper. "Thank you, monsieur," he continued, addressing Alan Milburn who had at once changed his seat. "We shall now have Madame Latour between us."

He went back to the door, paused a moment to view the table from that

point, then, taking a handkerchief from his pocket, threw it over the light, dimming it still more.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Milburn.

"Sh!" said her husband.

Lacasse silently left the room again.

"We all know it's nonsense, Jane," Clarkson remarked as soon as the door had closed. "For Heaven's sake, keep still and let's get it over."

"That's what I say," added Milburn.

"It makes me sick," said his wife, and the men allowed her to have the last word.

Now, for about the time it would have taken to count twenty slowly, complete silence held the room. In the scant light the five faces about the table were almost indistinguishable to one another. Only that of Georges, who had taken his stand against the wall, near the door, was clearly visible. He stood in his waiter's pose, one arm crooked, his masklike countenance toward the table, just as he had doubtless stood that night at Pigot's, looking on at the gay, "but not too gay," supper party, as he had himself afterward described it.

The reproduction of it was certainly not gay. No one spoke. No one moved. Even the eyes of those assembled seemed motionless, gazing straight before them at the center of the table where the light, falling across the two unoccupied chairs, was faintly reflected in the highly polished wood.

A sigh of mingled impatience and disgust from Mrs. Milburn suddenly pierced the stillness and would probably have been followed by words had not a step and the opening of the door at that moment forestalled them.

Throwing the door wide Lacasse came in silently and took the vacant chair next to Udoff. Every one at the table looked at him, but he seemed oblivious to their stares. Closing his eyes he sat like one sleeping.

The stillness became tense. Against the wall, under the light, Georges looked like a figure of wax. Then, of a sudden, every one moved. A tall, shrouded form had appeared in the doorway. Slowly it glided into the room and sank into the vacant chair at the table. Save for Lacasse every one leaned forward involuntarily, trying to pierce the veil that hung before the face of the medium. But her back was to the light, and the veil was not thin. She remained to her observers a mysterious image of cloth, with even her hands, which lay out upon the table, concealed under her flowing sleeves.

Unmindful, apparently, of her surroundings or of the people about her, she sat with bowed head, motionless except for the rhythmic rise and fall of her bosom. Then by degrees her arms began to move also, to rise and fall in unison with her chest, until at last her hands, which had been flat upon the table, left it, seeming to float upward by the force of her breath alone. As it subsided they dropped again, but not quite to the table, and thus, at each successive inhalation, they rose a little higher than before until, to those watching her, her very body appeared to be rising.

Suddenly, with an expiration of breath, a sound came from her lips, a low moan, hardly audible. A moment later it came again, then again and again, rhythmically with the breathing, growing always louder and becoming at last a veritable wail, painful to hear. And, curiously, the sound seemed as involuntary an act on the woman's part as her movements.

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, the wailing ceased. The rise and dip of the arms stopped also. Holding them straight before her she rose from her chair, and, standing upright, head lifted, she began with her hands odd, groping gestures, as of a blind person feeling her way.

Now there were sounds, but different; attempts at speech, perhaps, but for a time wholly inarticulate, like far-away whispers, from which, as they continued, the listeners made out that one word was being uttered over and over with anguished insistence, but too indistinctly to be understood, until suddenly, unexpectedly, it smote their ears with startling clearness—like a whisper on the stage.

"Georges! Georges!"

It was the French name, spoken with the French G, and heads turned instantly toward the waiter from Pigot's, whose name was Georges, and who, with blanched face and bulging eyes, was staring at the veiled woman, as if petrified with terror.

"Danger!"

Pronounced in the French manner, this next utterance of the medium was lost on several of the persons about the table, but not on Georges. His rigid body started violently, and one hand shot out toward the door, as though he contemplated flight. But Madame Latour had not finished her warning, if a warning it was.

"Poison! Le café! Un, deux, trois!" (One, two, three!)

The waiter's hand returned to his side with a jerk. He thrust his head forward. He was all ears now.

"Georges! Georges! Georges!" came the name, still in that penetrating, toneless whisper.

The lips of Georges opened, but no answer came from them.

"Georges! Georges! Georges!" insisted the voice.

"Oui, madame. Me voilà." (Yes, madame. I am here.) The man gaped out in sheer terror, obviously afraid not to reply.

There was a pause. The answering voice had come from behind the medium, but she did not turn toward it. Erect, with outstretched arms, she stood as motionless as before. Then

abruptly she spoke again, still in French, still whispering:

"Why dost thou say 'madame' to me? I am thy wife, Amélie, whom thou hast murdered at Marseilles."

A cry from the waiter brought those still seated to their feet. "God protect me! She is a devil," he exclaimed falling on his knees and crossing himself with shaking hands. "She is not my wife! I have never had a wife! I have never been in Marseilles! I have murdered no one—never in my life!"

"Silence!" commanded Lacasse sternly. "Let us hear more."

The excited words of denial had left the medium as unmoved as though she had not heard them. Calmly she continued in her clear whisper: "With poisoned coffee thou hast murdered me—me and another. Now I am come for thee, Georges Dupuy, for I love thee always—always—always——" The word died away slowly.

"I am not Georges Dupuy! I am Georges Loisel!" said the waiter, frantic with fear.

"Thou art not Georges Loisel, but Georges Dupuy, who calls himself—who calls himself——"

The voice faltered, and the hands made again their strange, groping movements, but Madame Latour's tall figure and lifted head remained as still as before.

"Who calls himself," she went on more slowly, "who calls himself—Paul Udoff!"

The name came from her suddenly, like an explosion, and, as she spoke it, she turned upon Udoff. At the same moment Lacasse pulled his handkerchief from the light.

"It is I, Hortense Joulin!" said the woman. "Regard me, the woman whose only child you murdered, miserable one!" Throwing her veil from her face she took a step toward the artist, her arms out as if to seize him.

Without a word of self-defense, he wheeled, sprang past Lacasse, hurled Georges aside with a vicious blow, and was through the open door. And, as Lacasse rushed from the room behind him, the outer door of the apartment opened, closed, and he heard the fugitive's running steps in the hall.

"I'll phone down for them to stop him," Clarkson, who was following Lacasse, shouted. Then, finding Milburn at his heels, he ordered him back to the telephone and ran on.

He overtook Lacasse at the head of the stairs which wound around the back and sides of the elevator shaft, and his lighter, younger feet passed those of the inspector and landed him at the foot of the steps before the latter had descended half way and just as Udoff was beginning the second flight.

The stairs were of concrete and bare, without hand rails, and made very sharp turns at the corners of the shaft, so that speed in descending them was dangerous. But, on the third flight, Clarkson saw that he had gained a little and calculated that, as there were still five flights ahead, he would lay hands on his quarry before he reached the ground floor. And that was fortunate, he thought, for he had no confidence in the ability of the two negro men below to stop any one as determined not to be stopped as the man whom he was pursuing.

Down the fourth flight and the fifth they went, Clarkson still gaining, and on the sixth he was so hard upon his man that he counted on having him at the next landing. But, as if he had read the thought, the artist quickened his pace and had recovered a part of his original lead when he began the seventh flight. That and one more and he would be in the foyer, with only a frightened porter and elevator man between himself and the street.

Then a shocking thing happened. Udoff's desperate haste defeated its

purpose. Rounding a corner his foot slipped, and he went hurtling downward, a horrible thing to see and hear, for his head struck violently against a step, and, as he rolled on, against another and another.

When Clarkson, who had pulled up involuntarily at the beginning of the accident, reached the fallen man he found him unconscious. Half carrying, half dragging, he got him down the few remaining steps to the floor, laid him flat, and examined him while he waited for the arrival of Lacasse. That first terrific contact of head with concrete had done the damage, he decided, and serious damage, for the human head was not constructed to withstand such treatment.

Following Lacasse down the stairs came Alan Milburn, and, after a word of explanation to the two of them, Clarkson asked Milburn if his car was outside.

"Let's get him to a hospital, then. They've stood enough upstairs for one night." Lacasse knew his "they" meant "she."

CHAPTER VII.

"TRADE SECRETS."

AN hour later Udoff died without regaining consciousness, and in a visitors' room of the hospital, which they had to themselves at that time of night, Clarkson, Milburn, and Lacasse discussed the artist's tragic end and the events that had led to it. There were things to be told on both sides before the story was complete.

"His name was Georges Dupuy, then? And he was French, not Russian?" Milburn inquired of Lacasse.

The inspector of police shrugged his shoulders. "As to his name, monsieur, who knows?" he answered. "Such men have many names. But that he was French there can be no doubt. I perceived it instantly in his speech. All educated Russians speak French, he

told me, and this is true enough. Also he had the cleverness to assume a Russian accent. But in such matters I am difficult to deceive, for in Paris, where the criminals of the world flock like sparrows, we of the police must know accents if nothing else. I perceived instantly, as I have said, that I had to do with a Frenchman under a Russian mask. Why the mask, I asked myself? An interesting question, was it not?"

His auditors nodded.

"To find the answer became at once the purpose of my life," continued Lacasse. "And in ten days I had succeeded. It is to say, I had found Madame Joulin—or Madame Latour, as she is now called. From her I learned of——"

"Pardon an interruption," put in Clarkson. "But how did you find this woman? It would interest me to know."

"Ah, that must remain a secret," answered the Frenchman. "A 'trade secret' we may call it. There are secrets, you know, in every trade. But to continue. I learned of an affair in the life of a certain Georges Dupuy, who, I had excellent reason to believe, was the Frenchman whom I was seeking under that Russian mask.

"This Dupuy, nine years ago, as madame related, was one of a small troupe of performers—magicians, acrobats, jugglers. Such troupes travel from village to village in France, sometimes entering the cities also to show their tricks. The one of which I speak went that winter to Marseilles. Dupuy was a juggler, but, between the performances, made drawings of the women and girls who had a franc to exchange for his efforts. It is easily seen then that his opportunities for intrigue with women were many, and, although he was married to a beautiful young member of the troupe, he had permitted himself to forget the fact more than once. In Marseilles he fell madly in love with

a woman who would have nothing to say to him without a wedding ring in his hand, and there was nothing for him to do, in his opinion, but to rid himself of his wife.

"He did it very cleverly and very simply. One morning at breakfast, which he was having in the company of his wife and her mother, he secretly dropped into each cup of coffee a small pellet. A few hours later all three of them were ill. The physician who was summoned said they had been drinking bad water, and this was easy to believe, because there had recently been deaths from that cause in the town. The wife died, but her mother and Dupuy recovered. And at once Madame Joulin, the mother, went to the police and accused her son-in-law to them as the murderer of her daughter. She had observed him, she swore, drop something white from his palm into his wife's cup, but had given it no thought at the moment, supposing it to be a piece of sugar. Now she was sure it was poison. He was a juggler, she explained, very quick and clever with his hands, and he was able to hold a small object in his palm while the hand appeared to be quite open. In this way, she declared, he had succeeded in conveying the pellet of poison from his pocket to the cup unseen. As for her own illness and his, it had been caused in the same way, but with a milder drug, and merely to conceal his real purpose.

"The police investigated and, getting wind of the love affair with the woman of Marseilles, they arrested Dupuy. But, after due consideration by the authorities, it was decided that the evidence was not sufficient to prove the accusation of murder, and he was released again. Infuriated at this outcome of the affair, Madame Joulin swore to avenge her daughter's death, and hearing of the threat, Dupuy fled. She followed, but soon lost track of

him. Later, believing for some reason that he had come to this country, she came, and for years has been quietly waiting for fate to bring them together. She believes in fate, you see, which is strange when one reflects that her business is to foretell it." Lacasse smiled.

"Then she is a professional clairvoyant?" asked Clarkson.

"Within the law, yes. It was her suggestion—this hocus-pocus to-night. Her purpose, I think, was to frighten Dupuy into a confession. I consented to the plan for two reasons. In the first place I thought it might succeed."

He checked himself and for a moment or two studied the intent faces before him.

"For the second?" Clarkson prompted.

"You will pardon, if I offend, *messieurs*," said Lacasse with great courtesy, "but I had the little idea that you would prefer a private accounting with Udoff to a public one."

"What made you think that?" asked Milburn frowningly.

The Frenchman gave his little shrug. "I do not desire to offend," he insisted, "but I must ask myself why you were so careful to calm the anxiety of my friend Pigot that you pronounced the olives that came from your father's home to be bad when they were not so. I know, because I also had them tested."

Milburn flushed uncomfortably. "We didn't want Pigot kicking up a row in the newspapers, that's all," he said.

"Naturally. And you consented to the meeting with Madame Latour because you did not desire me to 'kick up a row' with the police, is it not so?" Lacasse softened the retort with his pleasant smile.

"Well, we didn't know what you were up to then."

"Naturally. And"—with a shrewd glance at Clarkson—"you wished to

proceed with your investigation of the affair without professional assistance?"

Clarkson stared. "So you think we were investigating the case, also?" he asked.

Lacasse shrugged his shoulders again. "That question I will answer with another," he replied, enjoying the situation hugely. "If you were not investigating the case what were you doing one evening, about ten days ago, in the studio of Udoff?"

"Why, how do you know I was there?" inquired the chemist.

"I saw you, monsieur, and heard you. I heard you opening drawers, and I saw you come out and lock the door with a key. It interested me very much, that key. I wondered where you had got it."

Clarkson smiled. "My hat's off," he said. "You've hit the bull's-eye. That key is the crux of the whole affair."

"You encourage me, monsieur. I shall try another shot. That key came, did it not, from the boudoir of the dead madame?"

"It did," said Clarkson. "I suspected foul play, and Mr. Milburn and I searched his stepmother's rooms. My invasion of Udoff's studio was for the same reason." He turned to his friend. "Mr. Lacasse is a gentleman," he said. "I suggest that we tell him the whole story."

"You may rely upon my honor," the Frenchman assured them.

The story he heard was brief. The elder Milburn's second wife had been a disturbing element from the day she entered the family. She had deliberately estranged her husband from his son, and the daughter, who was affectionate and pliant, she had used for her own ends. The girl had been engaged to Clarkson, and this engagement the stepmother had broken off by lies in order that she might use her stepdaughter as a screen to her affair with the artist, Udoff. But, while posing as

an admirer of the daughter, Udoff really fell in love with her. There lay the trouble. Mrs. Milburn was infatuated with the artist, and he with the girl. Realizing that he could never marry her while the other woman lived he had killed her and her husband to remove at one stroke all possible obstacles to his desire.

"I think Mrs. Milburn must have suspected the state of his mind and have regretted throwing him so much with Miss Milburn," Clarkson continued. "Because she made overtures to me and to her stepson, which we were both glad to accept. The party that night was in the nature of a celebration of our renewal of friendly relations. She came to my laboratory, under pretence of wanting information about infected olives, and told me she had decided, after all, that I was the man her stepdaughter ought to marry. I was naturally not disposed to dispute the point with her. It was this turn in events, I fancy, that brought Udoff's plans to a climax."

"You think, then, that it was he who killed both madame and her husband?" asked Lacasse, and to an assent he shook his head positively. "I do not agree," he said. "I am of the opinion that Monsieur Milburn died from olives."

"No, no, you've gone wrong there, I'm sure," said Clarkson. "All the olives involved in the case were good. Udoff used the little scare that the newspapers have made about infected olives just as he used the scare over bad water in that earlier affair in Mar-seilles. It was he who first raised a question about the olives. I went to see him, you see, because I was suspicious. The symptoms of the three members of the Milburn family who were ill were all different, and I was puzzled. When he said he believed the cause of illness was the olives I fell in with the idea to throw him off his guard, and I

was much surprised when the physicians in charge of Mr. Milburn diagnosed his case as olive poisoning. I couldn't understand it, but, as it aided my plans, I did not challenge it. I did not, however, believe that the olives served at Pigot's were bad, because the only infected olives I have encountered were put up in private homes under unsanitary conditions. I have several bottles of them in my laboratory."

"Yes," said Lacasse quietly, "and all have white paint on the bottom, like the one that was found on madame's pantry shelf. She did not leave your laboratory empty-handed that day she honored you with a visit."

"I don't follow you."

Lacasse explained. "The bottle without doubt was from your laboratory," he continued. "But a bottle is not an easy thing to dispose of in a modern apartment house. Madame solved the problem by putting into the bottle some harmless olives and setting it in her pantry."

"And you think she fed the bad ones to my father?" exclaimed Milburn. "How horrible!"

"It was doubtless Udoff who pointed out to her that very simple way of becoming suddenly a wealthy widow. Then he, at the same time, disposed of her, quite as he had disposed of his wife nine years before, by dropping poison from his palm into her coffee cup, and, for the sake of appearances, he dropped something milder into the coffee of mademoiselle and of himself. It was such a simple plan and had worked so well on the former occasion that he could not resist the temptation to try it again. That is the great weakness that one finds among criminals, a lack of imagination. He should have tried another plan this time. When a man is accused of the same thing twice, under the same suspicious circumstances, it becomes serious for him.

This, I think, he perceived, since he ran away. But it is better so."

The two young men agreed. The guilty ones had paid the penalty of their crimes, and the tragic chapter was closed.

"I thought of the coffee more than once," said Clarkson then. "But I knew that Mr. Milburn never drank it."

"You had not my advantage of knowing that the waiter had positively insisted that he had not touched the olives. That was why I brought him with me this evening. I thought we might need his evidence to complete our case. And he almost turned the tragedy into a farce." Lacasse laughed. "You see, I had quite overlooked the fact that his given name, was the same as that of Dupuy."

"And now, messieurs," the inspector continued formally, rising, "I think we have solved our puzzle and may say good evening." He held out his hand.

"Surely we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again," said Clarkson heartily as their hands met.

"I fear not, monsieur, unless you come to Paris. I am sailing to-morrow."

"And without satisfying our curiosity as to how you found Madame Latour? That is heartless!" declared the chemist.

"You must allow me one little 'trade secret,'" replied Lacasse, and, bidding Milburn adieu, he turned again to Clarkson.

"You will come very soon to Paris, I hope, monsieur—on your wedding journey," he said smilingly. "Is it not said that all good Americans go to Paris when they marry?"

"When they die," Milburn corrected.

"Oh! But I hope you will not wait so long as that!" The Frenchman laughed and took his leave.

Alone on the street a moment later he chuckled softly over the one little point in the case that he had so care-

fully kept to himself. They had not suspected, those clever young men, that the finding of Madame Latour had been so simple a matter, so much a thing of chance, that he was ashamed to confess it.

His spirit was buoyant, his step light. He had acquitted himself well in the affair just ended. It would be something to relate to his confrères in Paris. And, in the meantime, he would have the pleasure of a triumph over his friend Pigot who had been so very sure, that stupid Jean, that no woman was concerned in the matter.

It was over an excellent supper, provided by the humbled Pigot, that Lacasse divulged his secret.

"One supposes that you did not lure this woman to your side by singing lullabies to your granddaughter," observed the host with delicate sarcasm.

"You are right, my friend, I did not," answered the inspector of police. "I have done nothing. That is the shameful fact. One does not boast of what one accomplishes by doing nothing."

"Nevertheless one can tell it, perhaps, without boasting."

"You are right again, *mon vieux*. It is truly astonishing! Very well, you shall hear. At the end of ten days of singing lullabies, as you say, I received from Paris a cablegram informing me that this Paul Udoff was a certain Georges Dupuy who, at Marseilles, nine years ago, had been suspected of

poisoning his wife. If I desired to know more of him I was advised to call upon a certain Madame Joulin, known at a certain address in Brooklyn as Madame Latour. This Paris has learned from Marseilles."

"They knew, then, in Marseilles that Udoff and Dupuy were the same man?"

"Neither Marseilles nor Paris had ever heard of Udoff. I sent them the clew. When I perceived from the accent of this Udoff that he was not Russian, but French, I sharpened my eyes and looked about. And soon I found something. He was turning over a collection of drawings. As he did so he left on several a very clear print of his thumb. I had only to select the best of these marks, purchase the drawing, and send it to Paris. They did the rest."

"*Mon dieu!* And you say you did nothing!" exclaimed Pigot admiringly. "How you must love your profession!"

"Ah, yes," said Lacasse, "it is a splendid profession." But he did not think it necessary to inform his friend that he would carry back to France a collection of American dollars which, when converted into francs, would equal, by a delightful coincidence, his salary as inspector of police for two entire years. He only added: "Nevertheless I think seriously of retiring and of making my home here in America. My children are here, you see. Besides, America pleases me. It is a wonderful country."

LINEN, CLOCKS, AND PIANOS STOLEN FROM SHIPS

THE manager of a steamship line, whose vessels run from England to Australia, states that on one recent voyage one thousand dollars' worth of the ship's linen was stolen. While passengers were embarking on another ship in England some person or persons removed also the clocks from the smoking room and the music room and succeeded in getting away with them. Still more extraordinary is the theft of a piano from a steamer. The piano was stolen while the ship was tied up at a dock; it was taken to a cottage in England, where it was recovered a few days later.

A Crook Without Honor

By Johnston McCulley

Author of "The Mouthpiece Will Know!" etc.



His lips curled in a sneer, his little eyes glittering, Jim Morlan stood against the bole of the tree in the darkness and watched the patrolman go slowly along the walk, swinging his stick, his helmet on the back of his head, sniffing at the roses that grew along the edge of the lawn, looking up at the big moon, enjoying the perfect summer night.

"Ass!" Jim Morlan growled to himself.

It was the habit of Jim Morlan to regard almost everybody in that light. To him all other human beings were inferiors. It was a state of mind he had acquired in boyhood, and it had grown with his great body until it had taken full possession of him and molded his character. It had cost him all his friends and a great majority of his mere acquaintances. Jim Morlan, in that particular corner of the underworld, stood alone. He was known as a crooked crook. He did not possess even the questionable honor of his profession. Openly he said that he would as soon rob another crook as an honest man. The honor among thieves idea he called "bunk."

The unsuspecting patrolman, possibly thinking of his cottage, his wife, and his children, passed on down the street and finally turned a corner. Jim Morlan knew, because he had made it his business to know, that he would not

return to this vicinity for more than an hour. This was the select residence portion of the city, and the patrolman had a big beat. There were a few private watchmen scattered around, but Jim Morlan knew them and their habits and had nothing to fear from them.

Yet he hesitated for a moment to be sure, and then he crept like a shadow into another shadow cast by a clump of shrubs, and from that to still another made by a big tree, and in this manner he worked his way from the street to the side of the big house he intended to rob.

Morlan knew all about that house, too. He knew that the family had gone to the mountains for a month, that the master of the house spent a part of the time in town, that there were but three servants in the place, and that they slept on the third floor in the rear. They were no more than caretakers. The better servants had been sent to the mountain lodge with the family. Morlan had nothing to fear from the three who remained.

In the library of that residence there was a safe hidden behind a panel in the wall. Jim Morlan knew that it contained some old jewelry that never was used, but which would bring considerable when properly handled by a "fence." He expected to find some ready money, too, for he had ascertained that it was the policy of the master of

the house to keep a supply in the safe at all times.

Nor was that all. There was a tray of ancient coins in the safe, so the fence had said, and an unscrupulous collector in another city would pay a big price for a particular coin in the tray. Jim Morlan expected to make a good thing out of this night's work.

And it was necessary, he told himself. He was almost out of funds, thanks to an idea that he could play poker. He knew that the men who had strapped him were exulting, not only because they had taken the money, but also because they had taken it from him.

For Jim Morlan was cordially hated by the others of the underworld. He never played fair. He always worked alone. He did not give loyalty to his kind, and expected none. He belonged to no class, but stood alone. He had gone out of his way some months before to swindle a pair of crooks.

And there was a keen determination throughout the underworld to "get" him. There was no idea of turning him over to the police. The idea was to make him a laughingstock, to kill him with ridicule.

Morlan did not think of these things as he came finally to the side of the big house and crouched in the darkness near the wall. He watched and listened for a time. In the distance some clock struck the hour of one. The district was quiet. There was scarcely a light to be seen, save here and there a night light in a hall or servants' quarters.

Morlan slipped along the wall until he came to a basement window. He did not break the catch with a jimmy. He guessed that the window was connected with a burglar-alarm system. Putting a rubber suction cap in the middle of the glass, he held it there with his left hand, and with his right cut out the window close to the sash, using a glass cutter of the most approved pattern.

A quick pull, a snap, and the pane of glass came away with scarcely any noise. Jim Morlan crawled through and found himself in a laundry room.

Now he flashed his electric torch and found a piece of carpet, which he stretched before the open window. None knew better than Morlan that a sudden gust of wind might come through that window, slam a door somewhere in the house, and awaken the servants.

The window covered, Morlan flashed his electric torch again and made his way to a hall. Along this he went and up a flight of steps, and presently found himself on the ground floor of the house. He stopped for a moment to watch and listen, the torch extinguished. Then he crept through the hall toward the library.

Once inside the library, with the hall door closed behind him, Morlan felt his way around the walls until he had drawn all the window shades tightly. Only then did he flash the torch again. He did not want a sudden flash of light to go outside, possibly to be seen by some passing watchman and arouse curiosity.

He knew where the safe was located and how to slide back the panel in the wall, and he lost no time in doing so. And then he knelt before the safe and played the light of the torch on the combination knob.

Jim Morlan always was well prepared when he turned a trick. He knew a great deal about this particular safe. It was an imposing thing, but, as a matter of truth, it presented no great difficulties to a finished cracksman. What it had in appearance it lacked in security.

Kneeling before it, Jim Morlan worked at the combination slowly, his ear close to the steel, the tiny circle of light shining on the numbers of the dial. He made a mistake once, growled low down in his throat, and began

anew. And finally he triumphed, and with a grunt of satisfaction swung the heavy door of the safe open.

Now his torch was extinguished again for a moment, while, holding his breath, Jim Morlan listened again. He heard not the slightest sound to indicate the presence of danger. Satisfied that everything was as it should be, he once more flashed the torch.

The strong box was before him. Morlan took a tool from the lining of his coat and snapped the lock. He pulled the strong box out. Jewels flashed in the light, gems in old-fashioned settings that made Morlan's eyes glitter with avarice.

Morlan extracted them and put them in a pile on the carpet before him. He opened another drawer and found a package of currency—a couple of hundred dollars, he guessed. It was not so much as he had expected, but it came in handy. And now he would have to find the tray of old coins.

It did not take him long to find them. Putting the tray on the bottom of the safe, he glanced over it rapidly, seeking the particular coin he had been told to get. He wanted to put that in a special pocket, away from the others. It was to be the best part of the night's haul.

A sound reached his ears. Morlan snapped out the torch and remained silent and motionless, crouching before the safe. He heard the sound again—steps in the hall.

A door creaked as though it was being opened slowly. Morlan took a revolver from his pocket and held it ready. He was caught in a way if this unknown entered the library and snapped on the lights. But he would have the advantage of surprise, perhaps—and he could make a get-away.

He did not have time to scoop up the coins and the jewelry and currency and slip the loot into one of his pockets.

He heard the rustling of silk. And then the lights flashed on.

Just inside the hall door stood a young woman in evening dress.

II.

Jim Morlan sprang to his feet and menaced her with the revolver.

"Oh!" she gasped.

"Silence!" Morlan commanded. "Shut that door behind you! Not a sound or I'll shoot!"

She seemed stupefied, but she obeyed mechanically, as though through the force of the fear he had inspired. She closed the door gently, and then swayed against the wall, one hand to her forehead.

"Sit down over there by that table!" Morlan commanded in a hoarse whisper.

She staggered across the room and collapsed in the chair. Her eyes were wide, and she appeared to be badly frightened.

"You—you're a burglar!" she whispered. "You—you were robbing the safe——"

"Naw, I'm just the rent collector," Morlan whispered in reply, grinning. "Seems to me you butted in at the wrong time. What're you doin' here? I understood the family was in the mountains."

"You—robbing the safe——"

"Yeh, I suppose so. You just be quiet now and don't make a move, and as soon as I collect these little trophies I've found I'll decide what to do with you. I can't be havin' my get-away spoiled by any young skirt."

She seemed to be breathing easier now. She bent forward a bit in her chair. Morlan glanced sharply at her and stooped to pick up the swag.

"Wait!" she implored. "I—I don't belong in this house——"

"Then what are you doin' here?" Morlan asked. "Burglar yourself?"

"I—yes, in a way."

"That's good! You don't look the part," said Morlan. "Folks don't burgle in Paris gowns and with their hair dressed that way. Are you tryin' to play some kind of a game on me? Anybody else comin' after you?"

"No."

"You play a trick, my lady, and it'll be your last. This gun I'm holdin' is a businesslike little article."

"I—please listen to me," she begged. "Maybe you—can help me——"

"I don't quite get this."

"Listen," she begged again. "I—I came here—to get something. I had a key to the front door. I don't belong in this house, but I—I've been a guest here often. I belong to the same social set——"

"What's all this?" Morlan wanted to know.

"Do you know whose house this is?" she asked.

"Sure. It's Blakeley's house."

"And do you know Blakeley? A polished gentleman, isn't he—rich, has social position, charitable, all that!" She sneered. "Do you know why I am here?" she asked.

"I'm listenin'."

"Blakeley is a man of fifty-five, a widower."

"I know all that. Get down to cases."

"And he—he wants to marry me. Can you imagine me marrying a man like him? There—there is another man, you see, but that doesn't stop Blakeley. And so——"

"Pardon me, lady, but I ain't got time to hear the latest society news."

"Please wait—listen, and help me. I'll make it worth your while. See—see these rings? They are worth several thousand, I suppose. I—I'll give them to you if you'll help me!"

"Very nice. But I can just take 'em without helpin' you at all," said Morlan.

"But you wouldn't do that, I'm sure. And it is such a little thing I want."

"Go ahead with the story."

"I've got a foolish young brother. Blakeley got him gambing at the club, and he—he forged a check. And now Blakeley has it—and if I don't agree to marry him——"

"He'll hand the boy over to the cops?"

"Yes," she breathed. "It's an old scheme, of course, but it is terrible for all that. I want to save my brother—and myself. I knew the family was away, and I slipped here from a party. I had some wild idea of getting that check."

"You think it is in the safe?"

"Possibly. Either there or in the desk. Get it for me, and I'll give you these rings. Here—take them now!"

She stripped them from her fingers, and Morlan took them from her hand and stepped back. His eyes glittered as he looked at them. Three or four thousand, at least, he thought. He chuckled as he looked at her again.

"Well, I'll play fair for once, lady," he said. "I've already got the safe open, and if the check's here you can have it."

"And I hope—hope you take everything else!" she whispered. "Blakeley deserves it. But just get me the check and then let me get away. And I'll thank you—thank you—— It is for eight hundred dollars, made payable to Peter van Lyne."

Jim Morlan knelt before the safe and pulled out a bundle of documents, bonds, receipts, lists of securities. Perhaps the check would be there, he thought. He'd give it to the fool girl, then take the other stuff and make his get-away. He would have nothing to fear from her. He might even learn her identity, and there would be possibilities of blackmail in the future.

He began going through the papers. Once he glanced at her, and she had settled back in the chair again and was breathing heavily, evidently listening

intently. She was frightened half to death, Morlan decided.

He put his revolver down on the floor and hurried through the papers. He wanted to be done and on his way. He turned his head away from her for an instant—

A sudden swish of silken skirts! Morlan turned quickly. She was out of the chair, standing just before him, her eyes flashing and a terrible look in her face. And she held a wicked-looking automatic that covered him steadily.

"Up with your hands!" she ordered. "Up, or you're a dead man!"

Morlan was caught fairly. The unexpectedness of it did for him as much as the sight of the automatic. He lifted his hands slowly, while his lower jaw sagged in surprise and his eyes bulged.

"Clever little burglar, aren't you?" she said sneeringly. "You swallowed that story neatly, put aside your gun, let me catch you. Not very quick-witted, are you? A few years in prison may improve your wits."

"You—you——" Morlan gasped.

"Walk across the room and sit down in that chair!" she commanded. "And just try a trick, if you think it is best."

Morlan obeyed. He was alert, watching for a chance to make his getaway, but he did not have much hope. Something seemed to tell him that this girl would shoot at the slightest provocation.

"I—was helpin' you——" he stammered.

"You fell for my story, that's all! I got you to put aside your gun, turn away your head——"

"What—you goin' to do?" he asked.

"What does a person generally do when a burglar is caught? You sit still, please."

She reached for the telephone on the table at her elbow. As she took down the receiver she held the automatic in

her right hand, and not once did she take her eyes from his.

She called a number. Jim Morlan knew that number well—it was police headquarters!

"Send officers at once to 1720 Norton Place!" she ordered. "I've caught a burglar!"

The receiver was returned to the hook, and once more she settled back in her chair, watching him.

"On your way to prison," she said. "I always had an opinion that professional burglars were clever, but it seems not."

"Let me go," Morlan begged suddenly. "I—everything is there by the safe. I haven't anything in my pockets except your rings. I'll give those back——"

"A man who transgresses the law must pay the penalty," she told him.

"I—I was driven to it," Morlan whimpered. "Give me a chance, lady."

"And you'd be robbing somebody else to-morrow night."

"No! I'll turn straight! If I got to prison now I'll always be a crook. Give me a chance, lady, and I'll turn straight."

"I am afraid not," she said.

She got up from the chair, and, still watching him, moved slowly to the hall door. She turned halfway from him, opened the door, glanced out into the hall, and closed the door again.

"No use to call the servants," she said. "I'll just watch you until the police come."

"For Heaven's sake, lady, let me go!" Jim Morlan implored. "I'll run straight from now on."

"If I could believe that——" she said.

"I swear it, lady."

"You're frightened now because the police are coming. To-morrow, over your fright, you'd decide that you had been a fool," she said. "You'd turn

burglar again. Prison is the best place for you."

"Ain't you got any mercy?" he asked.

"Mercy isn't extended to criminals," she replied. "You cut yourself off from mercy when you turned crook."

"Just give me a chance! I'll never forget it, lady! And I swear to go straight!"

Jim Morlan thought that he was a consummate actor. He had no more intention of going straight than he had of running for mayor. But he managed real tears and a dry sob or two. And meanwhile he watched her carefully.

It was about time for the police to arrive, he judged. She seemed to think so, too. She got up again and once more moved toward the hall door.

Jim Morlan took the chance. He was out of his chair like a shot and at the nearest window. He crashed through it, darted across the lawn, made for the nearest alley. And as he ran he exulted—he had her rings!

He did not notice that the lights in the library went out immediately.

III

The following evening Jim Morlan ate his dinner in a restaurant frequented by those of the underworld. He was surly, mean. In the morning papers he had read of the robbery at the Blakeley house. Servants had been awakened, the story said, by the crashing of glass. It was evident that the thief had made his get away through a library window, and in a hurry. Evidently something had alarmed him.

That puzzled Jim Morlan to a great degree. Did not the woman—he supposed she was the daughter of the house—tell the police the truth?

And there was more to puzzle him. The robbery had been discovered by the servants just after the breaking of the window. And the safe was open, papers scattered about, currency, old jewelry, and rare coins missing.

Jim Morlan thought it all over again and cursed beneath his breath. There was some mystery, he supposed. At least he had the diamond rings, and they would repay him. He would wait for a few days, and then carry them to the fence. Perhaps that story in the newspapers was a trick of the police, a trap. They often had resorted to such tricks before.

Into the café came two men Jim Morlan knew well—"Burley" Bell, a pickpocket, and Harry Carls, a swindler. They sat down at the adjoining table and nodded at Morlan, and he nodded in return.

He gave them no attention for a time, and then suddenly he pricked up his ears.

"I have mercy, lady!" Bell was saying.

"For Heaven's sake, lady, let me go!" Carls replied. "I'll go straight from now on!"

"Don't call the police, lady," said Bell. "I was driven to it! I swear I'll go straight!"

Jim Morlan's eyes bulged, and then his face turned red. He glanced at the others, and saw they were laughing.

"Great stuff!" Bell said to Carls. "It's the laugh of the district! This bird goes ahead and opens the safe and piles out the loot, and then Maizie comes along and gobbles it all in. And the boob gets away with a bunch of paste rings worth about fifteen dollars retail. My eye!"

"Let me go! I swear I'll run straight!" Carls grunted, tears of laughter running down his cheeks. "I was driven to it!"

"Here comes Maizie now," said Bell.

Jim Morlan glanced down the aisle from the corner of his eye. Along it, dressed in a neat blue suit, came the woman of the night before. She sat down at the table with Bell and Carls.

And then Bell got up and walked across to Jim Morlan.

"Come over and meet Maizie, Carls'

girl," he said. "She's some moll, educated and all that. She'll tell you about a funny little trick she pulled last night, Morlan."

"Go to——" Morlan began.

"Oh, don't get rough about it!" Bell said. "You had it comin' to you. No honor among thieves for you! You're a crooked crook, Morlan, but this'll finish you in this town. You're a huge joke to everybody in the know. Clever of you to open the safe and get out the loot for Maizie."

"I'll——"

"You'll take your medicine and clear out—or stay here and be laughed to death," Bell said, suddenly stern. "We've got enough to do watchin' cops, without watchin' a crooked crook, too. You were easy, Morlan. We had it all planned. We'd been watchin' you for a couple of weeks. Maizie played the game good, too. And that telephone call to the cops—wires cut outside,

Morlan, by yours truly. It may interest you to know that the swag brought Maizie a nice little roll. You may retain the paste rings, you boob!"

Bell turned and went back to the other table, said something under his breath, and Carls and the woman laughed.

"Have mercy!" said Carls. "I was driven to it! Let me go, lady, and I'll swear to run straight——"

Jim Morlan, in a rage, his dinner half eaten, grasped the check and his hat and hurried toward the cashier's cage. Behind him there was a gale of laughter. The eyes of the cashier were glistening.

"Some joke, Morlan," the cashier said. "Let me go, lady——"

Jim Morlan rushed out into the night. He knew when he was licked. He had a little money and there was a train leaving for the West in half an hour.

Jim Morlan caught the train.

PURSUE MAN UNDER RIVER

A STRANGE man hunt, which led under the bed of the East River, was made recently between Brooklyn and New York. August Mailhes, a Frenchman speaking but little English, was attacked by three men as he stood on the platform of the subway station at Clark Street, Brooklyn. An elevator used to carry passengers to and from the street level took the bandits to the station only a few minutes after Mailhes had arrived. The footpads waited only long enough for the elevator to start upward before attacking the Frenchman. One of the bandits gave a command in English and whipped out a revolver. Although not understanding the order Mailhes knew what the men meant and unresistingly permitted them to take his money, crying out only when one of the bandits struck him with a blackjack. Within a few minutes assistance reached Mailhes, and he was able to tell his hearers that one of his assailants had fled down the track which leads from Brooklyn to New York.

Employees of the subway company and police detectives started in pursuit of the alleged robber. Warned to watch for the fugitive the motorman of the train that speeded toward New York halted his cars just as the trapped man flung himself against the concrete walls of the subway tube to avoid the oncoming train. The fugitive was taken aboard, and the train then proceeded toward the metropolis.

A short distance farther on the motorman again halted his train as two figures, looming up in the tube, waved frantically for him to stop. They proved to be detectives who had started to walk from Manhattan to Brooklyn through the tube, in the hope of intercepting the suspect.

Mr. Mailhes later identified the captive as one of his assailants. The police assert that their prisoner is Samuel la Mar, who has been arrested seven times on various charges and has served a term in Elmira reformatory.

Ten Grains of Sand

by Christopher B. Booth

Author of "Back Fire," etc.

TAYLORVILLE said that Lester Henry was "queer." A small town finds it hard to understand a man who keeps much to himself and who has a hobby. His hobby was poring through massive volumes on criminology and in daily ferreting through the columns of a dozen or more newspapers that he subscribed for in search of mysteries. Taylorville regarded him with tolerant amusement until he asked us to elect him town constable; why a man with almost a section of fertile Missouri land, and half a dozen tenant cottages besides, wanted the office of town constable—it paid only three hundred dollars a year—was a puzzle.

Even I was startled; and I flattered myself that frequent contact with the outside world has given me a breadth of vision beyond the somewhat near-sighted perspective of my home town; also, as Lester Henry's attorney and personal friend, I understood him rather better than most people did. I had always felt a great sympathy for him; it was seldom that he allowed me to see the bitterness which he felt as a result of his affliction—a hopeless lameness dating from childhood.

When I returned from St. Louis on Thursday, after spending several days arguing several cases before the court of appeals, the silly thing had been done, and Lester Henry had furnished Taylorville with more amusement than it had enjoyed in years. He had been elected constable for the very good reason that no one else wanted it. I was indignant that he had made such a fool

of himself and was eager to tell him so. We were both bachelors and lived at the Globe Hotel. His two rooms were directly across the hall from mine, and I strode in upon him, finding him by his reading lamp, absorbed in some expert treatise on criminology, as was his wont in the evenings.

"I suppose you're going to tell me that I have lost my mind," he said, evidently anticipating the storm which was about to break from my lips.

"Well, haven't you?" I demanded. "Of all the fool things! A constable! Great guns, man; what on earth were you thinking about?"

"I was thinking that Taylorville ought to have a constable—and no one else seemed to want it," he answered half apologetically; he was in the way of being a sensible, practical man, and he knew how absurd the business seemed.

"There's no use in letting this crime stuff get on your mind this way," I sputtered. "It's all right for you to go browsing through books and pawing over an armful of newspaper clippings every day, but I never dreamed you would take it so seriously."

"I certainly wouldn't have taken it if any one else had wanted the job," he laughed. "Then it will—I hardly know just why I wanted to be a constable."

"I'll tell you why, Henry," I retorted. "You're tired of monkeying with crime in the abstract; you feel that if you hold some sort of a police office it will give your criminological studies sort of an —an excuse. It will help you fool yourself that you are not entirely wast-

ing your time. You'll be on the mailing list for the police 'wanted' circulars and all that sort of thing. Isn't that it?"

"Perhaps it is," he replied vaguely. "I'm not really so sure myself. Anyhow, it's done now. I'm really glad you were out of town, for I know you would have argued me out of it."

"And so I would," I returned. "Heavens, man, if you're determined to study crime in the concrete, why don't you go to the city, where there is crime. You might do something with it, at that."

"A great thief catcher I'd make with this withered leg of mine," he said, and the occasional note of bitterness crept into his voice. "No, that, like everything else, is barred to me. It's—it's the very devil, being a cripple, Carter. But I get a lot of fun out of my hobby. And, no matter what this town may think, I've got a perfect right to choose my own form of mental relaxation; as much right as a certain lawyer in our town has to spend his time behind the stove in Hocker's store playing chess."

"I suppose, at that, your criticism is as logical as mine," I grumbled. "Well, anyhow, when Taylorville develops a murder mystery we'll have our own sleuth right on the ground; we won't have to import any talent from the outside."

There was a look of almost fanatical hunger in his eyes.

"You meant that as a joke, of course," he said slowly, "but—well, it's only the law of averages that every town should develop a first-class mystery some time in its career. I am just waiting for that very thing to happen; I want to have a crack at it."

"And so that's why you got yourself elected constable!" I burst out in derision. "Well, you'll be waiting a long time, Henry; nothing ever happens in this town."

"One can never tell," said Lester Henry; "we may have a murder sooner

than you suspect. I wouldn't be surprised at it."

And, in the light of the swiftly following events, his words seemed prophetic; indeed, they might have seemed even—suspicious.

II.

Stuffing my pipe and tobacco pouch into my pocket, I was just in the act of getting out of Henry's easy-chair when the door fairly trembled with an impatient staccato of rapping.

"Answer it, will you, Carter? You're getting up, anyhow," Henry requested me, and I did as he asked. As I swung back the door I saw Worth Taylor standing in the hall just outside. Even in the poor light I could see that he was under the stress of some strong excitement. This in itself was surprising, for he was about as even-keeled mentally as any one I knew.

"They told me that I would find you here, Mr. Carter!" he cried, pushing his way into the room. "I want to talk to you—at once. Did—did you draw up my father's will?"

"To be sure I did, Worth," I replied. "What's wrong? If you want to talk business, suppose we go over to my office."

Evidently he was more concerned with getting an immediate answer to his questions than he was about privacy.

"This is as good a place as any," he replied. "All I want to know is this: Just what are my uncle's rights over my interest in the tile works? Has my uncle a right to take it away from me?"

"Has your uncle—what?" I asked, amazed. "Take your property away from you? What are you talking about, anyhow?"

"Answer my question, please. I want to know," he insisted.

"What rubbish!" I snapped impatiently. "Your uncle isn't going to take

your property away from you and you know it."

"I don't know anything of the kind," he doggedly insisted. "And I do know that he says he is. I know that the property my father left me is bound up in some sort of trust, and I want to know just what it is."

"Your—your uncle says that he's going to—to take your property away from you?" I stammered. "Boy, you're out of your mind!"

But just the same I was more startled than I had ever been in my life, for the truth was that Thaddeus Taylor had full control of the property that was morally his nephew's—to do with as he saw fit, with not a single legal string attached.

"I know it sounds queer," said Worth Taylor, flinging himself into a chair. "but that's because you don't understand. I'll explain it to you, and then I want you to tell me just what sort of a fix I am in legally."

"Perhaps I had better step outside," suggested Lester Henry.

"Oh, stay where you are," said Worth. "I happen to know that you aren't a gossip."

"I knew that Uncle Thad had my property in trust, but I didn't know he could take it away from me; I never dreamed of such a thing until—until the quarrel."

"I suppose every one in Taylorville knows about—about Uncle Thad's romance. You know about it?"

I nodded; he was right, for every one in Taylorville did know about it. It was the nearest approach to love, melodrama that the town had ever experienced. More than twenty-five years before, Thaddeus Taylor, then a struggling young business man, had been thrown over by the pretty Loretta Campbell, who had married Frank Marshall. Straightway Thaddeus Taylor had been transformed from a somewhat cheerful, commonplace, pleasant

youth into a mirthless, cold, and hard man. I had often said that it had paralyzed his soul and petrified his heart. The passing years served to increase rather than soothe his bitterness. Now he was the most greedy, grasping, and thoroughly disliked man in Taylorville. By dint of relentless squeezing and scheming he had built up a slender competence into a fortune which was opulent even for Taylorville.

"Well," went on Worth, flushing a little, "perhaps you can imagine what a blow it was to Uncle Thad when he discovered that—that Ethel Marshall and I were—er—interested in each other."

I whistled softly in frank amazement.

"Yes, I can imagine," I replied dryly. "You mean that you and Ethel Marshall, the daughter of the woman who—er—jilted your uncle, are—are engaged?"

He nodded.

"Ethel and I," he explained, "really never got acquainted until this summer. We were rather kept at a distance by what happened between her mother and Uncle Thad. We happened to be guests at the same place in St. Louis and were thrown together a lot. The result was that—well, it just happened. I knew a little of how Uncle Thad would feel, so we kept our friendship a secret. But he found out, somehow, and I had to admit that we loved each other."

"I won't repeat the things he said—you have a rather good idea, I suppose. The long and short of it was that he told me to take my choice—the girl or the tile works; said I couldn't have both."

"And what did you say?" I inquired curiously.

"I—I am afraid that I told him to go to—to the devil."

"Of course," and I smiled, "that's the way with youth—what's a hundred-thousand-dollar tile factory more or less?"

"Then he can do it?" Worth de-

manded. "He can take it away from me? Please tell me just where I stand."

"In order to explain the status of your property," I began, "it is necessary to tell you about your father's motive. He died when you were only fourteen. He had worked mighty hard to lay the foundation of the business which is now this town's largest industry. He had seen so many youngsters fritter away their inheritance that he wanted to take a precaution that it would not happen in your case.

"He felt that he could trust your Uncle Thaddeus implicitly. It was virtually certain that his brother would never marry, and that he, in fact, loved you like his own son—oh, yes, in his way he does. The result was that your father turned his entire property over to your uncle, and it was understood that you should have it all when your uncle should decide that you were capable of managing it.

"Now, see here, Worth, romance is one thing and common sense is another. Your uncle would not rob you of a penny. But you are not dealing with dishonesty; you are dealing with insanity. The chances are that he would do as he says—and there isn't a legal way in the world to stop it. The property is morally yours, legally his.

"Here's the sensible thing to do: Placate him, seem to fall in with his demands. If Ethel Marshall is sensible, she will understand. Your Uncle Thaddeus is an old man, and you two young people will not have a great while to wait."

Worth leaped to his feet with an angry gesture.

"I won't do it!" he cried. "I can't do it! Ethel is mine, and I'm going to have her, and——" His lips tightened grimly. "And," he added, banging down his fist on Lester Henry's library table, "I'm going to have my property,

too. It was my father's and it's mine, and he shan't take it away from me."

"There's no way you can stop him," I reminded him. "Better be sensible."

"I'm going to have it!" he declared again. "I'm going to have it out with him—now! He's not going to rob me of what is mine; I'll—I'll kill him first!"

His face was white with anger, his hands trembling. I sought to detain him as he started for the door.

"I'm going to have it out with him—to-night!" he shouted.

"Wait until to-morrow, Worth," I pleaded. "Don't go to him in a rage like that." I loved the boy as I had loved his father.

Worth jerked away from my fingers which reached for his coat sleeve and made for the door. In a moment he was gone.

"Oh, let him go," said Lester Henry quietly as I reached for my hat. "It's all right."

"Indeed it isn't all right," I retorted. "I'm going with him."

"Let him go," pursued Henry. "I saw old Thaddeus Taylor get aboard the eight o'clock train for the city."

I sighed with relief.

"Then it is all right," I agreed. "He'll be all right when he cools off a bit, but I was afraid—I was afraid that you might get your Taylorville murder, after all."

"Bosh!" said Lester Henry. "Worth isn't of the type that slays—even in anger. I've got 'em pretty well classified, and I was studying him. If Thaddeus Taylor were found dead to-night it would be a mystery—about the prettiest mystery you ever saw, because I would be sure of one thing: That Worth didn't do it."

"Stuff and nonsense!" I said explosively. "Who else would kill him?"

"Any one of half a dozen people might," replied Lester Henry. "Old Thaddeus Taylor has built up a fine list of hatreds in this town. Why, I would

be more apt to do it myself—I have good reason, you know.”

I started, more at the seriousness of his tone than at the words themselves which, of course, might have been only idle banter. I found an almost forgotten memory tugging for recognition.

Thirty-five years ago Thaddeus Taylor, on what was perhaps the only spree of his life, had raced his horse down a country lane; he had run down a freckled-faced farmer boy. That boy had been Lester Henry—and that was why Lester Henry was hopelessly lame!

III.

The blow was swift in falling.

My law offices are on the second floor of the Arnold Block, over Arnold's drug store. The room which I use as my library has a bay window, and I frequently sit there, my feet propped up in the window sill, as I browse through my bulky sheepskin volumes. From this projecting inclosure I command a full view of Main Street. On Saturday afternoon I glanced up as I heard the thunder of the afternoon train pausing at the railroad station half a block away; a few minutes later I saw Thaddeus Taylor coming up the street. He was returning from his two-day trip to the city. He had been absent since the evening of my talk with Worth. I made up my mind that I must have a heart-to-heart talk with Thaddeus very soon; he generally listened a little to me. He plodded wearily along Main Street, turning off on his way to the tile works; he was getting old, was Thaddeus, in a pitiful way.

He was little more than out of sight when I returned to my books, for I was briefing an important case for the next term of the appellate court, and I was soon wrapped up in the contemplation of a very fine legal point. It must have been fully an hour later when the telephone rang.

“Hello,” I grunted.

“That you, Carter?” rasped the irritable voice of none other than Thaddeus Taylor. “Can you come down to the factory right away?”

“Surely, Thaddeus,” I replied. “I'll be there in an hour.”

“All right, Carter,” grunted my client, “and bring some foolscap with you. I want you to draw up a new will. I want—wait a minute——”

I knew better than to start any sort of abrupt protest; he had to be handled very carefully, but I preferred to have him alone at his home. I was just planning to suggest a later hour when his pause was broken by the thin, filelike edge of Thaddeus Taylor's voice raised to a screeching scream of wild terror which made my blood run cold.

“What's the matter, Thaddeus?” I cried into the transmitter. There was no response.

“Thaddeus!” I shouted, jiggling the receiver hook up and down. “Operator! Operator!” The echo of my own voice, sounding through my office, was the only answer.

The first thought that came to my mind was—Worth Taylor! The boy, faced with loss of his property, had struck down his uncle, and I prayed for the best and feared for the worst. Only for a moment did I hesitate. The telephone would tell me nothing; I must get there as soon as I could. Fortunately my car was beside the curb at the foot of my office steps and, jamming my hat onto my head, I took the stairway three steps at a time. I forgot that I was an old man with rheumatism.

For the first time in my life I knowingly and willfully, as the legal phrase has it, broke the law; I shattered the town's speed ordinance into fragments as I tore along Blucker Street toward the Taylorville Tile Works. I was only a block away when I jammed on the brakes. Limping slowly toward town,

dragging his withered limb after him, I saw Lester Henry.

"Get in here with me, Henry," I cried, flinging open the door. "I—I am afraid that something has happened at the tile plant."

In short, terse sentences I told him what I knew; as much as I might have liked, there was no use in withholding anything from Lester Henry—Constable Henry now, if you please. He knew as much about the strained relations between Worth Taylor and his uncle as I did.

"I just came from the factory myself," remarked Henry. "I was there buying a load of tile to drain the lower forty acres of my farm."

"Did—did you see Worth?" I demanded anxiously.

"I didn't go inside the office," he replied. "I gave my order to Charley Wade, the foreman. I never go near old Thaddeus if I can help it; I—I always feel like I want to choke him. Good thing I didn't, eh? I had a motive, too. But dispel your fears, if anything has happened to old Taylor, that Worth did it; I'll bet money on that."

"I hope so," I groaned; "I love that boy."

"So do I," agreed Henry, "as much as hate his uncle. You understand why?"

Racing the car through the factory yard, between the row of flame-belching tile-baking furnaces, I paused at the modest office of the prosperous industry. I fairly leaped from the machine and burst into the office.

One glance told me that my worst fears were confirmed; Thaddeus Taylor was dead

IV.

Crouched against the wall as if to get as far as possible from the huddled-up body in the swivel chair at the battered roll-top desk, his face convulsive with terror, was Jasper Boddington,

Thaddeus Taylor's aged bookkeeper and cashier.

"He's dead—dead!" he whispered. "I—I didn't kill him; I swear I didn't kill him!"

Lester Henry had limped in behind me. He gave a searching glance in Boddington's direction and turned to the body. Henry had his wish; he had met crime face to face. I was a little surprised at his calmness.

"Stabbed," he said tersely. "Stabbed through the heart—with this." He pointed to a crimson-stained paper knife which lay on the floor beside the desk. Carefully he picked it up by the blade—a murderous-looking thing to open letters with.

"No finger prints," he added. "It would be a poor dub these days who wouldn't wipe off his finger prints."

I stared helplessly at the form of Thaddeus Taylor. Even death had failed to remove the harsh, almost sneering expression of his face—what a miserable soul had been released from its mortal prison, I thought.

"Boddington," said Henry, "I suppose you know that I am a constable? I will take charge of things."

"Where—where is Worth, Boddington?" I demanded.

"He—he was here when—when I left," whispered the aged bookkeeper.

"Please, Carter," requested Henry, "let me ask the questions—for the present. Come on now, Boddington; pull yourself together and tell us how this thing happened."

"I—I don't know," stammered Boddington. "I—I just came in—just as you drove up; that—that is what I found."

"You mean that you weren't here when Taylor was killed?"

A look of wild terror came into old Boddington's face.

"You—you don't think I was here?" he begged. "You don't think that—that I killed him?"

"Did you kill him?" demanded Henry.

"No! I swear it!"

"Then why do you fear that we will suspect you?"

"I—I don't know."

"You're not telling the truth, Boddington," charged Henry. "Out with it; you and Taylor quarreled—isn't that it?"

Old Boddington's teeth fairly chattered.

"But I didn't kill him," he insisted desperately. "I wasn't even in the office."

"What did you quarrel about?"

"We—that is he—was always quarreling," Boddington almost sobbed. "Oh, if you only knew what I've been through in the last fifteen years I've worked here. He was always abusing me, swearing at me, calling me names. He—he said that he liked people to be afraid of him and—and to hate him."

"And you hated him," persisted Henry. "Enough to kill him?"

"Maybe I hated him enough, but—I was too afraid of him," whimpered Boddington. "I didn't kill him; I wouldn't have dared."

It was possible to believe that simply by looking at the bookkeeper's palsied body and terror-stricken eyes; and yet, I told myself, worms had been known to turn before.

"Go ahead with your story," commanded Henry. "Get a grip on yourself and tell us. If you're innocent you've nothing to fear."

"I—I haven't any story," pleaded Boddington. "I went out into the brick yards to take some orders out. I was gone about ten minutes; when I got back he—he was like that—dead."

"Any one in the office when you left?"

Boddington hesitated.

"N-o-o," he said, with averted eyes.

"You'll be putting the noose about your own neck if you try to shield any

one else," reminded Henry. "You are under suspicion yourself, you know."

Boddington's panic returned.

"I'll tell," he said hastily. "I—I didn't want—I—I——"

"You hoped that the man who killed him would escape, eh?" Henry guessed shrewdly. And Boddington nodded slowly.

"Yes," he whispered, "that was it. Worth was in the office when I left."

"They quarreled about the will, didn't they?"

The bookkeeper's faded blue eyes widened at Henry's seemingly uncanny knowledge.

"They quarreled—about the will," he agreed; "but—but I know that Worth didn't mean those threats; he—he was just talking."

"Then Worth did threaten to kill his uncle?" went on Henry calmly.

"But he didn't mean it," protested Boddington eagerly. "Worth wouldn't do that. He didn't mean it any more than George Archer did."

I started in surprise, and Lester Henry's brows went up in surprise.

"You mean some one else threatened Thaddeus Taylor's life—to-day?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Boddington. "You know George Archer; he works out in the yards. He was all het up because Mr. Taylor was going to foreclose the mortgage on his house."

I understood what he meant. Thaddeus Taylor owned a number of tenant cottages which he sometimes sold on the time-payment plan. He insisted that purchasers live strictly up to their payments and never took excuses; it was "meet your payments or get out" with him.

"What did Archer say?" pursued Henry.

"He said, 'You foreclose that mortgage of mine, and it'll be the last mortgage you'll ever foreclose this side of hell. You turn me out in the street,

Thaddeus Taylor, and I'll put you off watch.' That's what he said, word for word."

Lester Henry knitted his brows thoughtfully.

"Let us be getting a little more coherent account of the time," he said. "When you left the office Worth was still here? Is that it?"

"He had started to the door like he was going out; he was standing out in front when I passed him. I don't know if he came back in or not.

"Archer had been in about half an hour before, and—I'm going to tell you everything—as I went out to the yard I met Archer, walking toward the office. I don't know if he came to the office or not, but he was coming in this direction, and then, a little farther on I saw you—and you were coming toward the office, too. Mr. Henry."

"Yes," nodded Henry, "that is so. I had forgotten to include myself among the—er—suspects. But I didn't come to the office. I merely passed in front of it on my way to the street."

Henry's eyes were like burning coals, and it was now evident to me that his calm exterior was but a cloak for a well-mastered excitement. A sudden suspicion seized me. I knew a little something about the queer twists that were often to be found within the brains of men afflicted such as he was. He had admitted that he hated Thaddeus Taylor, that he held him to account for the lameness which he had carried for so many years; he had even admitted that he had felt the impulse to do violence to the man who had maimed him.

He had passed the office, as he said, on the way to the street after placing his order with the foreman for a load of tile. A man passing the office, had he looked up, could easily see through the window within. What if he had seen the man who had blighted his life, sitting there alone? Suppose he had been seized with the desire to avenge his

wrong? Knowing that suspicion naturally would be diverted to Worth Taylor, what could be more logical than an impulsive dash into the room, a quick lunge at Thaddeus Taylor as he sat talking to me on the telephone—and a speedy flight? And then to hide the whole business by his own investigation of the crime? I will admit that I suddenly found myself more inclined to this theory than to the one that Worth had let his anger go to such lengths—for I didn't want to think the boy guilty.

Something of my thoughts must have showed in my face as I stared at Henry intently, for he laughed shortly.

"I see that I am indeed a suspect," he said. "I'll have a double motive now in solving the crime—I've got to clear myself, too."

Feeling a bit ashamed of myself, I turned my eyes away from his and looked out the window. At that moment Worth Taylor was walking briskly toward the office.

V.

One look at Worth Taylor's face, and I knew that he was either as innocent as myself or the cleverest actor in Christendom. His face blanched as he stared past us at the inert form of his uncle; he saw the telltale crimson stain on Thaddeus Taylor's shirt and the now-clotted weapon which had struck the blow.

"He—he has been murdered!" he cried hoarsely. "Who—who did it; who killed my uncle?"

"You didn't do it, did you, Worth?" Henry demanded bluntly.

"I—I kill him!" exclaimed Worth. "I kill Uncle Thad? Man, are you crazy?"

"You threatened to, you know," reminded Henry.

"That's a lie!"

"Mr. Carter and I both heard you—

two nights ago in my room at the hotel; and Boddington says he heard you here, too."

"Great heavens! You don't think for a minute that I meant that? That—why, I didn't mean it. I wouldn't have killed him for all the tile factories in North America." He stared at me appealingly. "Surely, Mr. Carter," he begged, "you—you don't think I even thought of killing Uncle Thad?"

A great lump came into my throat.

"Of course I don't believe it," I told him.

"But you did quarrel with your uncle again this afternoon," insisted Henry. "It is certain that you defied him, for he called Carter, here, up on the telephone and said that he was going to change his will. Boddington says you were in front of the office when he left—after the quarrel; when he returned, your uncle was dead."

"Yes," agreed Worth miserably, "that is true. I think I did use some hot words, but—well, I was under tremendous excitement. It isn't any calm matter to lose a factory like this—when it is really yours. You see—I didn't tell you this the other night—Ethel and I were married ten days ago in St. Louis. Uncle Thad found it out; I think he suspected it, and that's why he went to the city. That—that is why he wanted to change the will to-day."

"And," suggested Henry, "the only thing that would stop him was—death!"

"Don't—don't you dare suggest that I killed him!" cried Worth.

Henry smiled a little.

"Don't worry, Worthy," he said; "I know you didn't do it."

Even to me, Worth's friend, this decision seemed a little premature, but Lester Henry was so positive that I began to wonder if he really did know more about the business than he pretended. I could not, for the life of me, see but that the visible evidence was all against Worth.

Lester Henry had been walking slowly back and forth, and I noted that he moved his feet across the linoleum with a shuffling sort of movement that produced a scraping sound, not unlike that of two sheets of sandpaper being rubbed across. I noted that he moved toward the big, old-fashioned safe, the door of which was standing open.

"Boddington," said Henry, "you look after the cash, don't you?"

The old bookkeeper, who, still trembling, had slipped into a chair, hands across his face that he might not have to look upon the body of Thaddeus Taylor, nodded.

"Know how much money is in that safe?"

"To the last penny," replied Boddington.

"Count it," commanded Henry. "I think you'll find some of it missing."

The old man almost tottered across the room and knelt before the iron box. A cry burst from his lips.

"You're right!" he said. "There's seven hundred dollars gone—and it was there an hour ago!"

"Exactly." Henry nodded, with the suspicion of an exultant smile about his lips. "Hear my foot scrape across the floor—that's sand; a trail of it leads from the door to Thaddeus Taylor's desk and to the safe. You can scarcely see it, for it's white—white sand! Do you use much white sand in the factory here?"

It was Worth who answered.

"Yes," he replied. "We've got a whole car of it in to-day. It's from the Cuiver River; I discovered it and worked out a process for manufacturing a particular grade of fine tile. It's being unloaded on the spur track right now."

"How many men are unloading it?"

"Only one; Fred Willis, I think his name is," answered Worth.

"Send for Fred Willis, and you've got the man who killed your uncle," de-

clared Lester Henry. "We've got the complete evidence against him—absolutely conclusive. I'll show you in a minute."

Worth, as puzzled as the rest—Boddington was too bewildered to be further puzzled about anything—stepped to the yard phone to call the foreman.

"Hello, Wade," he said, "send Willis to the office. W—what's that? I—I'll call you back in a minute." Slowly he turned to Henry and I, who were waiting impatiently.

"Willis seems to have skipped out," he told us. "Wade says one of the men saw him running off down the railroad tracks. I—I guess you've got the right dope, Henry, but—but how——"

"Yes," I chimed in; "how did you do it?"

"Let me picture the thing out for you," said Lester Henry, moving his withered leg to an easier position. "Thaddeus Taylor had been out of town and only returned this afternoon. Boddington was alone in the office. Willis saw Boddington go out into the yard and surmised that Boddington might have left the office empty—and the safe open."

"I never did such a careless thing in my life!" quavered Boddington indignantly; he was one of those methodical souls who resented the imputation of such gross carelessness.

"Willis did not know that Mr. Taylor had returned. He knew that Worth was also out in the yards. He slipped up to the office. If he looked through

the second window there he could have seen the safe door open, but could not have seen that Mr. Taylor was at his desk in the corner. He came in with the idea of robbing the safe—nothing more.

"When he got inside he found Taylor here. Probably he is a thick-witted fellow and so, instead of making some sort of excuse for his presence, he considered himself trapped in the act of robbery. A man of what I judge his mental processes to be thought only of escape, and he knew that a call from Mr. Taylor would cut off retreat. Possibly, even, he got over to the safe before he discovered Taylor's presence. We will not know that until he has confessed—they'll catch him before he gets very far. At any rate, he grabbed the first weapon, which happened to be the paper knife—and struck.

"Thaddeus Taylor reached out his hands to ward off the thrust, catching Willis by the sleeve."

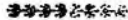
"That's just your imagination," I charged skeptically.

"Indeed it is not, Carter," retorted Henry triumphantly. "I know he caught Willis by the sleeve, for—sticking to the skin of Thaddeus Taylor's palm I found—ten grains of white sand!"

I glanced at Lester Henry ruefully.

"And I suspected you—a little!" I exclaimed apologetically.

"Oh, that's all right, Carter," he replied, with a smile; "that only made the case more interesting."



BURGLAR SWALLOWED EVIDENCE

IN an attempt to hide evidence of his trade a Berlin burglar swallowed thirty-two keys and a lever a year or two ago. This remarkable feat was brought to light recently when the criminal's stomach was X-rayed. Pain had forced the burglar to consult a specialist, and the X-ray photograph the latter took of the patient's stomach disclosed the cause of the trouble. An operation was performed, the alien objects were removed, and the patient recovered his lost health. Moreover, the burglar decided that crime does not pay; he admitted that, in spite of his heroic attempt to hide the tools of his craft, he was convicted and served sentence for the crime in which the keys and lever had figured.

Judy the Torch

by Arthur Preston Hankins

Author of "The Carved Trail," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

THE Wentworth Detective Agency has been retained by Homer Jennings, a crooked San Francisco millionaire, to locate Mary Chambers, alias Fay Gamble, a cabaret queen, who has disappeared with a string of pearls, valued at a quarter of a million dollars. Jennings' first wife, Boulah, at her death left the pearls to her young sister, Anice Manson, who was to receive them from the American-Asiatic Trust Company on her majority. The pearls were found to be losing their brilliancy, and, at Jennings' suggestion, they had been given to the Chambers woman to be nursed. Wentworth assigns Albert Stearns to the case, and he and Christopher Horn, a colleague, learn that Anice Manson is looking forward to receive the pearls within the next few months. The girl wants to take her invalid father to Arizona, and the pearls are to provide the funds. In a Sunday newspaper Anice finds a picture of the Chambers woman, who is featured as "Judy the Torch," the queen of hobos. The hobo queen is wearing the pearls, and Anice decides to take the road and recover the pearls. Christopher Horn, having first located the place where the newspaper picture was taken, decides to follow Anice as a protector. He follows the girl as far as Stall, and there nabs a man who had shadowed him out of San Francisco.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KEYSTONE MAN.

THE detective led his captive along the track toward the gloom of woods below the town of Stall.

"This is a dirty deal you're handing me, Mr. Horn," said the man sullenly, as they walked along.

"I know it." Christopher cheerfully agreed. "But I can't have you riding on my tail. I know I'm not very ethical and all that, but right now I've decided to take bigger chances than I ever took before."

"Can't we get together?"

"I'm afraid not. You don't strike me as a dick who would betray his trust and work against a client."

"I thank you," replied the other sarcastically. "But we're both after the same thing—I don't see the need for either of use betraying his client."

"Who is your client?" asked Horn.

"Who's yours?" came the swift retort.

"I don't know that myself," Horn told him. "But the case was given to the

Wentworth Agency by Homer Jennings. You know that, of course. Now who gave you your job?"

"Who do you think?"

"Well I'll tell you who you think I think it is."

"Maybe that'll do."

"The American-Asiatic Trust Company," Horn said.

This was received in silence.

"What's become of Bob Leach?" Horn asked suddenly. "First he gumshoes Sterns and me; then, in Sausalito, an old woman took over the job. Now you."

"Maybe Leach was afraid you were onto him. You know each other."

"So the trailing of me, in the interests of the trust company, was turned over to you—because you are a stranger to me?"

"Something like that, I guess."

I guess not!" said Horn. "Leach's turning the job over to you might pass, but you working for the trust company won't go down. You're hired by Homer Jennings."

"I thought you were."

"I am, but there's a joker in that. Listen here: I know that Miss Manson has not told the trust company of the theft of the pearls. I know that Homer Jennings won't tell them until the last moment before he loses hope of recovering them. There is no way, except through these two, for the trust company to have found out that the necklace is missing. Therefore they have employed no detectives. Therefore, also, you are working for Homer Jennings."

"That's silly, Horn."

"Is it? Listen here, then: Homer Jennings and Amos Wentworth, my boss, have known each other for years. They are members of the same club. The old man knows Jennings from A to Z, and there's an unpleasant taste in his mouth whenever he thinks of him. In short, they hate each other like poison."

"Mighty funny, then, that Jennings would employ the Wentworth Agency to run down the pearl thief."

"Not at all, brother. It's possible to hate a person and admire him at the same time. Jennings hates Wentworth because he knows that Wentworth's a thorough man. Just the same he knows that Wentworth has built up a detective bureau with which no other in San Francisco can compete. Jennings is a crook, but he's also a keen-witted business man. And keen-witted business men don't let personal prejudice stand between them and the employment of a man whom they are sure can render the best service for their needs. Get me, brother?"

"Go on—I hear you speaking, anyway."

"Just so! Jennings, then, knowing that the Wentworth Agency is likely to succeed where all others might fail, employs that agency to recover the pearls. He thinks Miss Manson has worked on the sympathies of the pearl thief and induced her to hand them over. So he

sends us over to get in touch with Miss Manson.

"At the same time, though, knowing Wentworth as he does, he is afraid that Wentworth or his men—who follow faithfully in Wentworth's footsteps and are just a little proud of it—will hear Miss Manson's story and also sympathize with her.

"The watchword of Wentworth's rather irregular detective bureau is 'Justice.' Ever heard that word? It means that a client's interests will be looked out for just so long as Wentworth is convinced that said client is in the right—and not one moment longer.

"Well, Jennings is in the wrong and knows it, and he fears that Wentworth will find it out. But he thinks the Wentworth boys are more likely to recover the pearls than, for instance, the Keystone outfit. So, to boil the whole thing down to nutshell size, Jennings hires the Wentworth Agency to recover the pearls, and then hires the Keystone Agency to get them away from the Wentworth Agency and turn them over to him. How's my dope, anyway, brother?"

"You're crazy!" exploded the captive.

"Granted," returned Christopher. "But, just the same, Homer Jennings doesn't get those pearls if I can help it. So that's why I'm going to take you into the woods here and nail you to a tree."

"Horn, if you do that——"

Christopher came to a stop and stood listening, paying no heed to the half-voiced threat of the Keystone man. "By golly!" he exclaimed, as he heard again the long, faint whistle of an eastbound train. "Come on, you. I've got to hurry!" He grasped a shoulder of the Keystone man in his powerful hand and shoved and dragged him from the track and across the right of way. Sensing that Horn had grown excited over some new, impending development, the man

began to struggle. And then he learned that he was as a child in the hands of the big Wentworth man.

Horn threw him on the ground, grabbed him by the collar of his coat, and dragged him under the barbed-wire fence. There he set him on his feet with jarring suddenness and propelled him across a road into the woods, as a big cop handles a half-stupid inebriate. In the woods Horn searched for and found a tree about ten inches in diameter. At its base, with an unexpected movement, he threw his man again, rolled him over, and knelt on his chest while he unlocked one of the handcuffs. With the irons dangling from one wrist Horn set the Keystone man on his feet again and forced him, face first, against the tree.

Now the fellow began putting up a desperate struggle for freedom, imagining that, with one hand free, he had Christopher at a disadvantage. But the surprising power of his big captor offset any disadvantage on which the captive might have built his hopes. After a brief, but severe, struggle he found himself hugging the trunk of the tree, in spite of all his efforts, and he heard the handcuff snapped about his wrist.

"Sorry," said Christopher, panting slightly. "Just embrace that tree till morning, then some one will come along and set you free, I guess. I'll drop the handcuff key in your pocket. So long!"

He darted away, found the road, and took up a dogtrot toward Stall, the rumble of the coming train in his ears.

The unexpected arrival of the east-bound train had slightly disturbed the plans of Christopher Horn. It had been his idea to take the Keystone man farther into the woods. There his yelps for some one to release him would not be so likely to be heard from the road. But once he heard the whistle of an east-bound train he had been obliged to dispose of his captive as speedily as possible and get back to town.

He had no way of knowing that Anice Manson meant to catch the coming train as the first step in her mad escapade. But it was traveling in the direction that it was certain she meant to go, and Christopher dared not linger in the woods with the chance of missing her.

Since she claimed to know all about tramps and their methods it was probable that she had familiarized herself with the train schedule before she left home. That she knew something of the method of procedure already had been evidenced by her trip "on the cushions" to Stall. Wise knights of the road seldom try to catch any kind of train at a terminus or as it leaves a big city. Both city and railroad detectives are too numerous at such points, and trainmen and yardmen are all on the alert. The experienced wayfarer usually walks—or rides if he has the money—to some small stop, close to a metropolitan center, where his danger of arrest is minimized.

Horn pounded on down the dusty road toward the twinkling lights of Stall, hoping that some one would not chance along and free the Keystone man before the train had left town. Now he regretted having dropped the key in his prisoner's pocket. That had been a stupid thing to do. When the captive was discovered, a short wait, while some one went for a file or a hack-saw, would have caused him but little more discomfort. But, as he had shown the man rather rank treatment, he had tried to alleviate it by making it possible for him to be set at liberty as soon as some one found him. If Anice did not take this train he would hurry back and make different arrangements for the keeping of the fellow. Now he could only plod on and hope that he had not bungled.

The train was passing him now, and he saw that it was a freight. Its arrival so soon after that of the passenger on which Anice had ridden almost made it certain that she had planned her sched-

ule to ride it out. As he padded through the outskirts of the town he saw something that told him beyond a doubt that this was her intention.

What he saw was nothing less than Anice Manson herself. She came walking swiftly down a street that ran parallel with Main Street, and, if Horn had not been prepared to see her dressed as she was now, he might have been deceived. He was running softly on the balls of his feet, making little sound. Half a block in front of him she emerged from the intersecting street and crossed toward the railroad under an arc light. She still carried her parcel, but at present it contained her feminine garb. New blue overalls and black-visored cap now set off her trim little figure. Doubtless she had sought a hotel and made the change in her room.

Horn checked his running and settled down to a casual walk. The train was at a standstill before the depot, and trainmen were unloading freight from a box car.

Anice, when she had crossed the road that paralleled the track, turned in the direction from which Christopher had come. In the shadow of trees, that stood in a little park on railroad property, she walked along toward the caboose. Horn stepped under a lilac that overhung the sidewalk and watched until her figure was merged with the blackness of night.

Now he crossed the road and the park, watched his chance, and slipped to the train between two cars. The brakemen were too deeply engaged in their task to observe him. On the other side of the train he ran along lightly in the dark toward the rear end.

Lighter and lighter he made his footfalls, as he drew nearer to the caboose. He glanced between cars, but he saw nothing of the adventuresome Miss Manson. Deciding that she had discovered an unlocked door and boarded a box car, he kept on until only two

tank cars were between him and the caboose. Then he left the vicinity of the tracks and lay down in the tall grass near the right of way to wait for the sound of the locomotive whistle and the continuation of the freight's journey.

Five minutes brought the expected signal. Lanterns were swinging at the head of the train, the wheels gripped the rails, and a shudder ran along the joints of the cars. The freight moved off slowly.

Then the detective rose and ran to the tracks, swinging aboard the second box car, just ahead of the tanks. He clambered up the steel ladder and came to a stop, his chin just above the top of the car. Now he could look in both directions along the top of the train.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN LUCK SMILED.

MEANTIME Anice Manson, youthfully fired with the thrill of her unaccustomed adventure, had been hastening along at the side of the train, looking between cars for an open end door. Several times she flashed a small electric torch on side doors, only to find that all of those investigated were sealed.

At length, however, about eight cars from the caboose, her disk of light trembled on a dark crack at the side of an end door of one of the box cars. Promptly she pocketed her flash light, glanced up and down the track to make sure that no brakemen were about, and stepped between the cars.

With a vigorous spring of her agile young figure she was scrambling upon the bumpers. There, standing on tiptoes she opened wider the small end door and was barely able to look into the car. Again her torch came into service, and she showered every corner of the empty interior with light.

There was no freight in the car and no wandering occupants. Just what she would have done had tramps been rid-

ing in this car she did not know. But she did not pause to speculate over a contingency that had accommodatingly refrained from arising.

She tossed her oilcloth-wrapped bundle through the door and began wriggling, scrambling, and digging into the end of the car with the toes of her stout boy's shoes. Soon she was hanging like a half-opened pocketknife in the doorway, her head inside.

More desperate squirming reversed her position, and her feet were now dangling down inside. She lowered herself to the limit of her reach and, hanging to the sill by one hand, contrived to close the door with the other. Then she dropped lightly to the floor.

She threw her light again, recovered her bundle, and looked about for a comfortable corner. Since one was about as comfortable, or uncomfortable, as another, she sat down next to the door, crossed her legs in front of her, folded her hands in her lap, and emulated a mouse reconnoitering before its proposed investigation of a pantry shelf.

She was on schedule to the minute. Her respirations came a trifle swiftly, it was true, and there was a dry little tickle in her throat, but she wasn't afraid! My, no! This was fun. This painful alertness of ears, the delightful little tingle that throbbled in every nerve—goodness, it was delicious, the spice of life which few girls ever tasted!

Her heart suddenly ceased to beat, it seemed, when she heard soft footfalls crunching the gravel beside her car. A brakeman? The conductor? Another tramp? She waited breathlessly, and now her heart was pounding a tom-tom tattoo that, she thought, the author of the footfalls surely must hear through the walls of the car.

But, as the steps grew fainter and fainter in the direction of the caboose, her breathing became normal.

Then presently came the quick toot-toot of the locomotive whistle, and well

she knew that this was the response to the conductor's "high ball" and meant "Out of town."

The wheels creaked. A shudder ran along the train such as might have traveled down the vertebræ of *Rip Van Winkle's* backbone when he awoke from his long sleep. Then the cars butted one another like wooden balls in the return trough of a bowling alley, and the next moment she was pitched rudely against the end wall of the car, and the train was moving ahead.

"Hateful thing!" she muttered, regaining her equilibrium.

But the engineer had no way of knowing that there was a lady aboard his train, and, after another jolt or two, the train moved on with its accustomed decorum.

Anice heaved a protracted sigh of relief, lay down on her side, and curled up in the corner. "I guess I'll sleep," she said.

But the engineer and the imp who lures adventurers to the quest guessed not.

With eyes wide open she stared into the blackness and decided that, beyond the shadow of a doubt, she must be the silliest girl in all the world. How different it all seemed now! Was ever blackness so black as that made by the four walls of that box car? How easy her undertaking had seemed back there on Sausalito's sunny hillside! How she had planned to do this and that under certain circumstances! But she had not taken into consideration that the circumstances, for which she was prepared, might not arise, while others, for which she had not known how to prepare, might at any moment stare her in the face. Then she had felt capable, resourceful, brave, unafraid of any emergency. Now she was alone in the blackness of a box car with her little bundle under her head—and she just knew she'd never be able to press the wrinkles out of her silk dress—with the train

rambling away into the night, bound for she knew not where. Alone and with very little money she began to sense the magnitude of her task.

Something wet and warm trickled down her cheek, a raucous screech followed, and pale moonlight streamed in through the end door to break the gloom. A wave of terror swept over her and seemed to chill her to the bone. Before she knew it she was on her feet and pressed like an abalone to a rock in the corner of the car, holding one hand to her side to still the wild galloping of her heart.

The head and shoulders of a man leaned into the car for an instant, and then the light from a brakeman's lantern grew stronger and stronger, as its owner lifted it to the opening.

Anice placed a hand across her mouth to stifle a cry of nervous terror. Would he drag her through the door and hurl her under the shrieking wheels? Or would he manhandle her to the next station, then kick her through a side door and call the officers?

Why didn't he come on in and do whatever he was going to? Why did he keep her in such terrible suspense? He just stayed there in the door, with his lantern not yet lifted to the height of his shoulders, so that he could see in. She was sure now that he was speaking, sure that, blending with the rumble of the racing train, she heard a coarse voice lifted high.

There were two voices now—both men's voices, of course. There was only one woman in the world who was fool enough to ride on a freight train speeding through the night!

Oh, why didn't they come in and crash their lanterns over her head, or whatever form of torture they had in mind! If they remained there much longer—

The light grew dim, the moonlight faded. With a screech and a slam the little door was closed again, and once

more the blackness made by four box-car walls pressed in upon her.

And only then did she remember the bright little .32 revolver in a hip pocket of her overalls. But she had never meant to kill brakemen or conductors with it. And, besides, she was not used to hip pockets—that was why she had forgotten the revolver.

But what luck! The man, whoever he was, had barely looked into her car, and had not even flashed a lantern through the door! What luck! Which luck had cost Christopher Horn, well versed in the etiquette of the road, just two dollars and fifty cents!

Once more she curled up like a sleepy kitten in the corner, but her little piece of good fortune had revived her spirits, and again the thrill of her mad adventure claimed her.

She thought of her father and hoped that he would be comfortable. She had at last swallowed her pride and asked for help from an old friend who had repeatedly offered it—a one-time brother contractor of her father who had retired wealthy. Of course her father and this old friend had no notion of what she meant to do, and devious were the expedients she had been obliged to adopt to keep from their knowledge plans which they would not have approved.

But they did not know her, had no idea of what she would be able to endure when she struck the trail of the Nurse o' Pearls. Oh, she would win! She would get the pearls! She had wonderful plans which nobody but herself dreamed of. She wished that it might have been possible for her to tell them to Christopher Horn. If he could have gone with her, but, of course, that thought was foolish, he might have been able to help. For a detective he was rather friendly and—well, nice. But, then, he would not have understood and therefore would not have approved. What could he know about tramps! But he was rather—well, nice, you know.

Chunk-a-lunk! Chunk-a-lunk! The monotonous song of the trucks filled her ears. A long sigh. Chunk-a-lunk! Chunk-a-lunk! The tramp girl was asleep.

CHAPTER X.

JENNINGS DRAWS A CHECK.

THE police department of San Francisco and some of the private detective bureaux knew something about the Keystone Agency which the general public did not know. It is possible that the American-Asiatic Trust Company shared the ignorance of the general public. A Keystone man was on duty day and night in their huge building, and they were known to employ the agency when they needed the services of secret operatives. However this may have been, the Keystone Agency was termed crooked by those who were in a position to know, but who were not accustomed to spreading their information promiscuously. The Keystone Agency men were in bad repute with those who knew the inside of things.

Assuming, then, that Horn was correct in his deductions as to the business of the Keystone man who had trailed him, it will readily be seen that Homer Jennings had known what he was about when he turned to the Keystone in his precautionary measure to make sure that the pearls, when found, would be returned to him. To avoid unnecessary confusion it may be stated here that Horn's rather shrewd surmises were entirely correct.

In employing the Wentworth Agency to serve him, and the Keystone to see that the Wentworth Agency served him properly, Jennings had created a situation similar to that in the verse regarding the nervous old man who, unable to sleep because of his fear of burglars, bought a gun. Then, the rhyme continues, he became desperately afraid of the gun in the corner and hired a boy to watch over the gun.

But the youngster with the trigger was too free.

Then the nervous old man employed the boy's father to stand over his son with a switch and restrain the youngster's curiosity about the mechanism of the weapon.

So, guarded by the gun,

The father and the son,

The nervous little man slept peacefully.

In a certain café of doubtful reputation on the beach near San Francisco a monkey-capped boy walked about and shouted:

"Calling Mr. Homer Jennings! Telephone calling Mr. Homer Jennings!"

So suddenly and unexpectedly robbed of the alluring society of Fay Gamble, alias Mary Chambers, alias Judy the Torch, alias Jane Luck—otherwise the mysterious Nurse o' Pearls—one might imagine the gray head of Mr. Homer Jennings bowed down with grief. Not so! At a table in a secluded corner of the café, a table that invariably called for an extra tip, sat the venerable *Romeo*, and on each side of him and across from him were girls who, if not so handsome as Fay Gamble, at least proved Amos Wentworth's assertion that old Jennings was a picker.

The droning voice of the page recalled Mr. Jennings from his pleasant ask of passing glasses, containing amber liquid, under the tablecloth to one of his guests. He frowned, excused himself, and followed the boy to the telephone booth, paying him an hour's wages of a journeyman plumber for one minute's work. Homer Jennings was a thorough sport when out "among 'em," with somebody looking on! Only in secret did he gloat over his stocks and bonds and the cash balance in his pass book.

"Hello! . . . Yes, this is Jennings . . . Oh, Cumberland, eh? Well, Cumberland, have you got my pearls?"

A long interval of listening was broken explosively:

"What's that you say? A Wentworth man handcuffed him to a tree near Stall? He followed him and the girl there? Heavens and earth, Cumberland! Get in a machine and drive out here. Hurry!"

In less than half an hour Homer Jennings was again obliged to tear himself from his guests, but it was not a difficult process when the price of his dead wife's pearls was at stake. He hurried the Keystone man to a private room behind the bar. Taking the man by the lapel of his coat Jennings demanded an accounting.

Hughes Cumberland, a big, bony-framed, dark man with deep-set eyes, sank into a chair near a green-topped table. Cumberland was the head of the Keystone Detective Agency.

"Well," he said, "this fellow Horn got onto our man Elburn. Elburn had followed Horn and the girl to Stall, a town about fifteen miles out of Oakland. Horn nailed him and slipped the jewelry on him and locked him to a tree. Then he beat it."

"Yes; yes! Fine bunch o' dicks you've got! What next?"

"Well, before very long a flivver drove by, and the man in it heard Elburn yelling. He stopped and turned him loose after he'd seen Elburn's badge. Elburn put up a yarn about some crooks getting the best of him."

"I wonder he had the sense to do that! Then what?"

"Then the fellow took Elburn into the burg, and he telephoned to me. I called you up at once."

"Thoughtful of you, I must say, Cumberland!"

"Now don't get too sarcastic," warned the detective. "We're doing our best for you, and you haven't promised any too much jack to push the thing along, anyway. I'll tell you right now, it's going to cost money to get those pearls back, and you've got to begin putting up.

Right now I'll ask you for a check for five thousand dollars!"

Homer Jennings jumped as if a knife had been thrust between his ribs. "Five thousand dollars! Great Scott! Do you think I'm a gold mine? What's the idea?"

"Why did that girl go to Stall?" asked Cumberland, ignoring the miser's agony.

"Don't ask me! That's for you to find out."

"And of course we know why Horn shadowed her."

"Do you? Well, you do know something then," declared the millionaire.

Cumberland was absently drumming on the green billiard cloth of the card table. "Elburn says that Horn sort of gave him a tip," he mused. "Horn meant to take him into deeper woods before locking his arms about a tree, but something suddenly changed his plans, and he did the trick right close to the road, using the first tree that was suitable for his purpose. Then he ran like the dickens toward Stall. Elburn says he's almost sure that the whistle of a coming train was what caused Horn to hurry so. Elburn was able to see out through the trees when the train passed and says it was a freight.

"That stumped him. It hardly seemed possible that Horn expected the girl to take a freight out of Stall and was rushing to get on her trail again."

"Perhaps this Horn didn't know it was a freight when he heard the whistle," suggested Jennings.

"But he knew it directly after he'd left Elburn, for Elburn was able to see that Horn kept on running even while the freight was passing him. In short, after Horn must have known it was a freight, he continued to run toward Stall."

"Well! Well!" was the testy response. "You're not getting anywhere that I can

see! Of course the girl didn't ride out of Stall on a freight!"

"How do you know she didn't? Do you know that this is getting to be a mighty funny case? I've been trying all day to get in touch with you, but you were out of every one of your old haunts when I called up. Did you look through to-day's *Eagle*?"

"Certainly."

"Through the magazine section?"

"Certainly not! I don't read that bunk!"

"So I imagined. That's why I brought a copy of the magazine section with me to-night. I'd have shown it to you sooner but, as I said, couldn't locate you."

Cumberland took a folded section of the Sunday paper from his pocket and spread it flat on the card table. After one swift look Homer Jennings' face went white, and he uttered a yelp of anger and surprise.

"I thought so! So that's the dame, eh? I scarce know what made me believe it, but I guess it was the pearls she's wearing in that picture. What do you know about it, anyway!"

Jennings had grabbed the paper, thrust his eyeglasses on the bridge of his hooked nose, and was rapidly devouring the feature story of the Queen of Tramps. When he had read it to the last word he beat the card table with the paper, then slammed it on the floor and ground it under his heel.

"The nerve of her! The nerve of her!" was all that he could say in his great rage.

"What d'ye mean, the nerve of her?" coolly quizzed Cumberland. "Wearing the pearls to be photographed?"

"Yes! Yes! That, and palming herself off on me as a somebody."

Hughes Cumberland shrugged. "Well, she looks about as good to me as the Queen of Tramps as she would kidding a bunch of baldheads in some café," he said. "But I'll admit that wearing these

pearls in front of a camera, only a month after she swiped 'em, certainly does show nerve. She deserves to be pinched."

"Oh, does she? You've just decided that point, have you? I've been wondering if I hadn't better hire some other detective outfit to keep you and Fay Gamble from splitting the loot two ways if you catch the girl. But, since you've decided she deserves to be pinched, I guess I can go on with you."

"Ah, can the bunk! You and I understand each other thoroughly, Jennings. I don't want to monkey with trying to turn a well-known rope of pearls into cash. You pungle up decently, and you'll get the necklace if we lay hands on it. Now how about that five thousand?"

"Absolutely nothing doing!"

"Then we're off the deal, old boy. I'll use the phone right here and call Elburn in from Stall."

"Not so fast, now! Not so fast! What do you want with five thousand dollars?"

"We need it for expenses and can't afford to advance 'em ourselves. Give me your check for five thousand, and I'll telephone Elburn and order him to New Orleans."

"Where? Great Scott! What's he going there for? Why, the fare must be——"

"Only a small fraction of five thousand bucks, Mr. Jennings. Now take another look at that picture, which shows the girl and the hobos, if you haven't ruined it with your feet."

Jennings recovered the offending sheet.

"See those trees? See the long moss hanging from them? Ever been in the South?"

"Yes, of course."

"I've traveled all over the United States, and I can't name any other section of the country, except the South, where moss hangs from trees like that.

That scene is in a Southern cypress swamp."

"Well, maybe you're right."

"Then the South is the place to look for the Queen of Tramps, my friend. If you'll come across with that check I'll send Elburn on his way to New Orleans by the next train."

Jennings sighed heavily and dropped into a seat. "Where's that girl and that fellow Horn going?"

"Heaven knows! But she's not got the pearls, that's a cinch! It's another cinch that she's after 'em. And Horn either hasn't heard yet that she hasn't got 'em, or he's pulling off one of the Wentworth funny stunts—justice and all that bunk."

"Merciful Peter!" Jennings sat up with a snort. "It would be just like Anice to try some funny stunt to get the pearls. She's a little devil, believe me! She'll do anything that pops into her head. See that car?"

Jennings leaned forward and displayed a scar on the lobe of his right ear. "She gave me that over a year ago. Clawed me like a wild cat, by George, when I tried to give her a little brotherly kiss, you know!"

There was something akin to a sneer on the lips of Hughes Cumberland. "Well, she hasn't got 'em," he said. "We'll send Elburn to New Orleans and get in ahead of her no matter where she's going. Even if she knows where she's going she's a long way from there, and we can beat her to it easily. That is if——" Cumberland paused.

"Go on! Go on!" came Jennings' testy tones.

"If it wasn't for Christopher Horn. We don't want to forget that bird for a minute. Well, do I get that check?"

Homer Jennings' thin chest rose and fell wearily as he produced checkbook and fountain pen.

For fully fifteen minutes after Hughes Cumberland had left with Jennings' check the cadaverous old man sat

in the card room staring into space. "Merciful Peter!" he kept muttering. "What a chance I've missed!"

Again he picked up the paper and once more read the feature story from beginning to end. "If she's there! If she can pull it off!" He pounded the table with a lean fist. "By golly, if she is—if she can control those yeggs as the story says—she can have the blamed pearls! That is, wear 'em a while, anyway."

He raked toward him a portable phone and requested the Southern Pacific ticket office. When a voice responded he asked at what hour the next train left San Francisco for New Orleans.

To be a master criminal and control a big, organized ring had been the secret lifelong ambition of Homer Jennings. In losing the Nurse o' Pearls he now believed that a great chance to realize this ambition had been snatched from his hands.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST STOP.

IT is no unusual sight in these days of woman's emancipation to see the feminine form outlined by overalls or breeches and puttees. But to see a pretty young girl thus garbed and dropping to the ground from the side door of a box car, with her back to the interested observer, has not as yet become a sight too familiar to go unnoticed.

Anice Manson had awakened and, by pressing outward on the side door of her car, had seen daylight streaming in. She had slept fitfully all night on the hard floor, but at dawn had dropped into deep slumber. She had no idea where she was. The train was at a standstill. She was stiff and sore, and her dark-brown hair was a tangled mass.

When she had appropriated the car she had been positive that the side door was at least locked with the hasp and hook, if not sealed. She had been unable to reach the hook from the ground;

hence her ingress by way of the tiny end door. Now it appeared that she had been mistaken about the side door, for it certainly was open to a tiny crack.

This was strange, but, as she had done in the case of the brakeman's interrupted invasion of her car, she accepted her good luck philosophically and did not question its source. With both hands she pressed hard against the door and then to the left, and it slid along its rusty track with a shriek that she thought would arouse the dead.

Leaning out around one side of the entrance she looked up and down the track and off into pine woods in front of her. Back beyond the caboose she saw the roofs of a town; ahead, beyond the locomotive, more pine woods and distant blue mountains. No human being was in sight.

"Well, what luck!" she murmured placidly, referring to the apparent security of the spot in which her car had stopped.

Then she sat down in the door, turned over, jackknifed herself across the edge of the car floor, and dropped lightly to the ground on the balls of her feet.

An interested observer was at his post, over in the pine trees, but Anice did not know it. "Little monkey!" Christopher Horn chuckled to himself.

The girl picked up her precious bundle, which had preceded her from the car with a thump, and started for the trees beyond. Christopher Horn moved along ahead of her, contriving to keep the trunks of pines between them.

He crossed a rushing little mountain stream, cold as ice, and kept on into deeper timber. About a hundred yards beyond the stream he came to a stop, flattened himself against a tree and looked back. After a wait of five minutes, during which time he had not again caught sight of Anice, he decided that she had done as he had expected her to. She had stopped at the stream

to change her clothes and make herself presentable. So he waited patiently for a further move from her.

Meantime Anice had crowed with delight, as she came upon the friendly little creek with its endless song and its mossy banks. The spot was quite secluded, guarded as it was by the tall, companionable pines that murmured above it.

She hastily undid the oilcloth-covered bundle and clucked at the wrinkles in her silk dress. The bundle contained a hand mirror and other toilet articles, as well as a sufficient number of articles of clothing to transform the tramp girl in overalls to a young woman at whom none would stare except for reasons not altogether connected with her attire.

She was soon out of the overalls and boy's shoes and into her dress. A tam-o'-shanter cap had seemed to be the only head piece that she could carry without it becoming a "perfect fright," and this she placed on her dark hair after it had undergone a vigorous brushing and patting into place, which manipulations succeeded a religious scrubbing of her face in the water of the brook.

In a surprisingly short time she was caching the bundle, that now contained her tramp outfit, in a clump of brush by the creek. With a final glance into her mirror she tripped back through the pines toward the railroad.

Christopher Horn had read many comic stories regarding the time required for a woman to put on her hat, but had had no practical experience in the matter. So he waited and waited, giving Anice ample time, and then, when he thought that a woman could have put on all the clothes in her possession, several times, he began to trail back toward the creek.

Frequently he stopped and listened, but heard nothing save the murmur of the water. Finally, screwing up his courage, he pressed on and found that

the spot, which he had decided the girl would choose for her temporary camp, was entirely vacant.

Now he hurried on cautiously to the tracks. But he saw nothing of her until he was beside the train. Then, far beyond the caboose and walking briskly over the ties, he saw a trim little figure wending its way toward the village.

Horn walked in the same direction, along the side of the freight, which, he knew, was waiting on a siding for a first-class train to pass. As he neared the caboose a brakeman swung to the ground and grinned at him when he came abreast.

"That her?" The brakeman jerked his head back toward the retreating figure of the tramp girl.

"Yes," said Horn. "Much obliged for your help, old-timer."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the trainman. "Funny stunt, though. Where does she think she's goin'?"

"Search me," truthfully responded Christopher, as he continued on toward the village.

Anice beheld a delightful little town, set in a green cup of the mountains, with snow peaks all about. The air of the high altitude was crisp and invigorating, and she was as hungry as a cub bear.

She passed the depot and outlying houses and entered the one business street of the town, which paralleled the tracks. A lunch wagon beside the curb appealed to her as in conformity with her nomadic adventure. Regardless of whether or not women were wont to patronize the wagon, she perched herself on a high stool, set on the sidewalk before the counter. She crooked her feet around the legs of the stool and decided to take ham and eggs.

The white-capped cook tossed a slab of ham on his smoking plate, and Anice sniffed her approval. Apparently women did not ordinarily patronize the

wagon, for the necks of passers-by were craned at her, and feminine eyes accused her. One old man, half whiskers and half rheumatism, came to a dead stop and camped on his cane for a prolonged inspection.

Up the street the alert Christopher Horn came to a stop, a cigar-store Indian standing sentry between him and Anice. "Little monkey!" he exclaimed admiringly. He entered a restaurant and ordered sandwiches to be prepared in a hurry. Next he sought a drug store where he had noticed a long-distance telephone station. After a considerable wait he was connected with the Wentworth office. The answer to his wire to New Orleans had been received. Wentworth himself relayed it to Horn who copied it as it came to him. He briefly outlined to his chief the developments to date and left the booth. Then he leaned over a show case and read what he had written down.

It developed that the feature writer who had written up the Queen of Tramps had heard of such a character for more than a year and had been on the lookout to get in touch with her. At length, in his wanderings through New Orleans' foreign district, he learned that she had returned recently to the South from the Pacific coast. Later he nosed out the information that she was to be in a certain well-known "jungle camp" not far from New Orleans, out in the swamps on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. He had gone there and succeeded in sneaking up under cover of the undergrowth and snapping pictures of Judy the Torch in action, with a number of hobos hanging eagerly on her words. He knew nothing about the necklace that she had worn and had not taken the risk of waiting to find out the subject of her discourse. The photographs were all that he had wanted, as his vivid imagination, with the stories that he had heard for a basis, was equal to the remain-

ing requirements of a successful feature story. He himself had often seen the moniker of Judy the Torch, for he too had tramped about a little.

All of this made Horn sure that Judy the Torch was wearing the identical pearls stolen in San Francisco. He had been wondering all along at the Tramp Queen's audacity in submitting to be photographed, with the stolen pearls about her neck, less than a month after the theft. If she was unaware that she had been snapped, as the feature writer claimed, everything was clear.

But now Christopher was more than ever puzzled as to just what to do. It seemed that the most sane course to pursue would be to have Wentworth send a man to Louisiana, where, if he was fortunate, he ought to meet with little difficulty in causing the arrest of the Nurse o' Pearls; he might run down that way himself.

Now, however, he had Anice Manson on his hands. He could not afford to desert her. As yet she had no notion of the predicament that she was really in, of the danger that would constantly surround her if she continued on in her mad flight.

Of course the logical thing, the prosaic thing, to do was to go to her in that same minute and tell her that he knew more about tramps than she did and explain that he could get the pearls far easier and with less risk. But Christopher Horn was still pretty much of a boy, pretty much of an adventurer. Never had he met a girl whom he admired as he admired Anice Manson. Her courage, her independence, her matter-of-fact manner of rushing into the unknown was working havoc with Christopher Horn.

Besides, he believed she had some highly practical plan up her sleeve for the recovery of the necklace. After all, would it be so easy for him or another Wentworth man to get the pearls after a trip to the South? By the time he

reached New Orleans, Judy the Torch might be in Michigan, or New York State. If she was the thorough hobo that the feature writer had pictured, laying hands on her would be no simple task.

But, in the final analysis, it was not these last doubts that caused Horn to decide upon letting Anice carry out her plans and induced him to make her safety assured by following her. It was the romance of it, the thrill of the unique situation, and the consuming desire to find out what the tramp girl had planned to do. He knew that that wise little head of hers held some scheme not altogether impracticable, and he felt that, in a measure, she knew what she was about. He resolved to let the situation develop and not throw a monkey wrench into the machinery.

As he reached this decision he noticed a collection of binoculars and field glasses in the show case. He called the clerk and a little later charged seventy-five dollars to his expense account and stepped to the door with a pair of ten-power lenses.

He trained them down the street under the guise of testing them. He picked up Anice Manson just leaving the lunch-wagon stool. His lips parted slightly as he saw the sun flashing on the string of imitation pearls about her neck. Knowing that she had been pressed for money he had thought she had disposed of them to make her father comfortable and to defray the expenses of her trip. Why was she wearing the necklace he asked himself.

She hurried on down the street, the lunch-wagon man leaning out and gazing after her, and Horn's question was still unanswered.

He followed in the direction in which the girl was walking, a block and a half behind her. He saw her turn in from the sidewalk presently, and, making a mental note of the place, he crossed the

street and wandered along in the same direction on the other side.

Soon he knew that she had entered a hotel, and, hoping that she would "stay put" for a little, he retraced his steps and crossed to the restaurant to get his sandwiches.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE WATER TANK.

WHILE Christopher Horn had been engaged in the telephone booth and in purchasing his high-power binoculars Anice Manson ate ham and eggs, dabbed at her adorable lips with a tissue-paper napkin and engaged the friendly cook in amiable discourse.

"Is this much of a tramp town?" she asked.

The cook swung about from his gas-line stove. "Hey?" was his surprised query.

Anice gravely repeated her question and wondered why lunch-wagon coffee cups were so thick.

The cook blinked twice in an effort to convince himself that the girl had asked the question. He turned to see if some one had slipped up and spoken over her shoulder. "Why—why, I guess so," he replied. "I guess maybe I don't get you. What d'ye mean, a tramp town?"

"I'm interested in tramps," she explained with an ingenuous smile. "I know lots about them already and want to find out more. Do you know anything about tramps?"

"Good night!" replied the cook. "Say," he added, "did you ever hear of a cook who wasn't a tramp?"

"You've been one, then?"

"Never got over it. I'm just campin' here. I'm always just campin' when you see me any place. When I'm goin' then I'm home."

"Oh, I see! Yes, you do look like a tramp."

"I do!"

"I mean no offense. But you haven't answered my question. Some towns,

I know, are what tramps call 'hostile.' In such places they get glommed if they mooch, and the bull slous 'em in the hoosegow. In burgs like that there are no dumps where they're allowed to hang out, and maybe there are no jungles where they can cook up and flop. Get me?"

"Great! Say, where d'ye get that stuff, infant?"

"Well, I've got it, haven't I? Your coffee is dandy, cook! Now is this a hostile burg?"

The cook chuckled. "Not so very," he admitted. "If you're lookin' for a regular tramps' hangout you ought to go to Tourney."

"Where's that? Oh, I know about Tourney! I've heard of it lots of times. Is it far from here?"

"No'm. Only about thirty miles up the line."

"Guess I'll beat it up there. What for a layout have they got at Tourney?"

"Well, the bulls don't bother the bums there. That's mostly on account o' big work that's all around the burg, you understand. It's hard to tell a stiff from a man just in from the camps. Then they don't worry none at Tourney. There's Al Staples' saloon. That's a hobos' dump that's known all along the line. Course, you savvy, saloons ain't what they usta be mostly; but you'd notice little difference in Al's. There's other dumps there, too, but Al's is where most o' the bums hang out. It's open all night, and the floor'll accommodate a couple o' hundred stiffs. There's billiard and pool tables, too, that make good floppin's, an' you ain't so liable to get a flock o' hobnails in your face as when you sleep on the floor."

"I've heard about Al Staples' place, but, of course, I couldn't go in there."

"You could, I guess, but you wouldn't want to. There's good jungles outa Tourney, and all the stiffs go there to loil up or have their scollin's. But what's the idear? This is a funny line

for you to peddle. Where d'ye get all this big savvy about stiffs?"

"Oh, I was born and raised in a railroad construction camp. I know stiffs!"

"Gypo queen, eh?"

"I was once, I suppose."

"You don't live about here, do you?"

"Oh, no! My, but this is good coffee, old-timer!"

The cook grinned. "Oh, I c'n make Java!" he declared. "Le' me slip you another cup."

"No more, thank you." Anice squirmed from the stool and tossed a dollar on the counter. "I'm much obliged, I'm sure," she said, dropping the change into her purse. "Well, don't take any bad money, Jack!" There she tripped hurriedly away.

"Good night!" muttered the cook and leaned out to gaze after her. "'Old-timer!' 'Jack!' C'n you beat that?"

Anice, passing on down the street, came to the little hotel and through the window saw some rather inviting chairs in the lobby. Promptly she entered, settled herself comfortably in one of the chairs, eased her head back, and fell peacefully to sleep.

The clerk, who had pivoted the register as she came in, picked up the stub of cigar that he had hidden under the counter and grunted.

A little later Christopher Horn sat down, like any village loafer, on a sack of bran in front of a feed store across the street from the hotel. He smoked and read the morning paper from the city and occasionally glanced across at the sleeping figure behind the glass.

"She'll get by where some men would fail," he declared. "People won't bother her. If she were a man, she'd get called down or fired into the street."

Anice slept undisturbed until about half past ten. Then she awoke, rubbed her eyes, and, seeing that no one else was in the hotel office, straightened her tam-o'-shanter and silently slipped out. Once more she presented herself before

her friend, the cook and professed vagabond.

"What do you know about the east-bound freights, Jack?" she asked.

"Say, you ain't really beatin' it on the bum, are you?"

"Oh, perhaps. But you needn't spread it around."

"Say, you're a crazy kid. I got a notion to get the constable and have you sent home to your folks."

She eyed him complacently. "I don't think you'd do that, Jack," she said. "I was beginning to like you. Ever heard of 'Rambo, the Bouncer'?"

"Sure, I know 'The Bouncer.'"

"'Calico Alexander'?"

"That ol'-timer? I guess yes! There's an old yegg that's known in every jungle camp from coast to coast."

"Uh-huh. He set me on old Ned for my first ride when I was about two years old."

"Ole Ned, eh? That shows you know the railroad grade, all right. Jack and Ned! I ain't cooked in a construction camp for six years and more."

"Know 'Louie the Lump'?"

"I'll say so! I busted his nose for him once outa Denver."

"That so? But I must be going. How about the freights?"

"Why, there's lots of 'em goin' east. You really goin' out on a freight?"

"Uh-huh. Keep it dark, though, Jack."

"Sure! Sure! You savvy, all right. None o' my business. Say, you come back here in a little. In the meantime I'll go see the switchman over in the yards and get the dope for you—ten minutes, maybe."

"Thanks, old-timer. I'll appreciate that."

She walked the length of the street, casually giving the town the "once-over," and came back on a residential street to the hotel block. Once more she approached the lunch wagon, and the tramp cook was ready with the schedule.

"There's a tank up the line a ways, where all of 'em stop for water," he confided. "Good jungles back o' the tank, and you can lay low till your train pulls out. Then you can slip out o' the trees and glom 'er. I'd wait till night though, and nail that seven thirty-two. She's a fruit train, and she rambles. She won't stop between here and Tourney. Small chance for empties, but you can ride outside. Here, take this along with you, kid. Just a little lump I wrapped up for you, a couple o' sandwiches and some doughnuts. And, say, if you hit Radium in your travels go to Mother Conway's and tell her 'Oyster-loaf' Johnny sent you. She'll slip you a feed and a piece o' jack if you need it. Good old woman—square, straight! Well, so long now! Good luck!"

Anice at once left the town and wandered up the track toward her cache. Horn stood in the waiting room of the little depot and watched her through a window. When he saw her turn off into the trees opposite where she had left her bundle, he went out and questioned a track walker, sitting on his speeder and reading a paper.

At the end of their conversation, made more genial on the railroad man's part by the offer of a good cigar, Horn, looking up the track, saw Anice come out on the right of way dressed as when she had disappeared, and continue on between the rails.

Wondering what she was up to now, he started leisurely after her. He, too, had learned about the water tank, the vicinity of which offered such good possibilities for catching a freight. Most outdoor railroad employees have been tramps, or "boomers," as they call themselves when traveling, and the hobo who knows how to approach them seldom fails to get information about trains.

Deciding that Anice was headed for the tank, but wondering where and how she had gained her information, Horn

kept on in her wake, a little surprised that she had not shifted back into her overalls, boy's shoes, and black cap. She went out of sight around a turn, and he quickened his steps.

He was on his guard when he reached the curve. He left the track and hugged one wall of a cut until the tank came into view. He halted in the shelter of a projecting rock and trained his glasses on the tank and the girl who was standing by one of the wooden pedestals, her back turned toward him.

She remained stationary in this position. Her hands were uplifted before her, but he could not see what she was about.

Therefore he left the right of way and ran through the trees until he decided that he was abreast the tank. Slipping forward under cover he reached the edge of the cut, where he flattened himself on the ground and once more leveled the binoculars at his charge.

"Love o' Mike!" he exclaimed. Through the strong glasses he was now able to make out the girl's occupation. With a serviceable pocketknife she had whittled a clean, bright spot which shone in contrast to the red paint of the tank. In her left hand she held a clipping from the Sunday paper. At her feet lay a tiny box of water colors. Consulting the copy frequently, with a little brush she was transferring to the leg of the tank, in black and red and white paint, the weird moniker of Judy the Torch.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW ORLEANS.

HOMER Jennings had apprised the head of the Keystone Detective Agency, Hughes Cumberland, of his intention of traveling to New Orleans. The iniquitous old man had, of course, refrained from divulging his sinister idea to use Judy the Torch, if he got in touch with her again, as the nucleus for a gigantic criminal ring. He merely

had given the information that he would go to the Southern city in order to be present, in case the necklace was recovered, to make certain that it did not fall into other hands.

Homer Jennings was a born criminal, knew it, and rejoiced in the knowledge. His business practices always had been just within the law, and a cringing terror of prison bars was all that had kept him to these limits.

But his scarred soul had always craved something more exciting than tricky business deals, something whereby he might gain secret power and pull strings that would control criminal operations on a large scale throughout the United States. Since his retirement from active business this longing had become an obsession. Only ignorance of criminals and their ways and of how to approach them with his plan for organization had kept him idle. Now Judy the Torch, with her strange power over yeggs and crooks and underworld characters, all closely allied, might serve his purpose and bring him into personal contact with those whom he wished to enlist in his enterprise.

He reached New Orleans in the course of time and established himself at the St. Andrew Hotel. Here he awaited a call from John Elburn, the Keystone man whose wrists Horn had locked about the tree near Stall. As Elburn had reached New Orleans, only one train behind Jennings, he presented himself at the old man's suite the morning after Jennings' arrival.

John Elburn was not in a position to treat the millionaire with the sarcastic tolerance that his chief had displayed. Else he might have told him flatly that he could be of no service to the cause in New Orleans and had acted the fool in coming. Over the phone, before Jennings had left San Francisco, Cumberland had told him as much and had begged him not to interfere. But Jennings, having in mind deeper plans than

Cumberland surmised, had, of course, paid no heed.

"Well," began Jennings, massaging his knotty fists with his palms, an indication of keenest anticipation, "we're here, Elburn, aren't we? And now the question arises where are we to begin?"

John Elburn stood in some awe of this cantankerous old scoundrel, as most commonplace minds do where great wealth is concerned. He felt honored to be in the old swindler's confidence, and it was with gusto that he unwittingly played into Jennings' hand.

"There are several ways of going about the matter," he began. "If my boss is right in assuming that the picture of the hobos' camp was taken close to New Orleans it ought not to be difficult to find the spot."

"And how will you go about it?"

"There's a place in this city called Exchange Alley," said Elburn. "There, I've heard, you'll find the dope fiends, the knock-out boys, the strong-arm men, the tramps, yeggs, rounders, crooks—all that scum."

"Yes! Just the place. Delightful!"

"Well, that depends on what a man considers delightful," returned Elburn, not just understanding the adjective that Jennings had applied. "But it's the place to get hold of some one who knows where that jungle camp is situated, or, better still, some one who knows Judy the Torch and can lead us to her."

"I see, I see. Quite logical, Elburn. And when do you purpose visiting Exchange Alley?"

"Right away, Mr. Jennings. I'll go down this morning. Though, between you and me"—Elburn rolled over his tongue the words that suggested such intimacy with a sure-enough millionaire—"I think night is the best time."

"Yes; undoubtedly you are right. Night is the time that the devil stalks about rampant. But I fear that I cannot contain myself until night. What d'ye

say we go down at once and look the field over, Elburn?"

"Why, you don't intend to go with me, do you, Mr. Jennings?" Elburn's eyes were round.

"By all means, by all means, my boy!" Jennings declared. "I'm tremendously interested in detective work. That's part of my reason for setting out for New Orleans. I am consumed with curiosity to see a real detective in action. Wouldn't miss the chance for worlds!"

John Elburn's tailor had sewn the buttons on his vest with practiced care,

or they would have certainly popped loose with the swelling of Elburn's chest as he took in the situation.

He rose briskly. "Well," he said, "I have letters of introduction to the head of a New Orleans detective bureau, and we'll go there first to get some dope on Exchange Alley. Maybe they'll send a man along with us for our introduction to the place. Rest assured, Mr. Jennings, that we'll be hot on the trail of this Jane before you realize it."

"Good! Good!" said the pseudo master criminal and tottered to his feet.

To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

IS ELECTROCUTION PAINLESS?

SINCE the adoption of lethal gas as the method to be used in executing criminals in Nevada doubt has arisen in the minds of many in regard to the painlessness of death by electrocution. Electrical experts say that execution by means of the electric chair is practically without pain. When the necessary voltage is applied through good contact to the human body, they assert, the resultant feeling to the victim is as though an extremely powerful blow had been struck at all points of the body, so that complete unconsciousness ensues. This reaction takes place in a very small fraction of time, so that the element of pain is almost negligible.

The electric chair is simply a type of armchair, having an adjustable back and head rest, as well as stockades at the bottom, where the feet of the subject are strapped in a fixed position. The person is first placed in the chair and then strapped firmly across the chest, the abdomen, and the thighs, to hold his back securely to the chair. The legs are strapped above the ankles into the stockades. The arms also are fastened tightly. They are held at the wrists to the arms of the chair, and at the upper arm to the back of the chair, which is insulated from the ground by rubber cushions on the back and in the seat.

Contact with the electric current is made on the top of the head by means of a helmet constructed of copper mesh, into which are woven sponges soaked in salt water before applying the helmet to the head. This cap is held on the head by straps passing from the top of the helmet underneath the chin and at the base of the brain. Another electro, completing the circuit of the current, is applied to the calf of the leg, and consists of a piece of wire mesh, also interwoven with a sponge that is soaked in salt water to insure good contact. Before electrocution the condemned person is given a close hair cut so that the resistance offered by the hair may be reduced to a minimum.

All being ready, a voltage of approximately two thousand is sent through the helmet. This voltage unquestionably produces instantaneous unconsciousness and paralysis. After a period of about ten seconds the current is reduced rapidly to a very low voltage and held at this pressure over a period of forty additional seconds to insure death. Again the current is increased to two thousand volts, then lowered, and finally stopped.

In the Spirit of High Adventure

by Charles Wesley Sanders

AT the front door of the police station Millard and Larkin stopped. Millard, the more venturesome of the two, had had his hand on the knob to open the door.

"I don't think we'd better do it," said Larkin.

"But we can't leave Billy in there all night," Millard objected. "Good Lord! You wouldn't let him spend a night in a dirty, ratty cell, would you?"

"We'd better go back to the club and get some one else to come down. I can feel that punch beating in my head yet. They might say we were loaded, too."

"Christmas!" Millard ejaculated. "That's right. No use in our getting locked up. We couldn't help Billy or ourselves then."

They walked out to the street and stood meditating.

"Who'll we get?" Millard asked. "It ought to be one of the old boys—somebody discreet, y' know."

"That's right. Let's see— What's this?"

An automobile had dashed up to the curb, and a young woman in evening dress, bareheaded and palpably excited, stepped down from the wheel. She came directly to the two young men.

"You're ready?" she asked. "Come—come quickly!"

Larkin opened his lips for bungling speech, but Millard, because she was a

very pretty, blond young woman, anticipated him.

"We are ready," said Millard. And to Larkin, aside: "We'll make Billy jealous, man."

The young woman ran back to the machine. Millard took Larkin by the arm and pushed him to the car.

"We have no time to lose," the girl said when they were seated. "I suppose the police will not stop us for speeding when you are in the car?"

"Oh, no!" Millard assured her, forgetting the menace of a cell in this rising tide of adventure.

The girl swung the car about, and it dashed down the street. In the avenue she slipped in and out among street cars and automobiles journeying leisurely theaterward. A crossing policeman held up his gloved hand at her, but she paid no attention to him. For five miles they kept the pace till they came to that residence district in which the young new-rich posterity of the old money grubbers have built their magnificent homes. The girl leaned back over the seat, one hand expertly guiding the car.

"I hope you're armed?" she said.

"Oh, no," Millard said gently, looking deep into her dark, shining eyes. "It won't be necessary."

"Well, you may be sure he is armed," she said. "I know he's desperate, too. However, if we can get safely into the house it will be all right. Mrs. Adding-

ton will give you her husband's revolvers."

"Oh, yes," said Millard; "that will be all right. What makes you think he is desperate?"

"Why, he wouldn't be trying to break into our house so early in the evening if he were not, would he? He frightened us half to death. Mrs. Addington was dressing when he looked into her room. He had brought a ladder from the garage. She had only a glimpse of him. He had a slouch hat on, and a handkerchief over the lower part of his face, so that she couldn't make out his features. But she said he *glared*. His eyes were terrible. He slipped down the ladder, though, when he saw her."

"You think he's a burglar?" Millard asked.

"Of course. That's why I telephoned to the police station and told them to have two men ready for me when I came. I ran out the back door and got the machine. As I dashed for the street, I was afraid he would shoot me in the back any minute. Poor Mrs. Addington! I wanted her to come with me, but she would not leave the house."

"Why didn't you stay there and wait for us?" Millard asked.

"Oh, the police are so slow, the newspapers say. We might have been murdered waiting for them. Mrs. Addington may be murdered now."

She turned back and gave her attention to the car.

"Here we are," she said presently, drawing up in front of a big stone house. "I'll run up the drive."

She brought the machine to a standstill at the kitchen door. Millard, his legs rather unsteady, leaped down. He looked about for the man with the slouch hat, but saw no one. Larkin followed him, and Millard helped the young woman to alight. She unlocked the kitchen door, and they went inside.

"Helen—Helen!" the girl called, pushing her way into the dining room, the men following her.

"Yes, yes!" said a voice from a room beyond. "Did you get them?"

"Yes; they're here—two of them. Did he come back?"

"No; it's been quiet as the grave." A woman of thirty, her face very pale, and her eyes wide, came to the doorway. "What a fright I've had!" she moaned.

"They have no weapons," the girl said. "Where are Jim's revolvers?"

"In his dresser." She looked at Millard. "It's the first room to the right at the head of the stairs. You get them."

Millard ran up the stairs. He came back to the head of them with a blue-barreled revolver in each hand. Mrs. Addington looked up at him.

"I was getting my jewels together," she said. "They're on my dresser in the next room. Bring them, please."

Millard found rings, a jeweled watch, and a diamond and a pearl necklace on the dresser in a little, glittering heap. He swept them into his pocket.

"What shall we do now?" Mrs. Addington asked, when he had returned to the floor below.

Millard handed a gun to Larkin, who took it gingerly.

"We'd better wait," Millard said. "He may come back."

They sat down in the dining room.

"It's such a relief to have you here," Mrs. Addington said. "You are so different from what I pictured policemen to be. Perhaps you're detectives—plain-clothes men they call them? I didn't know you wore evening clothes. Oh, dear, if you hadn't come!"

"Oh, the police are much maligned," Millard said, with a threatening glance at Larkin, whose honest face showed signs of revolt. "We try to be gentlemen always."

"I'm sure I'm glad," Mrs. Adding-

ton said. "The man must have been watching the house. He must have known we were here alone. We were going to a reception in town, and we had just come in this afternoon. The Andersons haven't been able to get away, so they had a few of us up for to-night. Foolishly I brought my jewels. We were just dressing when I saw that face at the window. I suppose he knew there were no servants in the house, either. You see, the house was closed for the summer."

"I see," Millard said, glancing around at the covered furniture. "I suppose he has been watching you at your summer home, and saw you leave alone. These burglars lay their plans carefully."

"You think he followed us?" Mrs. Addington breathed.

"I have no doubt of it."

"How horrible!"

"Well——" Larkin began; and then he stopped.

All of them lifted their heads and listened. The front doorbell was being impatiently rung.

"Who can that be?" Mrs. Addington whispered.

"It can't be your burglar," Millard answered with a sickly smile. "Perhaps it's some of your friends. They may have seen a light in the house. My companion and I might go out the back way and return to the station. I'll leave your jewels."

"Oh, no!" Mrs. Addington whispered again. "Answer the door, won't you? I—I'm afraid. I'm so upset."

"You answer it," Millard said to Larkin.

"Answer it yourself," Larkin retorted. "You're the boss."

Millard rose and went to the front door. He had a prevision of being arrested for something worse than kicking over a mail box on the avenue, as Billy had done.

As he opened the door a stranger pushed his way unceremoniously inside.

"Mrs. Addington live here?" he asked gruffly.

"Yes sir," Millard weakly answered.

"Where is she?"

"In—in the dining room."

"I'll take that gun, if you please," the stranger said, producing a snub-nosed revolver of his own, and presenting it to Millard's breast.

Millard yielded up the gun. He couldn't do anything else, because he had been holding it in a limp, nerveless hand.

"Come along, now," the stranger said. "I want to see Mrs. Addington."

He stalked into the dining room, and covered Larkin first thing.

"Give me that gun!" he said; and Larkin gave it to him promptly.

"Who are you?" Mrs. Addington gasped. "You're—you're not the burglar?"

"Hardly. I'm Detective Martin, from headquarters."

Mrs. Addington's eyes, grown suddenly scornful, roved from Millard to Larkin.

"Why," she exclaimed, "these men said they were from headquarters."

"That's an old trick with burglars," said Detective Martin, with a light laugh.

"Burglars!" Mrs. Addington cried. She stared at Millard a moment. "Ah, that's the man who was on the ladder! I can tell him by his eyes. They haven't that glare in them now, but they are the same. Oh, I'm so glad you came in time!"

Detective Martin turned on Millard.

"You won't insist now that you are headquarters' men, will you?" he demanded.

"N-o-o," Millard answered. "We're not. But this young woman seemed to need help, and——"

"I was at the station, where I could have got help—the kind of help I

wanted," the young woman broke in. "You deceived me."

"I didn't say——" Millard began.

"Well, who are you? What are you?" the detective demanded again.

"My name is John Millard. My father is president of the National Bank. This is Mr. Larkin. He is——"

"Oh, yes!" the detective laughed mirthlessly. "I suppose his father is president of the Steel Trust? Oh, no doubt!" He rose. "I'll just search you two."

He took Mrs. Addington's jewelry from Millard's coat pocket. Then he stripped him of his watch, a wallet with a hundred dollars in it, his ring, and his jeweled cigarette case. In his vest pocket he came upon a little box. When he opened the box he found a diamond ring nestling inside of it.

"A woman's ring!" the detective said. He turned to Mrs. Addington. "You can see they are professionals."

"We are not!" Millard cried heatedly. "That ring belongs to Billy van Alstyne. He gave his bachelor dinner to-night at the club. The ring belongs to the girl he's going to marry. It's a bit too large, and Billy was going to have it reset."

"Where is Billy now?" the detective jeered. "Can you get him on the telephone?"

Millard's face grew red.

"Well, no, I can't get him on the phone. But I can get my father if I have to."

"Where is Mr. van Alstyne?" the girl asked, apparently finding a hint of romance in the ring.

"Well, he's—he's—oh, hang it all!—pardon me—he's in jail!"

"Ah!" said the detective. "A gang of them, madam. I'll call the wagon. May I use your phone?"

"The telephone is out of order," Mrs. Addington said. "I tried to use it while Miss Drew was away. It had died somehow. I could get no one."

"Ah," the detective repeated, "you cut the wires, did you, *Mister* Millard?" He turned to Mrs. Addington again. "I'll have to go to the nearest drug store and telephone," he added. "I'll have to ask you to watch these young men. I'll leave one of these guns with each of you. Shoot if they move."

"Oh, I can't shoot," Mrs. Addington said. "I have never handled firearms in my life. Can't Miss Drew go to the telephone?"

"Burglars may be hanging about, ready to attempt to rescue these young thugs. It wasn't safe for the lady to go out before the way she did."

"How about you? They might overcome you. Then we would be in added danger."

"Never fear," he said. "They won't attack me. They know better. They know what Jim Martin can do with a gun."

He said it gently, without braggadocio. Miss Drew smiled at him with her lovely lips and eyes. Millard groaned inwardly.

"I'll see that they don't get away," she said, taking one of the revolvers from the detective. And to Millard coldly: "I've lived in the West. I'm a dead shot. I warn you, I'll fire at your first move."

"I won't stir," Millard assured her.

"You'd better not," she said.

The detective was bowing himself to the door.

"I'll take this stuff to the station," he said. "We'll need it for evidence."

"Very well," Mrs. Addington said. "I'm so glad you came! And please hurry!"

"I will." He looked at Millard with a hard light in his eyes. "You a head-quarters man!" he laughed grimly. "Why, I know every man in the department. As soon as I saw you enter this house, I knew you were impostors. I'd advise you to get acquainted with

the force before you attempt anything like this again. Acquaintance is a big asset in this business."

II.

As soon as he heard the front door slam behind Detective Martin, Millard turned to Mrs. Addington.

"Madam," he said, "you are doing us a great injustice. We are not burglars. We are just what we represent ourselves to be."

"Wasn't your coming here as you did reprehensible, if you are not policemen?" Miss Drew asked.

"Entirely so," he replied. "But we started to-night, on Billy's suggestion, to forget the common things of life. We set forth in a spirit of high adventure, as Billy said. And this is what it has led us to. The moment I saw you I thought we might carry out Billy's idea even though he could not be with us. I wish you'd let us go."

"I have no doubt you do," the girl said. "But I haven't any such intention. What was Billy arrested for?"

"Ki-kicking over a mail box on the avenue."

"And you call that the spirit of high adventure—in a man about to be married?"

"Well, Billy was rather overjubilant."

"How did you happen to have his engagement ring in your possession?"

"A—a few drinks put Billy's head in a whirl," Millard answered abjectly. "He—he gave me the ring, and told me to keep it. He was afraid he might lose it—or give it away."

"Give away his engagement ring!" the horrified girl cried. "What a vulgar—hideously vulgar—fear!"

"Well, Billy's susceptible, and extremely generous—at times."

The girl stared at him a moment, and then she looked away from him, still covering him with the gun, however.

Presently they heard the clamor of a bell in the street.

"Good Lord!" Millard said. "The patrol! Won't you—won't you let us go?"

"No!"

Mrs. Addington, her courage brought back by the nearness of the police, answered the doorbell. Three blue-uniformed men came awkwardly into the room.

"So here they are?" one asked, in a husky, gratified voice. "Well, come along now."

"But——" Millard began.

"No 'buts.' Just come along."

A policeman took each of the two men in charge.

"You'll come to the station?" the spokesman asked Mrs. Addington.

"Will it be necessary?"

"It'll be better. We'll want to talk to these fellows before they get a chance to think things over. We may want some information from you."

"I'm afraid to stir outside the door. If you could ride with us in the car and——"

"Certainly," the officer said. "Go along, boys."

As Millard passed Miss Drew, he looked into her eyes.

"You're a fine, courageous girl," he said in a low voice. "I'd like to know you better."

Miss Drew had a moment of hesitation, for Millard was a very good-looking young man. He hadn't any of the marks of a thug. Perhaps—but Miss Drew was not sentimental. She had read of thieves who acted like gentlemen. Her face flushed.

"Don't speak to me!" she said. "Do you think I'd be interested in a common thief?"

"I should hope not," he answered.

In half an hour Millard and Larkin were at the desk from behind which a big-mustached, red-faced lieutenant glared at them. Miss Drew and Mrs.

Addington sat on a bench against the wall. Millard tried to catch Miss Drew's eyes, but she would not look at him. He was more interested in her than in the lieutenant, for he had decided to call on influential friends to come to his rescue. He could easily establish his identity. The worst he could get out of it would be a severe reprimand from his father and undesirable notoriety in the newspapers. Then perhaps Miss Drew would be sorry she had not believed him. To make Miss Drew sorry—apologetic possibly—would offset the humiliation.

"Name?" the lieutenant asked crisply.

"John Millard."

"Occupation?"

"Bank clerk."

The lieutenant looked up. He would stand for no "joshing."

"His father is president of the National," one of the policemen said, with a snicker.

Now, this lieutenant was nobody's fool. He had been in the department for twenty-four years. He was familiar with all sorts and conditions of men. He put down his pen.

"If that's true, how did you get into this scrape?" he asked.

Millard told him the story from that beginning, in which Billy had participated, to their advent there in the station.

"If you'll call the Metropolitan Club and ask for Mr. Whitelaw—old Mr. Whitelaw—Mr. Dennison, Mr. Agate, or Mr. Denton, one of them will be here in a hurry," he concluded. "Just say that young Millard and Larkin and Billy van Alstyne have been arrested. Don't put us into a cell without investigation, lieutenant, please."

The lieutenant picked up a telephone. "What's the number of that club?" he asked.

Millard gave him the number. The lieutenant spoke it into the transmit-

ter. He asked for Mr. Whitelaw—old Mr. Whitelaw—and old Mr. Whitelaw apparently soon answered. The lieutenant put the receiver on the hook after a brief conversation.

"What did he say?" Millard asked eagerly.

"He said he'd be right down, I guess you're what you claim to be, all right. Whitelaw said he knew you'd come to this sooner or later—all three of you."

Millard turned to Miss Drew.

"We don't deserve that," he said.

Miss Drew flushed clear to her fair hair.

"I'm sorry——" she said.

Millard's heart leaped with a wild "Hooray!" but he only murmured:

"Don't mention it. It was all my fault. I don't blame you under the circumstances."

Mrs. Addington had been staring at him, speechless.

"If I had only known!" she gasped.

Millard sank down beside her.

"It's all right," he whispered. "You can make amends by inviting me to dinner."

"Will you come?" she asked, almost in tears.

Millard only stole a glance at Miss Drew's averted face.

Then a portly man came rapidly down the corridor. He stopped at sight of the group, and took off his hat.

"Millard," he said, "what in the world——"

Millard told the story over again.

"I called for you, Mr. Whitelaw," he said, "because I knew you'd be discreet."

"Discreet!" Mr. Whitelaw repeated. "I should hope so! If we can't fix up a plausible version of this for your father he'll turn you into the street. You don't know your father."

"I do—slightly," Millard lamented.

"We can say it was all a mistake,"

Miss Drew offered. "I'm *so* sorry that you——"

Millard sat down beside her then.

"What's to pay?" Whitelaw asked, turning to the window.

"Nothing to pay," the lieutenant said. And he added severely: "These young fellows will have to sign waivers, though."

"What's that?" the hitherto silent Larkin asked.

"Just to protect the city."

"Oh, we'll protect the city," Millard said. "We're fine protectors, aren't we, Miss Drew?"

Miss Drew laughed in the way he had hoped she would. The lieutenant pushed a button, and a man in his shirt sleeves came from a room beyond.

"Bring in the man in forty-four," he said.

Billy van Alstyne, thoroughly himself except for a hangdog look, was led in.

"If everything is fixed up," he said when he saw Whitelaw, "I'll go outside and get some oxygen."

At a nod from Whitelaw, he almost ran down the corridor.

"Don't you *ever* tell that girl about the engagement ring," Miss Drew whispered to Millard.

"I never will," Millard promised.

The lieutenant's telephone rang.

"That was the man we sent from here to Mrs. Addington's house when

you fellows copped out the automobile," he said. "He says he can't make anybody hear."

"Why," said Millard, "the man you sent was there at the house. He arrested us. I guess I left that out of my story, trying to clear myself."

"Oh, no; I just talked to the man we sent," the lieutenant said. "I told Mr. Addington when he telephoned that he had caught you——"

"Mr. Addington!" Mrs. Addington broke out. "Why, my husband is in Europe!"

The lieutenant pressed his big face against the grating.

"Who caught these fellows, then?" he demanded.

"Why, Detective Martin, of headquarters," said Millard.

"Ho, ho!" the lieutenant cried hoarsely. "What-for looking man?"

Millard described the detective accurately.

"There ain't no such man in the department," the lieutenant said explosively.

"Why, he took my jewels!" Mrs. Addington gasped out.

"And my money and watch and cigarette case—and Billy's ring!" Millard added.

"W-e-l-l," said the lieutenant, picking up the waiver forms, "I don't know as you can blame him much. Evidently that's what he was after."

BAD LUCK IN SHEETS

BED sheets are not popular with Frank Fiorello, who was sentenced in Brooklyn, New York, recently to serve seven years in Sing Sing for robbery. Three times bed sheets have been the means of bringing Fiorello into the clutches of the law. In 1919 he tried to escape from a house he had robbed in Dobbs Ferry by lowering himself from the window by a bed sheet, and was captured. In 1920 he collected silver in a residence, went into another room for a bed sheet in which to wrap his loot, and was caught. On April 12, 1921, he held up Max Goldstein, a laundry employee, in a hallway and took eighty dollars from him. The victim had been collecting clothes to be taken to the laundry. He picked up a bed sheet he had dropped, pursued the robber, threw the sheet over the thief's head, and held him until the arrival of the police.

The Price of Perfidy

by **Scott Campbell**

Author of "Atoms of Iron," etc.

NO cry came from her. No frantic scream for help broke the stillness of the starry night, no piercing shriek that might perhaps have relieved the awful fear and horror depicted in her girlish, ghastly white face. Only one in a frenzy of utterly ungovernable terror could have looked as she did or have fled as she was fleeing.

Martin Gaffney, a night patrolman in the Fens district, saw her pass near an arc light and then run at top speed into the silent and deserted park. Here she quickly vanished in the gloom amid the trees and shrubbery. It was after midnight. The stillness in the secluded avenues of the park was broken only by the sighing wind of the November night, the occasional quick tread of some late pedestrian, or the swift passing of a speeding motor car.

Gaffney gazed after the girl for a moment, then hurriedly followed her, sensing something wrong. He sought her vainly for several minutes. Then he found her back of some shrubbery, crouching low on the damp ground, her head bowed, her face hidden in her hands.

"What's the trouble, my girl?" he asked kindly, bending near her. "What are you doing here?"

She shuddered and looked up at him with a dazed, affrighted stare. She was a slender, brown-eyed girl of

eighteen, and her pretty face appeared almost deathlike amid the folds of a dark worsted shawl draped around her head and shoulders. It was her only outside garment, and she was very simply clad in a dark woolen dress.

"Don't touch me!" she said in a gasp. "I'm hiding! Don't tell! Please don't tell!" she entreated in strained, agitated whispers. "I must hide! I must——"

"Hide from what?" Gaffney asked. He never had seen such a look of fear on a girl's face.

"Those men—those dreadful men!" she said. "They'll find me. I must hide."

"Wait. Steady yourself. Let me help you."

Gaffney now saw there was something wrong with the girl. She shivered as if with ague when he touched her. She did not resist, however, and he gently raised her to her feet and drew the shawl closer around her.

"You're trembling. Are you cold?" he asked. "What frightened you? What dreadful men do you mean?"

"I—I don't know!" she faltered.

"What about them? Where did you see them?"

"I don't know. I—I can't remember."

"Nonsense! You must know where you saw them and what occurred, or you wouldn't be frightened," Gaffney told her. "What alarmed you?"

"The dead man! The body—the man on the floor." The girl swayed nearer to the puzzled officer and clung to him as if again in abject terror. "He was dead—dead! Oh, oh, it was horrible! The man with a knife—don't let them find me!" she pleaded, shivering from head to foot. "They would kill me. They would kill me as they killed him. Don't let them! Please don't let them! I must hide."

"Hush! Don't be frightened. No one will harm you," Gaffney assured her. He put his arm around her and drew her toward the avenue, now convinced that she either had witnessed a murder or that a sudden shock had caused her condition. "I'll protect you. You can rely on a policeman," he kindly encouraged her. "I'll take you home or to some safe place. Where do you live?" he inquired as they came into the brighter light in the avenue. "What is your name?"

The girl did not reply. She gazed vacantly at him and seemed to be trying vainly to calm her distracted mind.

"What is your name?" Gaffney repeated.

"I—I don't know," she faltered, voice trembling.

"Don't know your own name?" Gaffney eyed her incredulously.

"I've forgotten it. I can't recall it."

"Tell me where you live."

"I—I don't know," she repeated. There was something very pathetic in her vain effort to comply and in the dazed, lingering look of fear in her large brown eyes. "I can't remember where I live."

"Try again," Gaffney said kindly. "Try hard."

"I am trying. I cannot remember."

"Can you tell me just what occurred? You saw a dead man, you said, and a man with a knife," Gaffney reminded her. "Were you in your own home? Can you take me to it? Look around and try to recall."

He stopped when the dazed girl, suddenly shrinking instinctively, drew nearer to him. A man who had been sharply watching them from behind a tree was crossing the avenue to join them. He was an erect, well-built man of thirty-five, with a strong, clean-cut face, keen dark eyes, and a very firm mouth and chin. His hands were remarkably white and well formed, as slender and supple as those of a magician, a professional pianist, or a pick-pocket. "What's the trouble, Gaffney?" The man had a peculiarly incisive voice and his bearing was haughtily aristocratic. "Anything for the press?"

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Ludwig," Gaffney said respectfully. The policeman recognized Mr. Lester Lawton Ludwig, a bachelor residing in that locality, a writer of society notes for the local press and a special correspondent for New York and Washington newspapers. "I didn't know you, sir, at first."

"I was on my way home when I happened to see you," Ludwig emphasized it perceptibly. "What's the trouble?" he repeated.

"I'm not sure, sir, though it may be a murder case from what this girl has said. But she seems to be wrong in the head," Gaffney quickly added. "It's aphasia maybe, or the like of that. She cannot tell me her name or where she lives. She has forgotten."

"This girl!" Ludwig gazed sharply at her. There was a subtle, searching gleam in his narrowed eyes. "A murder where she lives—nonsense!" he said positively. "I know her, Gaffney. She's a French girl, employed as a maid by a dear old friend of mine, Mrs. Alden Beebe, one of the richest and most fashionable women in Boston."

"Sure, sir, that's right. I recall her now," Gaffney replied. "I've seen her before. She lives only around the bend in the avenue."

"A murder in that house—nonsense!"

Ludwig again asserted. "This girl's name is Edna Deland."

"That's it! That's it—Edna Deland." The girl uttered a cry of relief. It seemed as if this reminder, the mere mention of her name, had suddenly restored her to a normal condition and released her from a spell like that of a terrible nightmare. Her eyes lighted quickly, and a tinge of red came into her pale cheeks.

"That's it—Edna Deland," she repeated, gazing at the florid, kindly face of the policeman. "I remember it now. It's strange I couldn't recall it. I remember——" She stopped, suddenly pressing both hands to her head, ghastly white again when she also recalled the tragic cause of her singular mental disorder.

"What was the matter?" Gaffney demanded. "If you can remember——"

"Wait! I can tell you." Edna then steadied herself with an effort. "My mistress has been robbed. A man was killed in the library. I saw his body on the floor. It frightened me—oh, oh, how it frightened me!" she said. "I ran out as fast as I could. I ran——"

"Wait a bit!" Ludwig interrupted. "A murder and robbery in Mrs. Beebe's home! That's incredible. Where were you all the while?"

"I was out with a—with a friend," Edna faltered, and shrank with sudden confusion from his sharp and searching scrutiny. "I was out all the evening."

"Out where?" Ludwig curtly questioned.

"Not far. Out with a friend." The girl seemed to evade him. "There was a light in the library when I came in, and I thought madame had returned. I went there and saw—oh, oh, it was horrible!" she said with renewed agitation. "That dead man on the floor! I saw his white distorted face in the glare of light. There was a man with a knife and another with madame's

jewels. They saw me and—oh, how it frightened me! I feared that they would kill me. I ran out and——"

"You could have called the police," Ludwig again interrupted. "Why haven't you told this officer about it?" he demanded suspiciously.

"I—I don't know," Edna faltered, pale and trembling. "I cannot explain. I was afraid. I feared——"

"You had nothing to fear after meeting this policeman," Ludwig curtly told her. "You better say nothing, my girl, unless you can tell a plausible story. This may be used against you if there is any truth in your story. I very much doubt it, Gaffney." He turned abruptly to the policeman. "She either is-lying, or, as you said, is wrong in the head. I'll take her home and find out."

"I'll go with you." Gaffney spoke gruffly.

"That's not necessary." Ludwig quickly objected. "Her story is wholly incredible. You better remain on your beat. If there is anything wrong I will telephone to headquarters."

"If there's anything wrong, Mr. Ludwig, I'll do the telephoning," Gaffney informed him with grim dryness. "Get a move on at once. I'm going with you."

There was a look of disapproval on the ruddy face of the kind-hearted policeman. He did not like the way in which Ludwig had questioned the agitated girl, nor his immediate distrust and insinuations. He recalled her white, terrified face when he found her cowering under the shrubbery, and he did not believe she was feigning or guilty of any duplicity. Nevertheless he noted that her eyes were filled with fear and that her pale features had hardened ominously while they hastened around the broad bend in the avenue and came in view of the spacious grounds and stately home of Mrs. Alden Beebe.

"By Jove, there seems to be some-

thing wrong, Gaffney, after all," Ludwig exclaimed. "There's a motor car at the door, and most of the house is lighted."

"That's Detective Cruger's car," Gaffney said more gravely as they hastened up the driveway. "He's the deputy chief at headquarters."

"Some one, then, has notified the police." Ludwig's voice went strangely keen and cold again. "There's an inconsistency here. Who could have informed them, Gaffney, if this girl is telling the truth? That's the point."

"That's not the point at all," Gaffney returned. He glanced at Edna's pale, pathetic face and drew her nearer to him. "Cruger doesn't go out at night on any ordinary case. That's the real point. Take it from me, Mr. Ludwig, the girl is right. It's a case of robbery and murder."

II.

Only five minutes had passed since Owen Cruger, deputy chief at headquarters, entered the stately residence of Mrs. Alden Beebe. She met him at the door of her library, the scene of a robbery astounding both because of its magnitude and the evident brutal murder of one of the thieves by his two confederates.

Mrs. Alden Beebe, nevertheless, though very pale and still in elaborate evening dress, was meeting the calamity with stoical composure, quite consistent in a direct descendant of the Puritans and a middle-aged widow of great wealth and social distinction. Not even the loss of half a million in superb jewels, including her famous spectrum diamond pendant, so termed because of its rare prismatic radiance, could seriously disturb her dignified poise and aristocratic urbanity.

"I have met with a terrible loss, Detective Cruger," she said after greeting him. "I had Jacobs, my butler, telephone to you immediately after he re-

leased me. You can see for yourself what occurred here."

Detective Cruger glanced into the library at a broken safe in one of the walls, at the displaced furniture, the disordered rugs, and at the drawn, distorted features of a lifeless man on the floor. His own austere, impressive face, however, which seemed rather to mask than reveal the nature of his observations and deductions underwent no change.

"I'll look into it presently," he replied, restraining a policeman who had accompanied him. "What were the circumstances? State them briefly, Mrs. Beebe, as far as you know."

"That may be quickly told," she rejoined. "I went to the opera this evening with a party of friends. My doorbell rang about nine o'clock, and when Jacobs answered it he was seized and quickly overcome by three masked men in the vestibule, who then bound and gagged the other servants and locked all of them in a basement storeroom."

"In order to rob you of your jewels when you returned," said Cruger.

"Precisely. A sudden, severe headache precluded my taking supper with my friends after the opera, and I returned alone in a taxicab. I had told Jacobs he need not wait up for me, and, not finding my maid awaiting me, I inferred that she had dropped asleep in my room. I went alone to the library, therefore, to put my jewels in the safe."

"Are you in the habit of doing so before going to your room?"

"Invariably. The robbers, who then were concealed in the library, must have known I was not wearing all of my jewels. For they did not attack me until after I had opened the safe."

"Why, in that case, did they break the inner door?" Cruger glanced at it again.

"Because the moment I heard them I closed it before they could prevent

me," Mrs. Beebe explained. "It locks automatically, and it is the door of the compartment in which I keep my jewels. It then contained among others my costly diamond necklace and pendant. You have heard, perhaps, of my magnificent spectrum diamond. My attempt to prevent the theft proved futile," she ruefully added. "The robbers bound me and confined me in the dining-room closet."

"Do you know what followed?" Cruger inquired.

"I do not, except that I heard them breaking into the jewel compartment."

"Or why this man was killed?"

"I do not," Mrs. Beebe repeated. "None of us could hear what occurred. I know he was one of the thieves, however, though all were masked. The one evidently their leader wore a soft black hat and a long raincoat which completely hid his other garments."

"About his voice?" said Cruger.

"Did he speak to you?"

"Only once when he first seized and threatened me," said Mrs. Beebe. "His voice sounded husky, though deep and strong; he was quite a large and powerful man. Jacobs contrived to free himself and get out of the storeroom soon after the two confederates fled, and he hastened to find and liberate me. That is all I can tell you, Detective Cruger, except that my maid, Edna Deland, is mysteriously missing," she added. "Jacobs states that she——"

"I'll hear it from Jacobs, if you please," Cruger checked her abruptly and turned to the elderly butler and a group of awed servants near the stairs. "What can you add, Jacobs, to what Mrs. Beebe has told me?"

"Only about her maid, sir," Jacobs said gravely, coming forward.

"What about her?"

"She asked permission to go out this evening, sir, which I refused, and I supposed she then went to her room and remained there. But the robbers, who

seemed to know how many servants we have, could not find her, and the man in a raincoat asked me where she was. I then inferred that she went out in spite of my refusal, and, hoping she would return and be able to prevent the robbery, I lied and stated that she was spending the night with a sick friend."

"So that the crooks would have no fear because of her absence?"

"That was my idea, sir," said Jacobs. "But I since have learned that the cook saw her at the pantry window, which she hurriedly closed when discovered, and I now suspect that she was in league with the crooks and was secretly talking with them."

"Was that after you refused to let her go out?"

"It was, sir, and only a short time before the doorbell rang. I now think she told them who was in the house and gave them what other information they needed."

"You overlook a point," said Cruger. "If your suspicions are correct, Jacobs, why did they search for the girl after entering, and why did they question you about her?"

"Merely as a blind, sir, to avert suspicion from her," Jacobs pointedly argued.

"Possibly. Maybe I'm the one who is blind." The steely gleam in Cruger's searching eyes turned quizzical for a moment. "You reason quite keenly, Jacobs."

"Well, sir, Edna has been very friendly for some time with a young Frenchman named Charles Dupont," Jacobs informed him. "He is employed as a waiter in the Hotel Royal, sir, where he has a room. I don't quite like his looks. I'm not so sure——"

"What you're not sure of is immaterial," Cruger said bluntly. He turned to the waiting policeman. "Examine that pantry window, Farley, and the stone sill outside. Look for finger marks in the dust, if there is any on

it, and for footprints in the ground below. Report at once if you find any," he commanded. "They may show whether the missing girl was talking with a man outside. She may, as Jacobs suspects, be in league with the crooks. If she is——"

Detective Cruger stopped. He heard a door closed in the side hall. Edna Deland had admitted Patrolman Gaffney and Mr. Lester Lawton Ludwig with her key. They heard the last remarks of the detective as they came into the main hall. The girl drew back, shrinking and shuddering, apparently with returning fear of the shocking scene in the library, or from the pending accusation suggested by what she had heard. Gaffney took her arm again and drew her forward.

"The butler is right, Cruger," Ludwig asserted, familiarly as they approached. "I heard what you were saying. Gaffney found this girl hiding in the Fens. She told him an absurd story and pretended——"

"I'll judge for myself, Mr. Ludwig." Cruger's voice hardened ominously. It was not in his nature to brook interference. "Where did you find her, Gaffney?" he demanded with a frown that silenced all other observers. "What can you tell me?"

"To begin with, sir, I don't figure that she had a hand in the job," Martin Gaffney said bluntly. Edna Deland had one friend at least in the kind-hearted policeman.

"You state the facts, Gaffney, and I'll do the figuring," Cruger told him curtly.

Gaffney obeyed. He stated very precisely what had occurred and dwelt with genuine feeling upon the girl's piteous fear and strangely dazed condition, but it brought no sign of compassion to Detective Cruger's stern, inscrutable face. Cruger had the reputation of being quick to detect signifi-

cant trifles, and he was known to keep things up his sleeve.

"Well, what have you to say?" he asked, gazing more sharply at the girl. "You better tell the truth."

"I told this policeman the truth," said Edna. She drew up a little, resenting with a frown his searching scrutiny and the manifest distrust of the others. A look of defiance and sudden determination settled on her drawn white face. "I can tell you nothing more," she quickly added.

"You can tell what you know about this crime," Cruger said sternly.

"I know nothing about it," Edna retorted.

"Do you mean to say——"

"Only what I have said," the girl sharply insisted. "I know nothing about the crime. I will say no more about it," she declared as if driven to desperation.

"Now she is showing her hand, Cruger, all right," Ludwig declared. He had been quietly talking with Mrs. Beebe. "There's nothing now in feigned fear and forgetfulness," he said derisively. "You'll find that Jacobs is right."

"I'll first find out what that evidence denotes," Cruger curtly told him, pointing to the library. "I've deferred it only to learn the superficial facts. Look after the girl, Gaffney, while—well, Farley, what did you discover?" He digressed abruptly and hastened to intercept the returning policeman.

"I found them," said Farley, voice lowered. "A man's footprints near the window and marks of his hands on the sill, as if he drew himself up a little to talk quietly with the girl. She's one of the gang, Cruger, as sure as the Lord made little apples."

"We'll try to clinch it." Cruger's narrowed eyes had a singular, sinister gleam. "Go to the Hotel Royal and arrest Charles Dupont, if you can find him," he commanded. "Take the mo-

tor car and lose no time. Search his room and then bring him here. Detain him in the rear hall till I'm ready for him."

"Ready for him?" queried Farley.

"Till I have dug into that evidence to the bottom," Cruger explained with a jerk of his thumb toward the library. "I know the dead man. I knew him the moment I saw him. It's the body of Leo Carvalli, a Pitt Street Italian."

"Carvalli!" Farley's eyes opened wider.

"As foul and treacherous a crook as could be found in the North End," Cruger grimly added. "But he was not the crook who planned this robbery, Farley, by a long chalk. That was done by a much more capable knave, possibly Dupont, if this girl really is lying. Go and get him. I'll soon be ready for him."

Detective Cruger did not wait for an answer. He turned quickly and entered the library, apparently blind to the anxiety and suspense of his observers, none of whom had heard his brief talk with the departing policeman. His inquiries as a whole had been brief, in fact, for only ten minutes had passed since he arrived on the scene of the crime.

Martin Gaffney wore a frown of disapproval. He did not believe Edna Deland was guilty. He saw no way to refute the accumulating evidence against her, however, and he did not venture to oppose the deputy chief from headquarters.

Mr. Lester Lawton Ludwig was a man not so easily daunted. He ignored the detective's ominous frown and followed him into the library.

III.

Detective Cruger was gazing at the upturned face of the dead man. It was that of a swarthy man of thirty, sinister even in death. His brow was bruised and cut, his chin and neck badly

scratched. His convulsed features showed that he had died in agony and after a desperate struggle.

That he was one of the crooks, that he had been murdered by his two confederates, that they had fled with half a million in superb jewels, including a diamond pendant worth fifty thousand dollars—all that appeared obvious.

But why was he killed? What cause for such treachery? Who were his two confederates? Was Dupont one of them, and Edna Deland a liar? If not, who were they, and how could they be identified and how could the stolen jewels be recovered? These very important questions, rather than the bare facts, were uppermost in the mind of Detective Cruger.

"Shocking!" Ludwig muttered as he joined him. "I marvel, Cruger, that Mrs. Beebe can bear it so bravely."

"I agree with you." The detective glanced at him and nodded. "I wonder who except her servants knew that she was going to the opera this evening."

"Why so?" Ludwig eyed him keenly. "Is that material?"

"Very," said Cruger tersely. "The robbery could have been planned only by some one who knew in advance of her intention. He may have been one of her own set," he bluntly added.

"Nonsense!" Ludwig quickly protested. "That's absurd. She moves in the very best circle of society. There are no criminals, Cruger, in her set. I know what I'm talking about."

"You ought to." Cruger dryly allowed. "You're to the manner born."

"I don't base my opinion on my own birth and breeding," Ludwig told him haughtily. "Your supposition that any man in high society would commit such a crime is ridiculous. Her maid, Edna Deland, undoubtedly is the one who gave the crooks the necessary information. Her flight from the house, her vain attempt to hide, her crafty con-

duct and absurd story when Gaffney cornered her, and her defiant attitude when you began to question her, all point plainly to her guilt. They admit of no other interpretation."

"You may be right," Cruger said thoughtfully while he crouched to make a closer inspection of the dead man.

"I'll wager I'm right," Ludwig declared confidently. "Furthermore, contrary to the absurd suspicion you expressed, this fellow's face and clothing plainly reveal the low type of her confederates," he forcibly argued, pointing to the sinister features of the lifeless man. "He's a ruffian of the lowest class. There is no denying it, Cruger."

"Maybe not." Cruger glanced at his extended hand. He noticed how slender and well formed it was, very suggestive of gentility and aristocracy, and he also observed, around one of the tapering fingers, a band of pallid skin, as if a ring usually worn had been discarded. "As far as that goes, Ludwig, I have identified this fellow," he added. "He's a bad egg and has a criminal record. His name is Leo Carvalli."

"Carvalli." Ludwig's keen dark eyes narrowed for an instant. "I never heard of him."

"He has served two terms in prison."

"That confirms what I have said about the low class of the criminals."

"Oh, I admit that he is one of the crooks, as Mrs. Beebe asserted," Cruger allowed. "But there is one point I cannot fathom."

"What is that?" queried Ludwig.

"Why was he killed by his two confederates?" Cruger asked perplexedly.

"Pshaw!" Ludwig smiled derisively. "I wonder at that, Cruger, from a man of your insight and acumen. It may be easily guessed."

"What is your opinion?" The detective looked up at him.

"They wanted his share of the plunder. They wanted to split it between two instead of three," Ludwig said with

assurance. "That's like crooks of his class."

"You may be right," Cruger again agreed with him. "That may explain it."

"Surely! Notice the bruise on his head, also the scratches on his chin and neck," Ludwig pointed out. "One of his pals struck him and dazed him, no doubt, and then the rascals strangled him. There really is no denying it, Cruger, no getting around such evidence as this. They killed him to get his share of the plunder."

Detective Cruger did not argue the point. He examined the cut on Carvalli's head. It was more like a deep, ragged scratch. He then examined the wounds on his chin and neck, feeling the rough skin for a moment and noting also that two of his fingers were injured and discolored near the nails.

Ludwig watched him intently all the while. There was a subtle gleam at times in the depths of his keen eyes. He could detect no change in Cruger's stern, grimly determined face, however, reflecting what he had in mind.

"What do you find?" he asked at length bluntly.

"I guess you're right," Cruger replied, still frowning. "It seems to be the only reasonable explanation. Besides, that indicates that he was searched by one of his pals." He pointed to one of Carvalli's pockets, which was partly turned and protruding several inches. "He evidently was killed after the jewels were secured, and presumably to get those in his possession."

"Exactly!" Ludwig's thin, clean-cut lips relaxed perceptibly. "I thought you would agree with me," he remarked. "It's the only tenable theory. If this fellow——"

"Stop a moment," Cruger interrupted, rising from his crouching attitude near the body. A scintillating gleam, several feet away, had caught

his eye. He arose quickly and picked up from the floor, a few feet from the broken safe, an unset diamond weighing about two carats. Until now it had been unobserved among the open jewel cases and the fragments of the broken safe which strewed the floor.

"The rascals did not get away with quite all of them." Cruger displayed the glittering stone. "It must have been broken from one of the jewels during a struggle to get possession of it."

"Most likely." Ludwig eyed it indifferently.

"More likely, at least, than that they will return to get it," Cruger said with singular dryness. "I'll hand it to Mrs. Beebe presently. She will probably recognize it."

"Nonsense!" Ludwig said quickly. "Do you suppose she can identify that single unset stone from among her numerous jewels? Impossible!" He emphasized it derisively.

"Well, that doesn't matter much, Ludwig, as long as she has recovered it," Cruger told him.

"True," Ludwig admitted. "But I'll wager that her spectrum diamond is the only gem she could positively identify."

Detective Cruger did not reply. He took a lens from his pocket and began to inspect the safe in search of finger prints. He could find none, however, and he replaced the lens in his pocket.

"The crooks knew their business," he said. "They may have worn gloves. In any case, they made it a point to wipe all finger prints from the safe. If my suspicion of the maid is correct——"

"How can you question it?" Ludwig asked pointedly. "Why did she want to go out, and what was she doing till after midnight, when Gaffney saw her?"

"Wait! You'll soon know what I question." Cruger spoke with stern determination. "Wait till I get rid of this bauble and have a look at the pantry

window." He turned quickly and rejoined Mrs. Alden Beebe in the hall.

Ludwig watched him till he strode toward the butler's pantry. There was a sneer of haughty contempt on his thin lips. He gazed again at Carvalli, his brows knitting until a scowl of repugnance had settled on his fine, aristocratic face. His brain was seething with thoughts no man could guess. But he turned suddenly away and went to speak to Mrs. Beebe.

"Let me congratulate you," he said smilingly, pointing to the diamond in her hand. "That certainly is very encouraging, my dear Mrs. Beebe, I'm sure. Detective Cruger has made, at least, a very promising beginning."

Several minutes had passed when Detective Cruger returned. He had seen the lamps of his motor car in the driveway and the two men who occupied it. He was frowning darkly when he waved Patrolman Gaffney aside and confronted the suspected maid.

"Now, my girl, I want the truth from you," he said sternly. "No lies or evasions. You can't get by with them. What do you know about this crime?"

"I have told you." Edna Deland gazed at him defiantly. Her pretty face was as white as chalk, her lips gray and drawn, but now there was no look of fear in her glittering eyes. "I know nothing about it."

"That's not true," Cruger said severely. "You disobeyed the butler and went out this evening after talking with some one at the pantry window. Where did you go? What were you doing?"

"Nothing that I'm ashamed of," Edna curtly told him.

"You did not return till midnight. You told Gaffney you saw the dead man and a man with a knife. You then must know something about the murder," Cruger sternly insisted.

"That's all I know about it," said Edna firmly. "I had my key to the

side door, and I stole in quietly so that the butler would not hear me. The library was lighted, and I thought madame had returned."

"You knew you ought to be here when she arrived. Why did you stay out so late?" Cruger pointedly demanded.

"She had said she would not return till after midnight," Edna retorted. "When I came to the library door I saw the two men, one with madame's jewels, the other with a knife. He was bending over the man on the floor."

"Were they masked?" Cruger asked sharply.

"No, sir. The one with a knife was a dark man with a beard. He sprang up when he saw me, and I was frightened. I ran out again as fast as I could, and I heard him follow me. That's all I know about it."

"That's not all you know," Cruger sternly accused her. "With whom did you talk at the pantry window?"

The girl hesitated, shrinking from his sharp and searching scrutiny. She fell to trembling again, both hands pressed over her heart, a look of increasing anguish in her dilated eyes.

"I talked with no one," she said after a moment.

"That is a falsehood," said Cruger with threatening severity. "Your face shows it, and there is ample evidence of it." He glanced around, observing Farley in the rear of the hall, and he nodded to him significantly. "Who is the friend you went out to meet?" he harshly demanded, grasping the girl's arm.

"I—I won't tell you," she falteringly replied.

"Oh, yes, you will!" Cruger threatened. "Out with it! Who was your friend?"

"It was a girl who works near by," said Edna desperately. "It was a girl who——"

"No, it wasn't! Look there!" said

Cruger, quickly turning her around. "That's who it was!"

Edna Deland stared for a moment as if dumfounded, then uttered a heart-rending cry of dismay. Her gaze had fallen upon Farley and his companion—a tall, handsome young man, looking strangely white and perplexed and whose wrists were secured with handcuffs.

"Wait a bit!" Gaffney exclaimed. "Oh, I say, Detective Cruger, this girl isn't——"

"Stop!" Cruger turned as if pricked with a knife. "Don't you dare to interfere with me, Gaffney, or I'll have your buttons!" he declared with terrible severity. "The girl is under arrest, also her confederate. I don't believe a word she has said. As for you, Dupont, take a word of advice and keep your mouth closed. What you say will be used against you," he sternly warned him. "Look after them, Farley, and take them to headquarters. I'll question them later. Get away with them at once. I'll wait to call the coroner and have that body removed. Remain here, Gaffney; I may need you."

Ludwig glanced at Mrs. Alden Beebe.

"It's very evident now what Detective Cruger thinks," he remarked. It then was one o'clock.

Some hours later the body of Leo Carvalli lay in the back room of a Harrison Avenue undertaker. The police wagon and the undertaker had departed. The place was closed and in darkness. But two men who had come there very stealthily were seated in the gloom of the back room, Detective Cruger and Martin Gaffney. They were waiting, watching, and whispering, but not because they were in the presence of death.

"Bah! Things aren't always what they seem," Cruger said. "If not proved by absolutely authentic cases, Martin, no one would believe how strangely great terror may affect a timid

and sensitive person. I know of two. Hermann Meister, a German medical student, while dissecting a human body, suddenly compressed the chest and caused an exhalation which sounded to the horrified youth exactly like a hoarse command to run. He did so. He rushed out in abnormal terror, a sort of temporary acute mania, and ran nine miles at top speed. Then he fell in complete physical exhaustion. When restored he remembered nothing about it."

Martin Gaffney said nothing.

"Another is that of George Grochantzy, who deserted from the Prussian army. He was caught by soldiers while dancing in an inn. He thought of the death penalty and uttered a shriek of terror and fell insensible. When revived he could remember nothing, not even his own name, and he died an idiot a month later. I recalled both cases, Martin, when you told me about Edna Deland," said Cruger.

"Then you don't really suspect her?" Gaffney questioned.

"Suspect her—nothing!" Cruger exclaimed. "Why didn't she flee with the crooks? Why did they ring? Why didn't she admit them? Why did they ask about her and search for her after entering? No, Martin, I do not suspect her. I suspect only Lester Ludwig."

"Why did you arrest her then?"

"Only to hide my suspicions," Cruger interrupted. "It was very significant that he turned up just as you found the girl, that he objected to your going with him to take her home, that he is an old friend of Mrs. Beebe. He might easily have learned of her opera party. Obviously he was trying to convince me of the girl's guilt. I happen to know, too, that he lives extravagantly and is always short of money."

"I see those points," Gaffney returned.

"I found, when I examined Carvalli,

that the cut on his head was much more like a ragged scratch caused by a ring on the hand of his assailant," Cruger continued. "I saw, too, that Ludwig had removed his ring, and I presently discovered the diamond, evidently broken from it when he dealt the blow. I pretended to think it belonged to Mrs. Beebe. He probably did not miss it until after Edna Deland entered, when both crooks followed her from the house."

"Thinking she was after a policeman?" Gaffney asked.

"Surely!" said Cruger. "They did not overtake her, however, but evidently traced her. Ludwig then gave his disguise and the stolen jewels to his confederate, I think, and later returned with the girl to find his diamond, if possible, and perhaps to do something more. But, in the meantime, I had arrived at the house, and he then took advantage of the maid's strange conduct and her apparent inability to incriminate him in any way."

"Have you questioned her about that?" Gaffney asked.

"At headquarters," Cruger replied. "She was overjoyed upon finding that she and Dupont are not really under arrest. It appears that his father in France is very ill, and Dupont is sailing this morning. He came to tell the girl about it and whistled for her to come out. She talked with him from the pantry window, then went out and joined him. When accused of the crime she was afraid that Dupont would be arrested and prevented from sailing. This was her only reason for hiding the truth. I suspected something of the kind, and I had Dupont arrested only to convince Ludwig that I had no other suspicions and designs."

"But why was Carvalli murdered?"

"He wasn't," said Cruger. "I detected it, although Ludwig tried hard to convince me. I think you'll presently see why. Particles of skin on the edge

of Carvalli's nails showed me that the scratches on his chin and neck were caused by his own fingers. I then guessed the truth, I think, and took my one best chance to secure the crooks and the stolen jewels. I stealthily felt of Carvalli's throat while inspecting it, hoping to find one of them, but it evidently had slipped down."

"What do you mean, slipped down?" Gaffney stared perplexedly.

"You don't get me, eh?" Cruger laughed grimly. "I'll tell you how I size it up. Ludwig evidently hired two crooks to aid him. Carvalli proved to be a treacherous dog. He tried to steal the spectrum pendant, breaking it from the necklace, and he put it in his mouth to hide it."

"And swallowed it?" Gaffney asked.

"Exactly," said Cruger. "Ludwig detected him or suspected it, I think, and struck him when he denied it. That may have caused the thing to lodge in Carvalli's throat. He could not dislodge it, and it must have slipped down when the convulsed muscles relaxed after his death. Ludwig knew that the pendant is worth a fortune. He wanted to get it. That's why he was bending with a knife over a dead man, and that's why I had the body brought here."

"You mean——"

"That was my one best chance to get both of the crooks and all of the jewels. I made it a point to tell him an autopsy will be held to-morrow. The rascals may attempt to recover the pendant. In that case, Martin, it must be done to-night. Ludwig knows it, and I think his game was to get it. If I am right—wait! Not a sound!"

Cruger peered through the closed blinds of a window at which he was seated. He had seen a momentary gleam of light in a dark alley back of the building. Presently it came again, only for an instant, but long enough to

reveal two crouching men stealing toward the window. The detective grasped Gaffney's arm and drew him through an open door to an adjoining room. Here they waited and listened.

They heard the blind quietly opened, the snap of the lock when the window was forced, the cautious movements of both men when they climbed over the sill and entered the room, and then the keen, incisive voice of one, subdued and threatening.

"Take your time, Morley, and don't be a cur," he said. "The job may be done in five minutes. We can easily get it. It's worth the work and risk. But there really is no danger. The cop suspected nothing, and I completely blinded the detective. Go to it at once, Morley, and——"

Then came a glare of light, a threatening command, and two men were staring helplessly at leveled pistols. One dropped in a faint on the floor—Mr. Lester Lawton Ludwig.

Detective Cruger was perfectly right. It was five o'clock when he arrived at headquarters with Patrolman Gaffney and joined Dupont and Edna Deland in his private office. Martin Gaffney's ruddy face was beaming with delight.

"It's all over," Detective Cruger told the couple, smiling and placing his hand on Edna's shoulder. "I'm sorry I had to be so severe with you, my girl, and detain both of you here so long."

"Oh, that's nothing at all," said Edna, eyes glowing. "That is, sir, if——"

"There aren't any ifs!" Cruger interjected. "I must telephone to Mrs. Beebe. We have secured the crooks and recovered her stolen jewels—all except the spectrum pendant. Leo Carvalli has that, but he'll give it up to-morrow!" he dryly predicted.

Edna did not understand the last. Besides she was busy telling Patrolman Gaffney what she thought of him.

World-famous Robberies by John Laurence

THE ROBBERY OF THE SOUTHEASTERN MAIL

RARELY in the annals of crime has there been a story which has contained so much romantic interest and revealed such persevering patience and ingenuity as the robbery of the gold bullion from the "Southeastern" mail train in 1855.

The principal characters in this very remarkable robbery were a man named Agar and a man named Pierce, and it was due to the ingenuity of one and the grasping meanness of the other that the robbery was carried out and its perpetration afterward discovered.

Before beginning the actual story of the robbery it would be well to outline briefly the task the thieves were up against. The Southeastern Railway Company carried at regular intervals valuable consignments of gold from London to Paris, and they took such precautions for protection that it would seem impossible for the bullion to have been stolen without the alarm almost immediately being raised.

First of all, the bullion was packed in boxes which were clamped and nailed down and sealed. These boxes were weighed in London and placed in safes of special design before being put on board the train to Dover. The boxes were taken out and reweighed at Boulogne and examined to see that all seals

were intact, placed back in the safes, and sent to Paris by train, where once more they were weighed and then they were opened in the presence of officials.

The safes in which the bullion was placed could only be opened by two keys, and no single manœuvre had possession of both keys, so that it required the presence of at least two men to get at the sealed boxes containing the bullion. Three sets of keys were kept by the railway company, one set in London, another at Folkestone, and the third by the captain of the steamer crossing to Boulogne; all the officials handling the keys were trusted employees.

In the face of such precautions it would have seemed a hopeless task to obtain the precious gold without immediately being caught, yet skill was met by skill in such a remarkable way that if it had not been for the betrayal of a woman by one of the criminals the robbery might have remained a mystery to this day.

The story opens with the return of Agar to England from America, where he had been exploiting his criminal abilities to such an extent that he had managed to become possessed of several thousand dollars, part of which money was to prove extremely useful in the exploit with which this story deals. On

his return he called on Pierce, whom he had known previously.

"Hello! You're the one man I wanted to see," said Pierce. "I've got a scheme for making us rich for life."

"What is it?" asked Agar.

"Robbing the Southeastern of the gold bars it carries every week to Folkestone," answered Pierce.

"Aw, you put up that scheme before I went to America," returned Agar, "and I told you then you couldn't do anything because you hadn't even the keys of the safes. Get those, and we might be able to do something."

"I can get them," came the ready reply.

Agar turned quickly, and in response to his eager question Pierce said: "I've got in touch with a man named Tester. He's in the office of the traffic superintendent at London Bridge at present, but he's been in the office at Folkestone, and he says we ought to be able to get hold of the keys there."

"It's no use getting the keys like that," replied Agar, "for as soon as they were missed the locks would be changed. Can we get into the office and take a wax impression?"

"We'll have to go down and find out that," answered Pierce. "But, seeing as much as twelve thousand pounds is carried at once, it's worth taking a little trouble over. Suppose you see Tester."

Agar quickly got acquainted with Tester, whom he found to be a young man with extravagant tastes and few scruples. He had been betting heavily, and for this reason he welcomed any scheme of putting his hand on plenty of money. At one of these meetings Tester brought news which definitely settled any of Agar's doubts about carrying out the robbery.

"One of the keys of the safes has been lost," he said. "And all the safes have been sent to the manufacturer's to have new locks fitted and keys pro-

vided. I'm in charge of the correspondence between them and the company."

"Then you'll be able to get hold of the keys?" asked Agar eagerly. "And I can get wax impressions from them."

"No, I'm afraid I can't," answered Tester. "I can only get hold of one key, the new key. It's only that lock which is going to be altered. I can't get hold of the other key, anyhow."

"Then we shall have to get it at Folkestone, where I know it's kept," put in Pierce.

"Do you know exactly where it is in the office?" asked Agar.

"No. All I know is that it is there."

"Then we shall have to find out," said the leading conspirator. "You are sure Burgess is all right?"

"Absolutely."

Burgess was the guard of the train in which the precious bullion traveled. Pierce had sounded him some time previously, for it was necessary to get his coöperation to carry out the scheme successfully.

A few days later Tester met Agar in a small public house and showed him the new key of the safe. In a few minutes Agar had made a wax impression of the key, and the first step had been taken to rob the Southeastern mail.

The next step took months. All Agar and Pierce knew was that duplicate keys of the safe were kept in the office of the railway company on the pier and Folkestone.

"We'll go down for a little seaside bathing," Agar said laughingly. "Also we'll get to know what we can."

They told the landlady of the boarding house where they stayed that they had come down specially for the sea bathing, but nearly all their time was spent on the pier watching the trains come in and learning the ways of the officials. They hoped to see some of the bullion safes opened so that they could find out where the keys were kept, but, though they kept the closest

watch, they did not learn this. What they did discover, however, was that the office was in charge of two clerks named Ledger and Chapman, and that both often left the office unattended for a short while when a train came in, in order to receive any consignment of bullion and to see it transferred to the waiting steamer or to the steamship's officials.

"If we knew exactly where those keys were we could get them and take an impression of them before they came back—if we're quick," said Agar.

"Yes, but how are we going to find out?"

It was then that Agar showed what a clever criminal he really was.

"I'm going to send down some bullion myself," he said, "and see it taken out of the safe. Then I shall see where the keys are kept."

Accordingly, a short while afterward, the railway company received a box of gold bullion, valued at two hundred pounds, addressed to "C. E. Archer, care of Mr. Ledger or Mr. Chapman," at Folkestone, and he himself hurried down there to receive it in the name of Archer.

Just as Agar expected, the box containing the gold he had specially bought in order to obtain the information he wanted, had been placed in one of the special safes used by the railway company for that purpose, and when he called he saw the safe opened by Chapman, the clerk on duty. Agar's keen eyes let nothing slip. He noticed that the key he was after was hung up in a closet in the office, from which it was taken and replaced by Chapman. Agar, under the name of Archer, duly received the box addressed to him, signed the receipt for it, and hurried back to London.

"The stuff's as good as ours," he said when he saw Pierce. "With the slightest bit of luck I ought to be able to get my hands on that key for half a minute,

and that's long enough for what I want."

The two hurried down to the coast again, and in order to put any possible investigators in the future off the track they took rooms at a hotel in Dover and walked across the downs to Folkestone in time for the boat train. As luck would have it the train on its next trip contained an unusual number of passengers, with of course a corresponding array of baggage and valuables, so that Chapman and Ledger, the two men in charge of the office where the precious keys were kept, were soon very busy looking after the transfer of the valuables.

Agar and Pierce had iron nerves. Hardly had the two clerks gone on the platform than Pierce walked boldly in while Agar stood by the door. In a moment the key was in their possession, the wax impression was secured, the key returned to its customary place, and the two had strolled off the platform. From first to last the bold move, though it had actually taken months to plan, occupied hardly two minutes, and the two were now virtually in possession of both keys of the precious safe.

It took Agar some weeks to make the keys to fit the wax impression he had made.

"I shall have to travel down with Burgess," he said to Pierce, the keys made. "I shall want to test the keys, because it's unlikely they'll fit exactly straight away, and if we force the locks at all the game will be up at once."

Now that Agar was so near to success, now that he had surmounted the greatest difficulty of all—the obtaining of copies of the keys of the bullion safes—he did not intend to risk failure by a careless or hurried move. Not once, but eight times in all he traveled down to Folkestone by the train in which Burgess was guard. Each of those times bullion was carried in varying quantities, and each time Agar improved the

working of the keys. At first he had the greatest difficulty in opening the safes, but each time made it easier as he filed the keys bit by bit, till finally they opened the safes as well as if they had been made by the safes' manufacturers themselves.

The conspirators decided that the greatest amount of gold they could steal was twelve thousand pounds' worth, on account of its great weight. This amount, they calculated, weighed about two hundredweight, and naturally Burgess, the guard, could not assist in removing any of it. Decision was reached that the bulk of it should be carried by Agar and Pierce, and a small part by Tester, who would specially meet the train at one of its stopping places between London and Folkestone and pick up his precious burden.

Very carefully did the four conspirators lay their plans. In order that any difference in weight might not be noticed at Folkestone Agar and Pierce bought two hundredweight of shot, which they made up into small eight and four pound bags. These bags were carried in special carpetbags which had been strengthened for the purpose. It wasn't every day that such a large amount of bullion was sent to the Continent, so that the four had to wait their opportunity. Burgess, the guard, knew the value of the gold which he had charge of on its train journey, but he did not know it till a short while before the train started.

"We'll drive up to the station every evening with the shot," said Agar in preparation of final details, "and when there's more than twelve thousand pounds going you can give us the signal by wiping your face with your handkerchief. That can't raise any suspicions."

"How will you travel down?" asked the guard.

"Pierce will travel as a first-class passenger to Dover," said Agar. "And

we'll label his baggage for him," he added. "I shall travel in the baggage car with you. It'll be easy to slip in with the crowd about, and to hide behind the piles of stuff. Tester will catch the local train to Redhill and be there before the mail train is due. The local goes out some minutes before, and he will know as soon as Burgess the amount that's being carried."

Four or five nights the precious pair drove up with their burden of shot to the London terminus, and each time they were disappointed. Then came one night when Agar saw the guard pull out his big red handkerchief and mop his face, as though his exertions in helping with the baggage had made him hot.

"Quick," he said to Pierce. "Get two first-class tickets to Dover."

Pierce boarded the train after seeing his heavy baggage duly labeled to Dover and placed in Burgess' car, and settled down in a first-class carriage with all the appearance of a gentleman of leisure who was taking a trip to the Continent. He calmly pulled out a copy of a newspaper and read as though he had no cares in the world.

As Agar had said, he had no difficulty in slipping into the baggage car unobserved, and the moment the train started out of the station he had set to work.

"We've got just over half an hour before the first stop at Redhill," said the guard.

"That will be a little time," replied Agar. It was but a moment to unlock the safes, and the boxes of bullion were soon on the floor of the car. Agar had brought a mallet and chisel with him, as well as a seal and sealing wax. He was an expert thief, and it took him very little time to pry open the boxes and expose the bars of gold. One bar he slipped into a small bag.

"That's for Tester at Redhill," he said. "It will be all he can carry loose."

He wasted little further time talking, for he was transferring the gold bars to the cartridgese and replacing them with lead shot. Before Redhill was reached he had removed not only the gold from the two boxes, but a number of American gold coins which were being carried. The boxes were all freshly sealed, the safes locked, and to all appearances the precious bullion was secure as it had been in London.

At Redhill Tester was handed his bar of gold, while at Dover Pierce and Agar got out and caught a later train back to London with their booty.

So cleverly was the robbery carried out that at Folkestone the safes were taken out of the train in the ordinary way without anything unusual being noticed, and placed on the boat for Boulogne. There they were carefully weighed as usual, and the weight found to differ slightly from that at London. At Paris they were weighed again, and the weights found to agree with those of Boulogne. The value of the weighings was this, that when the safes were opened and it was found that the precious bullion had been replaced by lead shot, it was known at once that the robbery must have been committed somewhere between London and Boulogne, and this naturally narrowed down the field of investigation to a great degree.

The closest investigation, however, failed to bring to light the authors of the crime. Curiously enough neither Tester nor Burgess was suspected. Tester, in fact, some months later resigned his post and took up one in Sweden, and he was given first-class testimonials by the Southeastern Company on leaving. Burgess had been with the company many years and was so completely trusted that he was allowed to continue as guard of the train on which the bullion was carried.

The public had almost forgotten all about the robbery when, nearly nine months later, they were astounded to

hear that the perpetrators of it had been captured.

It transpired that the whole story of the robbery had been told by the chief man concerned in it, Agar, and his motive was one of revenge.

Some years before the robbery Agar had fallen in love with a very handsome woman named Fanny Kay. Despite his criminal nature, he was really very much in love with her; so much so, indeed, that a greater part of the proceeds of his robberies he invested on her behalf. At the time he had planned the Southeastern robbery he had invested no less than three thousand pounds in consols for her.

It might have been thought that after the daring robbery of the Southeastern mail Agar would have steered clear of crime for a considerable period, but, unfortunately for him, in selling some of the gold bars he got in touch with James Seward, one of the greatest criminals who ever lived; it was he who became famous for all time as "Jim the Penman." Seward bought twenty-five hundred pounds' worth of the stolen gold, and through him Agar was arrested and tried for forging a check for seven hundred pounds. It might be added here that, though Agar was found guilty of this crime, he was probably innocent, for he was not a check forger but a bank and safe robber.

As soon as he was arrested he sent for his solicitor.

"I have just sold out three thousand pounds in consols," he said, "which I was going to reinvest to better advantage for the benefit of Fanny Kay. I want you to hand the money over to a friend of mine named Pierce and ask him to invest it and look after Fanny if I am found guilty."

Of course, at the time, the solicitor or any one else had not the slightest suspicion that Agar had anything to do with the famous bullion robbery on the Southeastern. Criminal of the worst

type though he was, there were two redeeming features to his credit; one his love and the provision he made for Fanny Kay, and the other that he did not betray his comrades. If Pierce had not shown himself a traitor the truth would not have come out.

When Agar was convicted Fanny Kay had a last interview with him in prison.

"I've given Pierce plenty of money for you, my dear," he told her, "enough to keep you all the rest of your life, so you will have no need to worry."

But when Fanny went and saw Pierce he laughed at her.

"I don't know what he means," he told her bold-facedly. "He only gave me a hundred pounds for you, and when that's done I've got no more."

"But he told me that he had given you enough to keep me the rest of my life," protested the unhappy girl.

"He was only telling you that to soothe you," replied Pierce, who had determined to stick to all the money Agar had given to him.

The unhappy woman became so poverty-stricken that she was hardly able to provide necessary food, Pierce even refusing to allow her a paltry pound a week which she asked him to do till she could get employment. She felt certain that Pierce had had a large sum of money from Agar, and, though she did not know the two were concerned in the bullion robbery, she was perfectly well aware that both were criminals. Formerly a waitress in a refreshment buffet on the Southeastern, she had made every possible effort to induce Agar to lead a straight life, and had, indeed, more than once left him in her efforts to make him give up Pierce and crime.

When she realized that, not only was Pierce escaping scot-free, but her sweetheart was in prison, she managed to obtain another interview with Agar and told him she was starving.

Agar was furious, and without any hesitation he determined to betray Pierce and make him suffer for his treachery. He instructed Fanny Kay to go to the solicitor of the Southeastern Company and tell him that he was willing to tell how the robbery was carried out.

The solicitor, Mr. Rees, wasted no time before he interviewed Agar, and soon he was in possession of the facts of the robbery which had for nearly a year baffled the best brains at Scotland Yard.

Pierce was living at a place called Kilburn Villa, in the greatest luxury. He had furnished the house regardless of cost, and was posing as a gentleman of independent means. While he was drinking champagne he had refused to allow Fanny Kay even the wherewithal to buy herself a cup of tea. Burgess was arrested at his home, and Tester, when he heard that his companions had been caught, voluntarily came over from Sweden and surrendered.

At the trial the counsel defending Pierce described Agar as a devil incarnate and his own client as a poor, ill-used gentleman of such a tender heart that he had easily fallen into the demoniacal clutches of the master criminal. But Baron Martin, who presided at the trial, gave his opinion of Pierce, an opinion with which everybody agreed.

"I declare," he said, "that if I stood in that dock to receive sentence I should feel more degraded to be in your place than in that of both your associates. You had long been connected with this man Agar. He trusted you, and he gave you money to invest for the benefit of a woman he had real affection for. This you stole and appropriated to your own use. It's a worse offense than the act of, which you have been found guilty. I would have rather been concerned in stealing the gold than in the robbery of that wretched woman. A

greater villain than you are does not exist. I greatly regret that I have not in my power to inflict a heavier punishment on you, but the heaviest sentence which the law allows for your offense I will pass upon you."

Pierce was the real villain of the piece, though Agar was the organizer, and he thoroughly deserved all he got.

"I should never have spoken," Agar declared, "if that scoundrel had not tried to cheat poor Fanny."



WOMEN AS DRUG SMUGGLERS

SOME of the cleverest smugglers in the game to-day are women. This is the opinion of numerous members of the government's narcotic squad. Certainly women have used very ingenious means to carry "dope" over the boundaries of the United States.

One, an innocent-looking girl who had the appearance of being not more than twenty years old, fooled detectives for almost a year. She plied her trade on palatial steamers running between the Orient and San Francisco. To her confederates was assigned the comparatively easy task of getting the drugs aboard the ship. Her work was to get it safely past the customs inspectors and government detectives at San Francisco. To do this she made herself a petticoat of serviceable material and put in a row of narrow pockets all the way around it. Almost three thousand dollars' worth of drugs could be secreted in these pockets.

Her detection was brought about by a watchful operator. With another detective this man was aboard the vessel. He had been discussing women's clothes and had remarked that petticoats had gone out of style completely and consequently were not being worn by women.

The other sleuth disagreed with him. "You don't know what you are talking about," this man averred. "That girl coming down the deck is sporting an old-fashioned white petticoat."

Naturally the first detective was surprised and interested, but not until the woman was about to leave the ship at San Francisco did he discover the secret use of the garment. The girl was crowded against the side of the gangplank, and one of the glass containers she was carrying was broken. The detective happened to be standing near by and heard the noise of the splintering glass. His suspicions aroused, he arrested the girl and searched her. She is serving three years now.

An official at El Paso, Texas, noticed a little girl wearing elaborate, ribbed, round garters. He observed that the child and her mother made daily trips across the international bridge into Mexico. A few days' shadowing convinced the authorities that mother and daughter were smuggling opium into El Paso, concealing the drug among the ribbons on the child's garters. They were caught.

In order to fool police officers in Kansas City a woman who was peddling dope secreted the drugs in combs she wore in her hair. She would appear wearing a large comb ornamented with imitation diamonds. Down the main business street of Kansas City she would go to a large department store. There she would enter the rest room for women and would rearrange her hair. She would place her comb on a table near her. Then her customer, wearing a similar comb, would enter, put her comb on the table, and take the other in its stead. Back of each stone in the peddler's comb was a hollow space filled with opium.

These are a few of the dodges used by women dealing illicitly in narcotics.

Unseen Assistance

by Alan Macdonald

Author of "Heart of Stone," etc.

TAKING his spectacles from his nose with a tremulous, uncertain hand old McGregor laid them beside the slip of white paper he had unfolded and spread before him on his tall desk. The act was symbolical. For more than forty years the old man had been an employee of the firm of Whitehouse & Wright, whose perfumes are known wherever civilization has taken its beautiful women, and now he was through. They were "laying him off" for good and all, and it was like death to him, a kind of death that Kipling somewhere wrote about wherein "some of him lived, but the most of him died."

He had received the note that morning. It was typewritten on the formal embossed stationery of the firm and signed with the florid, old-fashioned signature of the senior member, James Leeds Whitehouse, a man scarcely older than McGregor. For some time the old employee had known it was coming. Fellow workers had begun to speak frequently of his forty years of service, of the honored time of his retirement. Whispers had risen about him; he had refused openly to heed them; but in his heart he knew.

Oh, they would do it well, the firm; he knew that, too. The note told him as much. It requested him to report at the office at 9:30 o'clock. It was couched in simple, respectful terms, old McGregor admitted, but he thought it

heralded an infantile proceeding, the fatuous foible of younger men. He could see himself now, standing as he would before the broad, glass-topped desk of the senior member, listening to the formal meed of praise, his fellow employees standing about and crowding in the open doors, a girl stenographer snickering as usual, a sentimental clerk or two coughing to hide emotion.

The new office manager would be there, probably at the right hand of Mr. Whitehouse, cold, urbane, sharp and keen of eye. McGregor had never liked Mr. Neal, the new man. Somehow, he seemed to be of a different business age. Successful, it was true, but unscrupulous, a believer in efficiency rather than esprit de corps and soul.

"Oh, they'll pension me, all right," McGregor muttered testily. "They pensioned old Weenan; thought they were doing the kindly, generous thing. Yes, yes, they mean well."

The old man's voice trailed into silence. His fingers, still active, but now habitually bent, tapped on the ledger on the desk before him and his somewhat rheumy eyes gazed down the long, narrow, old office over its compartments and dusty cubby-holes, to the sunlit street window out front. A kind of fright lighted his eyes, until it glowed behind the dullness of their age as feeble flame does through a dusty glass.

"Old Weenan died," he whispered

with fluttering lips. "Old Weenan died. I know they said it was his heart, but it wasn't, it wasn't. It was inactivity, uselessness; a man dies when his work is done. They killed him. They killed him. They're killing me. They——"

He caught himself and looked cautiously around. His voice had risen to a loud, trembling treble with the crescendo of his emotion. He glanced at such of his fellow workers as were within his range of vision, afraid, they had heard. His old heart calmed; they had not heard, he thought they were bending sedulously to work. He was glad of that; he did not intend to cry for mercy, or beg to remain where he was no longer wanted. Not McGregor, who had his share of pride; no, sir.

But there were things his aging eyes did not see. The clerks had heard. Even now they were watching from the corners of their eyes. "See," they whispered. "He is talking to himself. Yes, it's time. The poor old man."

Old McGregor's mind set busily to work again. It was this morning like an active animal in a trap. With the note before him he was like a man who waits execution. He glanced at the clock; it was ten minutes after nine. Twenty minutes! It was as if he had but twenty more minutes of life. Already he could feel the chill of inactive days closing down about him; he would never be content to sit in the sun and rest. He couldn't; he knew it would kill him, as it did Weenan. He was sure of it.

Gradually his immediate environment forced itself upon his attention. His eyes softened in expression. He looked about the office, now filled with the bustle of the morning's business. It thrilled him, as it always had. All this was, it would be, his monument. Why, he thought surprisedly, it was forty-one years ago this morning that he entered the employ of Whitehouse & Wright. Forty-one years!

He began to scratch with his bent forefinger the incrustated ink on the old desk. Forty-one years! The ink stain about the inset well was nearly a quarter inch thick, where he had dropped it little by little, day after day, layer on layer. Forty-one years! to this: To be told to go home like a little boy. Sudden weakness assailed him; he would have bent his head upon his arm, but there was a step behind him, a light, vigorous step. Resentment surged through him; youth had come to take his place. He straightened with dignity, almost with hauteur. He would show these young bloods how a McGregor passes from the stage. He would show them, even though ahead of him threatened storm and darkness.

But it was only a girl, scarcely seventeen years old, from the private office of James Leeds Whitehouse, and in her fine, sympathetic young eyes was a shy, deep respect.

"Could you come to Mr. Whitehouse's office now, Mr. McGregor?" she asked softly. "He would like—he is waiting for you. He sent me to ask if you would please come in."

McGregor moved excitedly. He glanced again at the clock. It was ninety-fourty. "Tut, tut," he sputtered. "Tut, tut. Certainly, certainly." He hustled about, closed his ledger. His emotion, his problem, his trouble, relegated itself into momentary oblivion, as it had done for more than forty years whenever the interest of Whitehouse & Wright was in hand. He must hurry. He had kept the head of the firm waiting ten minutes! He himself had discharged men for less. And on this, his last day at business! McGregor hastened after the girl.

II.

Days passed. Old McGregor, pensioner, pottered about the house of his son-in-law where he lived since Martha, his wife, died more than fifteen years

ago. The flame continued to glow behind the dusty panes of his aged eyes, and he talked very little. Alice, his daughter, a plump, matronly little woman, was concerned about him. She watched him carefully. She shared his grieving. McGregor had told her old Weenan's story.

Alice remembered, as she regarded him, the subtle note of triumph that was in his voice when he related it; recalled how he had given her to understand that while he was a year older than Weenan, he was made of sterner stuff; that he would die, when the time came, in harness. She thought time and again of the incident. How McGregor had flexed the withering muscles of his thin arm and danced the remnant of a jig to prove his perennial youth.

Old McGregor was continually restless. Alice felt that he smoked too much. Times were when she noticed his old face was yellow with nausea from the effects of numerous cigars, but he had always smoked cigars, and she did not have the heart to protest. For years the old man had balanced rigorously the program of his life that he might serve the more worthily Whitehouse & Wright. He had worked so much, slept so much, eaten so much, smoked so much, day after day. Now the balance suddenly had been destroyed; excess in some direction was inevitable. If he had worked less hard, given less of his life to his job, she thought ruefully, the change might now be less hard to bear.

Alice hoped he would strike a balance with the new conditions, though she knew it would take time. She helped him when she could; she put little tasks in his way; she arranged for him to see entertainments, to learn games. One day she urged him to go to the circus which came to town. But he turned on her with an irritability she had never seen in him.

"Am I a child?" he exclaimed

harshly. "Must I play like a child? I am a man. They do not think so, the kind, generous, efficiency experts. Ah, they have used me. They have used me. But they cannot make me a child. Indeed, they can't. Not McGregor."

Alice could see that he brooded. She spoke to her husband, a young, rising broker, and he thought about the old man's problem for days. Finally he went to old McGregor.

"Dad," he offered, "we've a place for you down at the office, if you'd care to take it. It would help us. I'd be mighty glad to have you."

"A place," cut in McGregor, "what kind of a place? Running an elevator, I suppose; or, maybe, being janitor, or distributing handbills. Boy, don't bring it up again."

Marsh, his son-in-law, flushed and turned away. The tragedy of the thing hurt him, opened his eyes. He had, in fact, consulted with his office manager and arranged that a job be created for "the old man—something to keep him occupied."

"Do you know that Whitehouse & Wright are paying me my full salary every week?" the old man pursued, as if impelled by some force of brooding thought piled up in his mind. "Do you know they made a ceremony of my going? What do you think these things mean? I'm a symbol for them. There was rumbling of discontent among their employees. I had heard it; we all had. Those fellows, incapable of loyalty to a great firm, they were making a noise. I know Whitehouse was scared; he's not the man he was. What did he do? He called in an expert. An expert, mind you!"

Old McGregor's voice was strident. His son-in-law tried to soothe him.

"There, there, dad," he interrupted when he could, "don't take it so hard. I'll give you—I'll arrange real work for you. I'll do it to-day."

"Not for McGregor, Marsh," the old

man argued. "I'm not asking for alms. You forget it."

Old McGregor let himself tremulously down in his chair on the porch where they were talking. His breathing had become labored with effort and emotion.

"Mr. Neal, the expert," he raged on. "He laid me aside. He did it with the blare of trumpets and the clash of cymbals; and Whitehouse was his mouth-piece. They told me of my great service to the firm, of my well-earned reward. They did it in the face of all those workers, discontented and otherwise. They showed them all what fair treatment they might expect. I was a living example. But that wasn't all; my going made promotions possible all along the line. I saw it coming. I knew it. It was bitter, bitter——"

Old McGregor's voice died away. He sank back in his chair. His body relaxed, except for his right hand, which remained so clenched that the knuckles showed white in the sallow skin. The son-in-law was impressed with the fire that burned in the dull old eyes. Frightened, he reached his hand to old McGregor's taut fist. The thought of paralysis was in his mind. But McGregor snatched his arm away and thrust his hand into his pocket, and into his eyes crept a secretive suspicious glint.

"There's bitter days ahead for Whitehouse & Wright, you mark me," McGregor intoned slowly. "Bitter days. Years gone, that man Neal was with the Cartmell Corporation, and all of the other companies will combine against Whitehouse & Wright one of these days, sure as you're standing there. You mark me."

Marsh could think of nothing adequate to say. His sympathies were all with old McGregor, who was as fine and as true as his daughter, but the look in the old man's eyes and the clenched fist disturbed him. Young,

practical, Marsh believed the old man's explanation for his being retired was a fiction that grew out of too much brooding. To him it appeared simply that age had rendered old McGregor unfit for service.

"It's clear enough to me," he told Alice, "but, of course, you could hardly expect him to see it. That's one of the tragedies of age."

He shook his young head. "I'm afraid, Alice, I'm afraid he's meditating some sort of vengeance. He had something in his hand that he kept hidden from me. You must watch him. If he did anything rash, like shooting, it would be difficult for all of us, and it wouldn't help him. I'd do anything for him, but there's nothing to be done."

From that day on old McGregor drew more and more away from them. Alice's heart ached to see the pain of his thoughts grow in his face; it seemed as though they piled one upon the other until he stumbled along under a vast weight. She heard him whispering sometimes to himself, as if planning, considering some course of action.

"The time will come," she heard him repeat softly, time and again. Once, in the early morning, when McGregor was sitting on the porch, she saw the sun's rays reflected on the ceiling above his head from something that lay in the outstretched palm of his right hand. She managed to look over his shoulder; an ordinary new key lay in his hand. Her heart went out to him for he sat there staring at it as one might regard a treasure in pawn. She recognized it as a duplicate of the key to the offices of Whitehouse & Wright which he had surrendered the day he was pensioned.

III.

On the day the morning newspapers carried the first stories of the long action in law brought by Whitehouse & Wright, "preëminent perfumers," as

their advertising man called them, against the Cartmell Corporation, late in 1912, old McGregor sat for hours on the porch of his daughter's house. His old eyes were two mysteries with brooding thought. On his knee rested his right hand, now always coiled into a fist. From time to time he beat softly with it on the arm of his chair.

The case of Whitehouse & Wright versus the Cartmell Corporation caused a sensation in business circles wherever perfumes are sold. The complainant company sued for an injunction restraining the defendants from further manufacture and sale of a certain perfume which they alleged to be the exact reproduction of Whitehouse & Wright's famous "Pamela." The charge was made that the Cartmell Corporation had obtained possession of the secret formula for Pamela perfume through fraud, and it asked that the court grant it thousands of dollars damages for inroads upon its business by the defendant corporation. It alleged that after it had spent a fortune establishing Pamela through national advertising, the Cartmell Corporation had no right to its use.

The whole perfumery trade knew that Whitehouse & Wright, while they made and sold many grades and kinds of perfumes, built their trade and reputation on three delicate perfumes, the formulas for which were discovered by Augustus Whitehouse many years before. Other firms had striven to imitate these products but never had succeeded and, as a consequence, never were able to threaten seriously the trade of the old company. Proposals for the creation of a combine and the consolidation of Whitehouse & Wright, Cartmell Corporation, and several other firms, had been made, but the Whitehouse people had refused to be a party to them.

Old McGregor knew all these facts; he had at times been called into conference with members of the firm of

Whitehouse & Wright when problems relating to them had been discussed. He remembered with bitterness those days, days when he had been an important cog in the great machine to which he had given the best days and efforts of his life—his monument. He pounded softly on the chair arms; the great machine was being attacked, and he was sitting on the sidelines.

Testily he got out of his chair and stamped back and forth on the porch. He knew all that the fraudulent use of the Pamela formula meant; he realized that it was but the first step in a deliberate campaign to break down the reputation, the resources, the morale of a splendid business organization that for many years had stood cleanly above its competitors, that had refused to run with the pack. He swung his arms.

"Fraudulent use of formula," he muttered.

It was clear to him that in some way the rival companies, combining with the Cartmell Corporation, had gained access to the innermost secrets of the house of Whitehouse & Wright. No one knew better than old McGregor how well the three secret formulas had been guarded, how Wright alone had charge of the final assembly of ingredients, how the formulas were kept in a special safe in the main offices. He had handled the big blue envelopes in which they were sealed.

Throughout the day old McGregor worried and roamed about. Alice, who read the report of the beginning of the company's suit, watched her father with wide eyes. In whispered tones at noon she discussed the case with her husband, who regarded McGregor with disturbed, baffled eyes. He recalled the bitterness with which the old man had denounced the company for its treatment of him. He could not help but wonder whether old McGregor had some hand in the transference of the secret formula. A fine ending, he

thought gloomily, for forty years of honest, faithful service. But he said nothing, for Alice's sake.

Along toward nine o'clock old McGregor arose from the chair in which he had been brooding moodily, squared his stooping shoulders, and went into the hall. There he put on his coat and hat. Alice ran out to him to ask where he was going. The old man took the girl in his arms, kissed her, then held her at arm's length. She, too, noted the strange light in his eyes, like flame burning behind a dusty glass. She was frightened, tears came in her eyes; there was, somewhere, the hint of tragedy about him. McGregor reassured her and told her he was going down to the corner to get a few cigars. It occurred to her that she had not seen him smoke that day, and she believed him.

Rain was falling, but McGregor did not seem to mind. He went down the street with hastening steps as if at last barriers for him had been shifted aside. In a few minutes he stood in the shadows in an alley near the old brick building occupied by Whitehouse & Wright, in the rain, and waited for the policeman going his rounds to try the door and pass on. Then, old McGregor, keeping in the shadows like a thief, stole up to the door that he often had entered proudly erect. He opened it readily with the duplicate key he had been treasuring in his right fist, stepped inside, and closed it.

For an hour the old man prowled about the dim office like an exile permitted after long years of loneliness to return to his home. His ancient blood coursing warmly through him, a smile on his lips, he went, like one entering a storied church, into the little compartment which for years had been his own. He flicked on a little desk light, then with eager fingers he opened the old ledger and ran his glance up and down the columns of figures. Under impulse of former habit he even reached

down the dusty eyeshade that hung above the desk and put it on. He picked up a penholder and sat there with it poised above the ledger.

By and by he took down the special ledger in which accounts for the three secret formula perfumes were recorded always. He drew in his breath and held it for long seconds as he read down the columns: Pamela had fallen seventy-five per cent in sales. He shook his head; the rival firms were underselling Whitehouse & Wright with their own product. It meant only one thing, as he had thought. The competitors had set their entire energy to crush the originators of Pamela.

A feeling of terrible impotence swept over the old man. No doubt Whitehouse & Wright knew all that he knew, and more! And they had set him aside; he was too old. Their action, for him, was tinged with irony. They had taken it almost at the time of their direst need.

Yet, as he sat there in the dimness, there lived again in the offices the business that for forty years had been transacted under his eyes. The men he had seen come into those offices, contribute all they had of intelligence and heart and then pass on into other fields or other worlds, began to people the shadows. They sat at their old desks, occupied their old chairs. He saw their faces in the dark; he remembered their stories, their accomplishments, their hopes, their fears, their failures. Scene after scene that stood out in his memory passed before his eyes. It was like a play in which he had his part for forty years.

He lived again the thrill of success that came to the whole personnel of Whitehouse & Wright when, under the stimulus and direction of Milfred West, one of the greatest men the business ever knew, they sold fifty-five per cent of all the perfumes wholesaled in the United States for two years.

Again he stood in the office with the little group of quiet men who idled sadly there the night the elder and greatest Whitehouse of the firm passed away. He felt once more, as if all the years between had been swept away, the terrible tug at his heart that came when word was brought that night that the stern old man had gone. He fought through once more the months of uncertainty that followed, when no one knew whether the firm would, or would not, share the fate of its master. He had again the thrill of the fight that was his in the succeeding years wherein little by little Whitehouse & Wright won upward to the place of prestige it appeared now about to lose.

He forgot the present Whitehouse, and the sting left in his mind by the ceremony, the pompous, prattling ceremony, they held that last day of his business life. He forgot the expert who had molded the office reformation that put him out. The very walls of the old office, the chairs and the soiled files, seemed to live and breathe as part of him. The whole establishment took on for him an entity, a soul that was bigger than any man or policy. His love for it rose within him. He felt tears streaming down his cheeks; he was like a captain whose ship, on which he had sailed and lived and loved through many voyages, was sinking into the sea.

In this ecstasy the old man slid from the high stool he had occupied so long and so well. He stood there in the center of the room where he had spent the major share of his days, his hands down by his sides, his face upraised, and tears streaming from his patriarchal eyes.

IV.

Old McGregor heard a key turn in a lock. Quickly he turned off the desk lamp. For a moment he stood starkly still. He saw the front door, the door through which he had entered a little

while ago, opened silently. A man entered stealthily, looking over his shoulder as if to assure himself that no one saw him. His feet made no sound.

Trembling seized McGregor. The man who entered was slim, short and muscular. His coat collar was turned up, the brim of his hat down. Water dripped from him. Old McGregor for the first time heard the wind and thunder that had been storming in the night for some time. Rain-laden gusts beat against the door as the newcomer pushed it shut. Shaking the rain from his apparel, the man turned from the entrance. He pulled his soggy hat from his head and beat it quietly against his knees. Old McGregor sank down suddenly and silently behind the desk of his little compartment. The man, he saw by the night light in the corridor, was Neal, the cold-eyed expert, hired by Whitehouse when "those fellows incapable of loyalty to a great firm were making a noise."

Almost fiercely old McGregor threw out of his mind the hope he had entertained that the intruder was a member of the firm. He had allowed himself the fleeting thought that on finding him, they might, somehow, have made possible his return to duty. His old hands clung to his ancient desk. But the expert! Old McGregor expected no mercy from him. Ten to one, the efficiency man would accuse him of having entered the offices to find secrets for the Cartmell Corporation. The old man's pride flared again. No, his allegiance was to the house of Whitehouse & Wright, to all those men who had gone before, whose lives and labors he remembered, to their monument. These moderns had put him out; he would not come back. Yet he knew that he would give his arms to help the old company. If he could do that, he thought hopelessly, he would gladly consider that his work was done.

In bitterness now he settled down to wait until this "new man" had completed his errand and departed. It would never do to have him discover the old henchman in the haunts from which he had been turned away. He listened to the howl of the storm outside, the gusts of wind that swept sheets of rain down on the skylight above his head. He felt very old, very useless and impotent. The consciousness that he had entered a place wherein he had no legal right to be, that he was forced to hide and skulk, smoldered and burned within.

McGregor heard the expert walk quietly down the narrow corridor between the office compartments; saw him pass the door of the compartment in which he crouched beside the desk. When he had passed, McGregor got himself up and stole to the doorway. Cautiously he peeped into the corridor; he saw the expert enter the main offices at the end of it.

Directly opposite the corridor, in the far wall of the main office, was the great safe where the formulas, on which the fame of the house of Whitehouse & Wright rested, were kept. Three men in all the firm were intrusted with the combination of the strong-box. They were Whitehouse, Wright, and Royland, secretary to Whitehouse for the last twenty-five years. Monthly was the combination changed, and the three men memorized it each time and then destroyed all material record. Old McGregor well knew this rule; it was like a ritual in the firm. Three of the greatest moments of his life were times when, during illness of Royland, he had been intrusted with this secret of the business.

The "new man" went directly to the safe. McGregor was dumfounded. The expert produced a pocket flash; its white circle illuminated the lock. It occurred to McGregor that the man might have been taken into the firm,

but he could not believe it. He knew Whitehouse & Wright too well. Then the old man's heart sank; he saw that the expert's fingers were uncertain, faltering. Again and again he turned the combination knob carefully. Again and again he shifted his weight and swore softly. At last, a whisper of relief escaped his lips. The door of the safe swung open, and the expert bent to thrust in his hand.

McGregor stole down the corridor. Youth coursed through his aged veins. Here, then, was the man who stole the secret of Pamela. The new man! McGregor seemed of a sudden to lead an army. He sensed the fluttering of its banners. At his back, it appeared to him, thronged all those men he had known in the firm of Whitehouse & Wright in forty years. They urged and crowded him in the dark, narrow corridor. Their whispers were in his ears. One of them kept saying: "For the honor of Whitehouse;" old McGregor heard it above the thunder and the rain.

He saw the expert shuffle a sheaf of envelopes in his hands; saw him select the pale-blue ones in which the three secrets were sealed. The expert hesitated, picked out one of the pale blue envelopes, sorted the second one back with the sheaf and reached to drop it into its place in the safe.

"The devils," muttered old McGregor. "They're taking them one at a time. Three court actions, three selling campaigns instead of one. Money, money, money."

From somewhere the pibroch sounded in McGregor's ears. He knew the office like a book; he knew that a wall telephone was situated at the end of the corridor. He could reach it. He straightened and silently jerked down the receiver. He heard a voice.

"Police," he shouted. "Whitehouse & Wright, Main street."

He turned with the light of battle in his eyes, his phantom army of the past at his heels. He leaped forward. The little man at the safe turned, startled white. His right hand fumbled to reach his hip pocket, but surprise hampered him, and McGregor was upon him. The two crashed to the floor. With all the strength of his body, with all the power of his unseen army, McGregor caught the expert's left arm in a wrestling lock he had not used since boyhood. He was strong as iron; his host of men of the past swarmed silently about him. He snapped the expert's arm at the elbow. The blue envelope fluttered from the expert's nerveless hand. Above the thunder, a fierce cry of pain echoed through the office.

McGregor pounced on the envelope. Suddenly suffocating, vision blurred, his strength seeming to ebb away, the old man threw the envelope into the safe, swung the door to, and twirled the lock. He turned just as the expert, scrambling to his knees, his face distorted with pain and rage, leveled the automatic he had pulled at last from his hip pocket.

Old McGregor smiled. His army was fading away; he could see it some-

where far in the distance, a glad, triumphant army, saluting him with upraised arms.

He saw the expert's lips twist with words, but he did not hear them. There was thunderous buzzing in his ears. He saw the red flame-tongue of the weapon leap out at him. He had the feeling that some one had struck him a terrible blow somewhere in the region of the heart. He slid down before the safe of Whitehouse & Wright, his head resting against it. In his heart he was glad; his work was done.

"Can't open it in time," he muttered. "They'll be here in a minute. I rang for 'em."

With his failing eyes McGregor could see down the corridor to the entrance door. Vague forms moved before it. His glazing eyes watched them in the gathering mists. Thunder rolled in his ears; lightning crashed. McGregor never knew it, but the crash came when the police shattered the glass in the office front door.

The bluecoats caught the expert trying madly with his broken arm to escape from a high office window. They found McGregor with signs of a smile about his tired eyes—dead.

EXPERT FORGERS OPERATING ABROAD

FRENCH police are on the trail of a band of international crooks who have passed at least a million francs in worthless checks on Paris merchants by representing themselves as American buyers registered at leading hotels in that city. The band is believed to have operated in London, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, and New York, and to have forged signatures so perfectly that even bankers were deceived, not discovering the forgeries for weeks after the checks were paid, thus enabling the crooks to escape to other fields.

Jewelry merchants especially have been victims of the swindlers, who ordered valuable necklaces and rings, which they readily resold after having them sent to a hotel, where a check would be given in payment to the messenger delivering them. Then, while the messenger was returning to the seller of the jewelry with the check, the crook would pay his hotel bill and would depart with the jewels on the first train for the headquarters of his band.

It is the belief of the French police that Americans are implicated in the swindles. They base their charge on two incidents in which the only clue obtained was in packets of mint-flavored chewing gum, which, the police say, a majority of Europeans do not use.

Mysterious Hidden Hall

by C.N. and A.M. Williamson

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

A STRANGE old house, dating back to colonial times, is lent by its owner, Rawdon Wells, to Kennedy Haste and his bride, Evelyn, for their honeymoon. After dinner on the day of the arrival of the couple, the young wife goes into the music room to play for her husband and, a few moments later, is found to have disappeared. As there is a legend about a disappearing bride connected with the old house, Haste is alarmed and, instituting a search, discovers a secret stairway leading to the private laboratory of the owner of the house. Following this stairway, he comes upon Rawdon Wells himself, although the latter had announced his intention of sailing for England and was supposed to be aboard his ship at that time. Haste's adopted sister, Pandora, arrives on the scene, having had a premonition of evil to the newly wedded pair, and a woman named Frances Gillett is also found to be in the house at the time of the bride's disappearance. This Frances Gillett is known to have been deeply infatuated with Kennedy Haste. In searching the house, the local police find the furnace in the cellar going full blast, although it is midsummer. On extinguishing the fire and examining the ashes, they discover some charred fragments of feminine apparel and a number of bones which, from casual inspection, appear to be those of a human being. Pandora Haste confesses that she is implicated in the disappearance of her sister-in-law and is placed in the local jail, but the detective from the Sherwin Detective Agency, a young but very capable investigator of Italian parentage, Vancelli by name, believes that the girl has made this admission in order to shield some one else. Pandora, however, either escapes or is kidnaped from her cell. While Vancelli and the local police chief, Sergeant Anson, are examining the secret entrance to the laboratory, they are interrupted by the Italian butler of the household, Marianti, a recent employee of Rawdon Wells, who announces that he has made a new and terrible discovery bearing on the disappearance of Evelyn Haste.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE EAST TERRACE.

YOU have discovered something more—something which we didn't discover last night?" exclaimed Anson.

"Yes, sare," Marianti replied. "But it was not your fault you not discover it zen, because it do not exist las' night."

"Out with it!" said the sergeant in a tone calculated to encourage the old man.

"Yes, sare. I am going to out wiz it," Marianti said meekly. "Ziz morning arrive a letter from New York which is registare for Meestair Wells. I recognize ze 'andwriting on ze envelope. It is ze 'and of Signor Magnani, ze cousin of Meestair Wells, 'oo employ me one time, and recommend

me 'ere, w'en ze last butler, Davis, has been suddenly ill a short time ago. It is me 'oo receive ze letters and divide zem out. W'en I see zis envelope, I say to myself, 'I will take it wiz my own 'and to Meestair Wells.' I go to 'is bedroom. I knock. I t'ink I 'ear 'im call 'Come in!' I open ze door. Zere is nobody in ze room! I would go to look for Meestair Wells some ozzer place, but I smell a strong smell of fire. I t'ink Meestair Wells must 'ave left a pipe or a cigarette w'ich 'as commenced to burn some tablecloth or maybe ze beautiful rug of Persia on ze floor. I search and I find much smoke come from ze grate, be'ind a big screen w'ich 'ides it unless one look on purpose. Zis I t'ink strange! In summer we do not 'ave ze fire in ze grates. I poke wiz a poker at a mass of w'ite stuff, and I find two towels, much cov-

ered wiz brownish-red stain w'ich I t'ink is blood."

The police sergeant and the detective glanced at each other, but it was Anson who spoke. "Well, what then? Have you spoken to Mr. Wells about what you found?"

"No, sare—not yet," replied Marianti. "I do not know w'ere Meestair Wells is. Besides, I do not like to tell 'im myself. Meestair Wells might not understand zat I do not, of course, t'ink it is 'im 'oo put zese t'ings in ze grate. No. It must be a person 'oo 'ates Meestair Wells and wish to do 'im 'arm. I say to myself, 'Zare is a plot.' And I run quick out of ze room to speak wiz ze constable of police zat was in ze 'ouse all night. Zen a servant informs me ze illustrious signor 'ave arrive, and I come 'ere instead."

"Oh, this affair in the bedroom happened only a few minutes ago, then?" said Anson.

"Not ten minutes ago, sare. Would it please you to visit ze room of Meestair Wells, both gentlemen, for yourselves? I do not t'ink 'e 'as return yet."

"Where is he—do you know?" Vanelli asked with apparent carelessness.

"On ze east terrace, sare."

"Could you see him there, from one of the windows of his room when you were there just now?"

Marianti looked surprised at this question, and as if he were not quite sure how to take it—whether or not to be hurt.

"I might 'ave seen 'im, perhaps, sare, if I 'ad looked out for 'im," the old man admitted. "But I did not t'ink to do zat. A servant 'ave told me Meestair Wells was below on ze terrace."

"Well, I suppose we'd better go up at once with the butler and take a squint at what's in that grate?" Anson suggested, his face troubled. He was depressed at the prospect of more evidence against Wells, and judging from

appearances, a very bad piece of evidence indeed.

"You go with him," said Vanelli. "If you don't mind, I'll have a look round for Mr. Wells and introduce myself."

"Certainly, do as you prefer, Mr. Vanelli," the sergeant responded.

He was astonished at the decision, however, for the news brought by the butler seemed to him as important as it certainly was unpleasant. Anson didn't know whether to be flattered that the New York detective should trust such a matter entirely to him, or to wonder whether Vanelli regarded it lightly. Surely that couldn't be, however. It was important; it must be so from any point of view.

The butler also had the air of being taken aback by Vanelli's indifference. Perhaps Marianti feared that his ideas about a plot of which Rawdon Wells had been made the victim were laughed at by the agency detective. Anyhow, there it was. Vanelli would not go to Wells' bedroom. He was set on meeting Wells himself—at last.

The detective took himself to the east terrace, and there saw a man—whom he supposed to be Wells—seated on the stone balustrade, reading a letter. Vanelli paused at a distance and studied the picture for a moment, the word "picture" suggesting itself to his mind.

He was just near enough to do rather more than guess at Rawdon Wells' good looks; Italian in their romantic darkness, the black sweep of brow and bent lashes, yet, somehow, American, too—American in the neatness of the black hair brushed straight back from the square forehead, in the set of the shoulders, and the way of wearing those perfectly tailored clothes. The man was slim and graceful as he half sat, half leaned against the balustrade, with a background of gauzy blue like a stage drop and immense cedars that stretched out dark, warning arms against the summer brightness of the sky.

Suddenly Wells glanced up from his letter, and saw the stranger looking at him. That brought him to his feet, and advancing to meet Vanelli, the limp which he had acquired in his brief army career was slightly visible.

"Are you Mr. Vanelli from the Sherwin Detective Agency?" he asked. He did not smile—what man could smile after a tragedy in his house like that of last night?—but his voice had charm.

As the detective answered mechanically, he was questioning himself: "Which of the two should I prefer, if I were a woman—Kennedy Haste or Rawdon Wells?"

It was oddly difficult to answer, for each was a nearly perfect specimen of his own type; and Vanelli could imagine a girl like Evelyn Carroll loving both at the same time in a different way. "It might be just a toss-up which she'd choose in the end!" he thought.

Having learned that the newcomer was the detective, Vanelli, the next question Wells asked was about Pandora Haste.

"Have you seen Miss Haste?" he inquired eagerly, yet with an air of weariness, as if he carried a heavy burden.

Vanelli watched him as he replied: "Miss Haste has escaped from the police station at Ardry." Deliberately he refrained from giving his opinion that she had not gone of her own free will. That was for later on, if at all.

The man looked dumfounded. Then his face lit up. "Thank Heaven!" he said. "The child ought never to have been there."

"This chap Wells is either sincere, or else he's some actor!" Vanelli told himself. And as he so thought, he noticed that a sheet of the open letter Wells held in his hand had dropped out from among the rest to flutter down on the stone flagging.

Wells caught sight of it at the same moment. They both stopped. Vanelli retrieved the sheet and saw written at

the head of it, "My dear cousin Rawdon." He had learned by practice to observe things quickly, so he noted also yesterday's date and the address of a New York club much frequented by the best class of theatrical men; and all this in the second of time between picking up the paper and handing it to Wells.

In stooping for the lost page, the owner of the letter had dropped a second sheet. This had no writing upon it, but was used as a wrapper for several photographs, apparently proofs. In falling they scattered, and being unmounted, would have blown away had not Vanelli snatched at them.

"Allow me!" he said politely, and glanced from the snapshots of beautiful, smiling Evelyn Carroll in her wedding dress to Rawdon's face.

Wells' dark skin had flushed and, seeing the detective's eyes on him, he appeared to hesitate whether he should let the little incident pass in silence or make some explanation. After an instant, he decided on the latter course.

"These photographs were taken yesterday at the wedding reception for Mr. and Mrs. Haste by my cousin, Paul Magnani," he said. "I—that is—I'd mentioned to him that I was coming down here last evening, and I suppose, as he addressed the letter to me at this place, he must have forgotten that I didn't expect to stop the night. If all had been well, I should have been on my way to England by this time. But actor folk never remember other people's engagements, and seldom their own!"

"I've often seen your cousin on the screen," the detective remarked. "I believe he is considered one of the best romantic actors in the moving-picture world." He might have added: "But I didn't know till now that you two were cousins." Instead, however, he said: "I see he's a good photographer as well as good to photograph."

"Yes, he's a keen amateur photogra-

pher," the other agreed, apparently rather surprised that the detective should pursue a subject which seemed to hold no interest for him. "Paul asked permission to do these yesterday. That smile on the bride's face looks tragic now—as things are. I suppose you've seen many portraits of—Miss Carroll? She was much photographed for newspapers."

"I knew her slightly," Vanelli said.

Wells turned an astonished glance upon him, and the detective quietly repeated the information he had given Anson; how, while trying to "spot" a jewel thief, he had posed as a footman in Mrs. Payntor's New York residence.

"Miss Carroll wouldn't have remembered me, or recognized me if she had," Vanelli finished. "But, of course, no one who'd ever seen her could forget what she was like."

"I'm glad you've seen her!" Wells said. "Tell me, do you think any human being, man or woman, could have the heart to hurt such a lovely creature? Could you—no matter what the provocation?"

"I don't know," Vanelli answered, his manner changing, so that he spoke, not as a detective, but as one man to another. "I don't know. Sometimes I have black moods when I could imagine myself doing anything."

"I have had those moods, too," said Rawdon Wells. "I don't conceal from you that my mood wasn't far from black when I knew that I was to be thrown over for my best friend. No use to conceal it! Every one knows or guesses; but I couldn't have taken revenge on the girl. I couldn't have hurt Miss Carroll, and if I wouldn't murder her, I certainly wouldn't have stooped to kidnaping, especially after she'd married another man. Still—if the circumstances were only a little different, I'd take the guilt on myself instead of letting Pandora Haste be suspected for a single hour."

"What do you mean—if the circumstances were a little different?" asked Vanelli. "But, of course, don't answer that question unless you wish."

"I do wish," said Wells. "You are a detective brought here to find out what's become of Mrs. Haste, and suspicion points my way in spite of what that poor child said. You have a right to suspect me, and perhaps you do, but I can't help feeling that, if we'd met in a happier way, we should have been friends. The reason is, you look very much like some one I cared for a good deal, and I can't get the resemblance out of my head. So I do wish to talk frankly to you—that is, as frankly as I can, and I'll gladly tell you what my meaning was. It was this: I can't, even for Pandora's sake, say that I was such a depraved creature as to harm the bride of my oldest pal, in my own house, where I'd invited them both. It would be too sickening! Even if Pandora—Miss Haste—were still in prison protesting her guilt, I couldn't do that, I'm afraid. She'll be cleared in any case——"

"I'm not so sure of that!" Vanelli cut in.

"You must clear her—while she keeps out of harm's way," Wells declared.

"I'd like to clear her—mighty well; but I told you Miss Haste had escaped. That wasn't quite accurate, according to my view. I believe she was drugged and kidnaped."

"Heavens!" The other stared at him. "What makes you think that?"

"Because her cell smelled of an anæsthetic, and, as she was searched by the matron last night, she did not take it in with her. It wasn't an ordinary anæsthetic. The smell was the same as that on a handkerchief of Mrs. Haste's which the young lady handed to Anson. She said she'd had the stuff from you, as a sample of an invention of yours some time ago, and had kept it ever since."

"My anæsthetic in Dora's cell! Do you suspect me of abducting her as well as Mrs. Haste?"

"I suspect you—at present—of neither Mr. Wells," said the detective. "But as for what Miss Haste said about the handkerchief, if she's merely sacrificing herself to save you, that was rather clever and thoughtful for a young girl, wasn't it—to pretend that she'd had some of the stuff invented by you, and had kept it by her?"

"Heartbreakingly clever!" groaned Wells, with a visible shudder. "But what are you leading up to?"

"To asking you some other impertinent questions, if you'll let me," said Vanelli, "for your good and for hers. For instance—why did you regret telling me that your cousin knew you were coming down to this house last night?"

Wells caught his lip between his teeth. He did not speak for a few seconds, and the detective saw him draw in his breath sharply. Then he said: "No doubt there'll be many questions I shall gratefully answer, Mr. Vanelli, but that isn't one of them. It has nothing to do with the affair."

Instantly Vanelli was convinced—he could not have told why—that this small, insignificant circumstance had everything to do with the affair.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIVE PORTRAITS.

DETECTIVE VANELLI had ironically told Sergeant Anson that he had "a dozen theories, each one entirely different from every other," but something—quite a small, insignificant something—which had happened banished the lot into the background of his brain. In their stead, a new theory stepped forward.

Perhaps, in its turn, this last would be dismissed, and a half-abandoned rival beckoned out of obscurity to take its place; but for the present it lured, star-

led, fascinated the detective. He dared not let his mind dwell upon it too much. He wished to keep in touch with all sides of the subject. And though he started a new notebook in honor of the new theory, he neither starred nor emphasized it there. No one save himself, looking through the jottings, could have guessed in which person named therein Vanelli felt the most absorbing professional interest.

The day following his visit to Hidden Hall and Ardry the small volume which he dubbed "My New-theory Notebook" would have appeared to any other eye than his a hodgepodge. To Vanelli, however, it was clear enough, and bade fair later to be illuminative.

The detective had returned to New York on the quiet, in order to develop the photographs of the smudged finger marks, also those he had discovered on the bench in Pandora Haste's cell. He had brought to town in addition a tiny sample of the dried and clotted blood found on the wall under the tapestries and the least charred of the bones retrieved from the furnace.

As for the blood, the microscopic tests made showed it to be that of a human being, young, in a state of normal health, a member of a white race.

The bones taken from the furnace fire by order of Anson, on the contrary, brought suspicion up against a blank wall. Burned as they were, almost disintegrated in the furious flames, it was still possible for an expert to pronounce them portions of a man's skeleton.

This discovery gave a singularly piquant note to Vanelli's book; no one knew yet of the mysterious—perhaps tragic affair at Hidden Hall. It was being kept dark for the moment by Vanelli's request as well as Kennedy Haste's earnest wish, for in case a simple explanation of the seeming tragedy should be found, the happenings of that terrible night need never be known beyond a small circle.

The hour was late in the afternoon and it seemed that Vanelli, concentrating on the problem in his own room, was not likely to be disturbed even by the telephone bell, as none of his friends save Kennedy Haste had been told of his movements, and Haste would not try to communicate with him.

On the big table which supplemented his desk and stood beside it were five framed cabinet portraits, four of the frames cheap things merely designed as supports, to keep the photographs in an upright position. The fifth was different. This Vanelli had framed in silver, and had given it the place of honor in the middle; it was Pandora Haste's portrait.

He had obtained it from the house which she called home—the house at whose door she had been left as a baby. He had asked Haste for the picture as a loan, and it had been sent to him by messenger.

A portrait of Rawdon Wells he had obtained in the same way; also one of Frances Gillett dressed in her nurse's uniform. A picture of Wells' cousin, Paul Magnani, he had bought at a shop where photographs of theatrical favorites were sold; and one of Evelyn Carroll had been already in his possession. He had appropriated it in the days of his disguise as Mrs. Payntor's footman.

There they all stood, side by side on his desk, and Vanelli apostrophized them in the intervals between jotting down "second thoughts" in his new notebook with a stylographic pen.

Under the heading of "R. W.," he had already scrawled several paragraphs; but he knew his notes by heart, and there was no need to refresh his mind by reading them over. He now wrote:

Whether or no R. W. had any hand in the disappearance of Eve Carroll, the man has a strange secret of some sort concerning his visit to Hidden Hall on her wedding night. R. W. says he had forgotten some important

papers which he needed to take with him to England. This I don't believe. Too obvious an excuse! Says also that, being on the spot, he thought it well to burn a lot of things which were no longer of any use. I do believe he burned the things, but not because they weren't of use. The burning is immensely important in this business. If I can find out which things he really burned, and which somebody else burned—if there was somebody else—I shall have gone a long way on the right road.

That skeleton in the furnace was a cute trick, if R. W. has an enemy who would go any length to injure him, but it wasn't quite cute enough. Either the person who planned it couldn't get the skeleton of a woman, or didn't suppose that it would be possible to detect the difference in a few bones after they'd been nearly burned to cinders. There could be two objects only in burning that skeleton—putting aside the idea that R. W. did it—once, to make it appear that Evelyn Haste had been murdered; the other, to make it appear that R. W. was the murderer.

After studying these notes for a few minutes, Vanelli next wrote under the heading "Pandora Haste:"

Is P. H. capable of killing or kidnaping the wife of her adopted brother, as she intimates that she has done? Possibly she might kill in a moment of rage. Any hot-headed person might do that. She could do nothing of the sort in cold blood. Kidnaping must be carried out in cold blood, therefore P. H. did not kidnap Evelyn.

If P. H. was willing to damn herself for the sake of R. W., doesn't that mean she knew the proof against him was overwhelming. P. H. had herself arrested, let's say, because she wished, for one reason or another, to be thought guilty of "doing away" with Evelyn Carroll, as she put it. Why, then, vanish before she'd had time to establish her own guilt in the mind of any one?

Was P. H. kidnaped? If she was, the man or woman responsible for Evelyn's disappearance or death did the trick. He—or she—wanted R. W. to be convicted, and feared the scheme would fail because of P. H. if she stuck to her story.

The next heading under which Vanelli wrote was "The Unknown," and his commentary was as follows:

Who is this person who wants R. W. convicted, and, if possible, hanged? Is there such a person at all? What motive has he?

Acts of the Unknown—taking it for granted that such a person exists—comprise:

Making the footprint in blood on the floor of the Tapestry Boudoir, and certainly using a shoe of R. W.'s for the purpose. To get human blood isn't too easy. Probably the Unknown tapped his—or her—own, which would explain why there was so little; not a drop to waste! It wouldn't have done to take enough to produce faintness or make a serious wound. That would have led to suspicion.

Then there are the finger prints on the wall. If these had proved to be R. W.'s, it is quite probable that they were planted by the Unknown. Finger prints can now be copied accurately, provided a cast or mold of the finger tips can be obtained.

Vanelli wrote the next name slowly and gazed for a long time very thoughtfully at the portrait of the young woman who had confessed her love for Kennedy Haste—"Frances Gillett."

So far there wasn't a scrap of evidence to connect her with the disappearance of Haste's bride, except that she had been caught paying a surreptitious visit to Mrs. Haste's bedroom. That visit she had explained, and though her avowed motive was not one to boast of, there was less guilt in it than flagrant bad taste. Still, Vanelli could not get the conviction out of his head that there was another reason, apart from the one or two she alleged, for Miss Gillett's presence at Hidden Hall on the night of Kennedy Haste's wedding. If he were right about this, he would never learn the truth from the girl. He must find it out, if at all, in some less obvious way.

Then, there was that mother of hers, the utterly unsuitable housekeeper at Hidden Hall! The detective had no photograph of her, but the white, tragic features were printed on his memory. He could see the frightened eyes, the thin, pale face, the woman's quick, nervous glances over her shoulder as if she saw something which no one else could see.

What had Mrs. Gillett done that would give her the appearance of a

haunted being, and why was she the housekeeper at Hidden Hall?

The name of Paul Magnani came directly after that of Frances Gillett on his list, and Vanelli studied the actor's not unfamiliar features with keen interest.

Magnani and his cousin, Rawdon Wells, were of somewhat similar type which was not surprising, as they were closely related.

The cousins were said to be very fond of each other, and Wells was known to admire Magnani's talent as an actor. Had not the master of Hidden Hall stumbled over an explanation and then refused to go further with it? Vanelli would not even have thought of linking Magnani with the case. As it was, he was bent on finding out all he could about the moving-picture star. Had Magnani known Eve Carroll well? Could he have been in love with her? Was he jealous of his cousin in any way? Even if so, would he not have more to gain from Rawdon Wells, alive and prosperous, able to bestow gifts, than from a convicted criminal?

Last of the five photographs came that of Evelyn Carroll herself; and Vanelli stared into the large, soft eyes of the portrait.

"What has become of you?" he said aloud. "Have you been kidnaped? Are you dead? Or have you played a trick on your husband and the rest of us and run away?" Vanelli paused thoughtfully. "Evelyn's aunt, Mrs. Paynter can probably enlighten me as to that possibility," he added, and then, to his astonishment, the telephone bell rang.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LETTERS.

WHO besides Haste knows I'm in New York?" Vanelli wondered. The detective was half-minded not to answer the call, but changed his mind as the phone bell rang again. He lifted

the receiver to his ear, expecting to be bored by some stupidity, but his weary "Hello!" was answered by a voice so peculiar as to suggest disguise and instantly to pique his interest. The speaker might be a woman wishing to be taken for a man or a man posing as a woman.

"Is that Mr. Vanelli himself?" some one inquired.

"Yes. Who's calling?"

"Who I am doesn't matter, and you won't be able to find out, because I'm using a public telephone. Though, of course, you can try, if you like to waste time. It isn't my name that's important. It's my message. As an admirer of your talent who doesn't wish you to fail ridiculously after all your successes, I warn you solemnly, as you value your reputation, to keep off the Haste-Carroll case. Make any excuses you choose, but keep off. Otherwise, ruin—perhaps death for you!"

"Thanks for the advice," Vanelli retorted, extremely puzzled but speaking with airy indifference of tone. "Please add to your goodness by stating why I should keep off the case."

No answer was vouchsafed to this question. Vanelli repeated it several times, in varied forms, but silence answered, with the odd, impish echo of the telephone. At last, softly whistling, the detective hung up the receiver.

So far as he was aware, Kennedy Haste was the one person who knew he was paying this short visit to New York, and Haste was the one person of the lot whom Vanelli did not suspect at least of ulterior motives or hiding some secret knowledge.

He had asked Haste if he would object to show him letters from Miss Carroll written just before her marriage, as some chance word might be enlightening to the mind of a detective. Ken had a bundle of such letters in town, and being told that Vanelli had to go

to New York for a day, offered to go also and get the parcel.

"Can Haste have mentioned my being here?" Vanelli wondered.

It was easy, it seemed, to obtain an answer to this question from headquarters. He had made an appointment to call at the Haste house, ostensibly to get a glimpse of Eve Carroll's letters, but in reality for another object quite as important to him, if not more so. This appointment was for an hour hence, but he was sure that Haste would be at home and he could not resist calling him up on the phone.

"Can you see me now, instead of in an hour's time, as we arranged?" Vanelli asked.

"Certainly, I would prefer it," the answer came.

Kennedy Haste's house was on West End Avenue. He had lived there only since his engagement to Evelyn, at which time he had sold the big and somewhat gloomy old home of his boyhood on West Seventieth Street. Evelyn had selected the new house herself, or, at least, had said that she would like to live in that section of town. This had been enough for Ken. Furniture, decorations, and everything had been chosen to please her, except in the suite which he had set apart for his adopted sister, Pandora.

The first note struck, even on entering the hall, was gay modernity. Vanelli was shown into a drawing-room with a black carpet and furniture mostly of old Chinese lacquer, much of it red. There were green curtains, with splashes of purple embroidery and wonderful iridescent bowls containing fantastic-colored fruits which might have been stolen from the stage at some magnificent Oriental spectacular production. Poor little, lonely Evelyn. She would have been a witchlike vision of beauty here, in the wonderful gowns that she affected. Where was she—living or

dead? It was as if a voice whispered the question in the detective's ear.

After a moment's waiting he was taken to another room, a combination of library and smoking room, and there Haste met him at the door—a pale and haggard Haste.

"This house is killing me!" he said. "It's worse than at that haunted hole of Rawdon Wells'—Eve and I chose everything together. I can hear her calling me to save her from some horror. I'm glad you came early. I want to get away—to get back to Hidden Hall. Anything may have happened there while I've been gone. Who knows?"

"I know that nothing has happened to interest you," Vanelli reassured him. "But you can get back as soon as you like, so far as I'm concerned. I see how you must feel here. Didn't you tell me, when you spoke of your new house, that Miss Pandora had furnished her suite entirely with things from your old home? Why shouldn't we both go to her rooms, where there'll be nothing to call up painful memories for you, while I look through the letters you're going to let me have?"

"Not a bad idea," said Haste. "The sight of those old things of the past may cool my nerves a bit."

He took from a drawer in a gorgeous Empire desk an olivewood box, about the size of an ordinary glove box, and then showed Vanelli the way upstairs. Pandora's suite was at the top of the house, for an extension at the back gave plenty of room for servants. Kennedy Haste opened a door which was not locked, and ushered the detective into a room in which the modern note dominating the remainder of the house was conspicuously lacking.

"Pandora is only my adopted sister, as you know," said Ken, "yet she adored the old house and everything in it. I never cared, but she cried like a baby when I decided to sell and to let

most of the furniture go with the place. You see, this house isn't really large enough for the big, solid things of my father's day."

Vanelli looked about with intense interest. His heart was beating fast. He felt as children feel in playing a game of hide-and-seek, when some one calls out, "You're warm!"

"These old-fashioned things are rather splendid, I think," he said, trying to be calm. "Now, that secretary bookcase, for instance, there between the windows, with the closet underneath and twisted pillars running up the sides."

"That old thing is a special pet of *Dora's*," answered Haste, distracted for an instant from the gnawing torture of his loss. "She keeps all the souvenirs of her *début* into our family in that closet."

This was precisely what Vanelli had been leading up to as well as he could without asking questions, and now he knew precisely what he wanted to know.

Haste invited him to sit down on a huge old sofa where Vanelli could imagine a girl curling up for a nap, or to read a novel, among the cushions of old-fashioned chintz. It was of Pandora Haste that he thought as he took certain letters which her adopted brother selected from the olivewood box.

"I never expected to let any one see Eve's precious little letters," Ken said. "But if you imagine you can discover anything useful from reading them—why, of course, I'd be a fool to hold them back. There are just a few here that are too sacred—and nothing in them, anyhow, except about our two selves; but make what you can of the rest."

They were charming letters—Eve at her best; but her most ardent worshiper could hardly say that she was not a flirt, and here and there the nature of the flirt peeped out from these perfumed pages.

Poor Rawdon Wells! I'm afraid I have been rather horrid to him. But it's all your fault, Ken, for coming into my life and making me love you when I was just on the edge of falling in love with him—or was it with his house? Nowadays I think it must have been only the house; for I can't believe I could ever really have cared with all my heart and soul about any man except you. Oh, dear, it's frightening, though, breaking the news to Rawdon. His eyes can be terrible. I never realized how Italian he is till now, and primitive and all that. But thank goodness we do live in the twentieth century. I wouldn't go back into—say, the sixteenth or seventeenth with Rawdon Wells for anything on earth. It would be too dangerous. Even you couldn't save me from him then.

This was in one letter. In another Evelyn referred to some man whose name she did not mention:

When I was a naughty little girl, I used to cry for things I couldn't have, and when they were given to me I didn't want them any more. Alas, I never got over that sort of thing until you cured me by making me want you for always. Yes, the "Idol" was a bad case. I was wild when I thought he didn't care—or only for my money. When I found out that he loved me—and what he was really like when he was in love—oh, Ken, he made me sick, and I told him so. Afterward we patched up a peace, rather than have people talk—anyhow that was my reason—but I shall never forget as long as I live.

Before he made any comment, Vanelli finished reading all the letters Haste had handed to him, of which there were eight; but in no others was there anything that interested him, except one allusion to Pandora:

I'm sorry she feels about me the way she does, but I can't blame the poor kid much, considering everything—and one or two things she may have been told by—you know who. I shall try to win her—yes, try as I never tried when I was flirting my hardest!—after you and I have had our honeymoon in that wonderful house of poor Rawdon Wells'. Then maybe she'll change her mind and live with us, in her own suite, rather than do as she threatens now and go out into the wide, wide world, far away from

Yours lovingly.

8A—DS

The letter concerning the unnamed "Idol" interested the detective most.

"Are you willing to tell me who is this man Miss Carroll referred to?" he asked, pointing out the passage to Haste.

Ken read the words and flushed up to the roots of his brown hair. "Ask me something else," he said; "I can't tell you that."

"Do you mean you can't—or you won't?"

"I—I am afraid I've forgotten that particular one. There were—so many chaps who fell in love with Miss Carroll," Ken stammered.

Vanelli knew that he had not forgotten; and Haste probably knew that he knew, but the detective let the subject drop. Instead he said: "Just now you gave me permission to 'ask you something else.' Well, I take you at your word. We're in Miss Haste's own sitting room. You tell me that in the wardrobe there are souvenirs of the time when she first came to you. Will you let me see those things?"

Haste stared. "But what possible connection can they have with this case?"

"They may have more than you think," said Vanelli.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SCARLET CLOAK.

HASTE took back the letters hurriedly, as if he feared more questions, and then, glad of the change of subject, found the key of the closet in a drawer of the secretary above, where no doubt, he had seen Pandora place it. This new affair had little interest for him. He could not conceive it possible that the souvenirs of Pandora's babyhood should have the remotest connection with the disappearance of Evelyn. There was no reason for refusing Vanelli's request, so Ken rather indiffer-

ently unlocked and threw open the closet.

"I suppose you've heard the whole story," he said, "about the box being left at our door, and all that. The box itself was thrown away by our servants, I suppose; but everything in it was kept; and there's the lot in that doll's trunk, which was one of the greatest treasures of Dora's childhood."

"Allow me!" exclaimed the detective, and stooping, took from the one shelf in the closet a miniature trunk. It was not heavy, though it was of a good size, two feet long by one in height, perhaps, and Vanelli placed it on a table. It was unlocked, but thinking of the girl, he hesitated to lift the lid, and Haste impatiently did so.

A delicious fragrance rose to the nostrils of the two young men, and though Haste had moods of fiercely doubting his adopted sister, his heart melted as he looked at her preciously guarded treasures of the past. The trunk had a tray, in which reposed a doll which had been a present from him on one of Dora's birthdays. It had eyes which opened and shut, real eyelashes, and curly hair which could be brushed. Dora had named the doll after him and herself: "Pandora Kennedy." It lay on a neat pile of its wardrobe, made by the child's own hands, with here and there a ribbon bag. Ken removed the tray, and Vanelli's eager eyes saw first a fleecy Shetland shawl, then a silky blanket striped with red, white, and green.

"There! The poor little kid was wrapped in those when we found her!" Haste said. "I suppose the rest of the things are underneath. Examine them as much as you like."

The dark face of the detective had flushed at sight of the silk blanket; but Haste did not notice his change of color. He was thinking of Evelyn, and wondering why the detective had said so

little about the letters which, after all, he had come to the house expressly to see. The fellow had appeared to be somewhat impressed by two of those letters; yet now he seemed far more interested by these odd trifles which, surely, could have no bearing whatever on the case.

Almost reverently Vanelli touched the blanket. Before looking at what lay beneath, he held the silky stuff with its bright stripes between his hands. Perhaps the blanket fascinated him because of the Italian colors. He could hardly have decided on such scant evidence that Pandora Haste, the foundling, was a compatriot of his, for these Italian blankets were intended more for export than for home use, and thousands were sold every year in most countries of Europe. They had been cheap in the old days before the war, too, and therefore would have been quite within the means of a poor mother.

Whatever his motive was, Vanelli gazed at the little striped silk blanket for several moments with an odd, abstracted gaze. Then, still with the air of one who feared to profane a shrine, he examined in turn the tiny garments which were Pandora's only relics of her unknown babyhood. They were commonplace things enough, cheap and rather coarse; but a small scarlet cloak of woolen stuff, with a mother-of-pearl button at the neck and lined with cotton flannel which imitated ermine, held him spellbound.

"One would think you could read the history of my adopted sister's birth in that little cloak," Haste said.

Vanelli started. "Oh, I don't go so far as that!" he exclaimed, his sense of humor not in the least aroused. "But I confess it interests me—for special reasons. May I take the cloak home and keep it a short time? I'll promise to bring it safely back in the same condition as now. I don't believe Miss Haste would object, do you?"

"Oh, certainly, take it," said Ken. "I'll be responsible for giving you permission. It would be different with Eve's letters if you wanted them. I couldn't bring myself to part with those for ten minutes!"

"I remember every word in the letters that I need to remember," the detective assured him.

"And do you think they've helped you to draw any conclusion?"

"One of them has helped me, I believe."

"Which one, if I may ask?"

"The one you refused to tell me about," the detective replied dryly.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DREAM PICTURE.

ON returning to his apartment, Vanelli began rummaging in a large trunk, containing a mass of papers. Finally, he pulled out a parcel done up carefully in waterproof cloth. This he opened, spreading it flat on a table and gazing at the contents; a quaintly made little waistcoat of a size to fit a child of three or four years old. It was made of scarlet cloth, had four mother-of-pearl buttons down the front, and was lined with black-tufted white cotton flannel that crudely imitated ermine.

Beside this he laid the tiny cloak which had enveloped the baby left at the Hastes' door. The red cloth, the cotton flannel, and even the buttons were precisely the same.

"Great heavens! I felt it! I knew it!" the detective cried aloud.

His mind rushed back to a picture which he often saw in dreams, especially if he were tired or depressed or if he feared failure in some undertaking. He wondered, whenever he waked from this dream, whether the picture were not really something remembered, something earlier in his life than any of the more assured memories.

They—the catalogued memories

which formed a more or less connected chain—began in a street. He was crying because he was hungry. "Vanno, povero Vanno!" he had wailed, for he was "Vanno," a pet name for Giovanni, or John. How he had got into that street he had never known; but he thought he had been on a ship, and there had been a very big man who seemed a giant, sometimes cross and sometimes kind to him. In the street a much smaller and very different man had spoken to the crying child; but Vanelli had not been able to understand English then.

This man had taken his hand and they had walked to a house not far off, where the man had apparently wished to keep the waif; but a woman with a loud voice would not let him stay. Out he and the man had gone again, and they had ridden in a street car to a big building where a great many children lived. It was a foundling asylum, and there the boy had spent several years. The grown-ups had been good to him, and when he was old enough to go away and work on a farm they had given him the red waistcoat with imitation-ermine lining. It had evidently been made at home by some loving hand, and might possibly help him to find his lost family some day. Who could tell?

The dream-picture was connected with this queer little garment, and the oddest thing about it was that he had had the dream before the waistcoat had been returned to him—before he had recalled its existence. He saw himself in a garden with a beautiful woman who was weeping. In her arms she held a baby wrapped in a red cloak exactly like the red waistcoat he had on, and of which he was very proud.

The woman's face was clear as a cameo before Vanelli's eyes in the dream, and he knew that he loved her dearly. He liked the baby, too, but only as if it were a doll, and he was not thinking of it at all in the garden, except

that it had a cloak like his beautiful waistcoat. There were tall, straight trees, almost black against blue sky, and there were many flowers hanging in festoons over a low, pink house. The group stopped at a gray gate and looked back at the trees and the house. The dream stopped there, too, with a feeling of loss and sadness as Vanelli waked.

How stupid Kennedy Haste and Rawdon Wells and Anson had all been not to realize at once the likeness between him and the girl known as Pandora Haste! Both Haste and Anson had exclaimed, "Who is it you look like?" Rawdon Wells had stared at him in a puzzled way that was equivalent to a spoken question.

Now Vanelli knew that Pandora Haste had been the baby in the red cloak; he, the little boy in the red waistcoat, and the beautiful woman who wept her "Addio" to the pink house, their mother.

Vanelli did not feel that he was neglecting his duty as a detective engaged to solve the mystery of Hidden Hall, in turning his whole attention upon his own affairs where they touched those of Pandora Haste. They were not, something told him, entirely separate from the Eve Carroll affair, and his soul was bent upon seeking the link.

The garden with the pink house and climbing flowers and tall, dark trees had been somewhere in Italy. He was sure of that, because he had been able to talk only Italian as a child of about four, when he had been picked up in an East Side street in New York.

Could the big man on the ship, whom Vanelli vaguely recalled, have been father to him and the baby in the red cloak? No, he thought not. The man had not behaved like a father. He must have been a stranger, hired to play the part.

"He brought me to New York on that ship on purpose to lose me," the detec-

tive told himself. "Somebody lost the baby girl, too; but I begin to see that it wasn't chance which took that somebody to the door of the Hastes' house on West Seventieth Street. There was a reason. Somebody knew the Hastes."

And so his brooding mind strayed from the house where the baby had been left to Hidden Hall, where, at that time, an Italian woman—Rawdon Wells' mother—had reigned as mistress.

Two small children—brother and sister—thrown upon the world in different quarters of the metropolis—what could connect them and their fate with that strange old house near Ardry? And why did the detective feel so strongly that Evelyn Carroll would not have disappeared if those two children had not existed? All he knew was that he felt sure that it was so, and that Hidden Hall had a tragic secret for him as well as for Kennedy Haste.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ECHO.

PANDORA HASTE had a long and intricate dream, about a thousand things. Some of these things were vaguely horrible. At last she thought that Frances Gillett was determined she should not tell a secret which it was most necessary she should tell, in order to save somebody's life. To prevent her crying out, Frances sat heavily down on her face. Struggling, gasping, the girl woke up.

The dream of Miss Gillett slipped slowly away into dimness, but in its place a recollection that Eve Carroll—Eve Haste—was dead, tragically dead, writhed in the girl's brain like a living monster. Evelyn dead, and Rawdon—no, she, Pandora—accused of murder!

"Oh, but that's only part of the dream! It isn't true!" Pandora heard herself say out aloud.

She opened her eyes, and stared

dazedly up at a ceiling. What ceiling? Where was she, at home in New York, or—

It was a low ceiling, and the room—wherever it was—seemed dark with a curious green darkness like that prevailing under the sea. Pandora remembered visiting the Aquarium as a child. The same greenness had been there. It had seemed very mysterious to her, and she had insisted upon talking in whispers, because the Aquarium had “felt like a place of silence.”

This also felt like a place of silence. Perhaps she was dreaming, too. Most likely she wasn't really awake yet. But, oh, what a comfort that the awful dream about Evelyn and Rawdon and herself wasn't true! It couldn't—couldn't be true. Yet was it? Then there was that cell in the police station—why, it was real, at least, and she had gone to sleep there!

With this thought Pandora sat up suddenly and stared about her.

What a strange ceiling this seemed to be! Why, it wasn't a ceiling at all. It was water—green water. There were fish in it, swimming. Yet—she was in a room. Oh, certainly it was a dream! There couldn't be a room under the sea, with a glass roof!

But there it was—just that! A glass roof. Pandora slid off a very queer, old-fashioned bed such as she had never seen before. Then, tottering a little, she stood on a stone floor with green reflections floating over its grayness, and reaching up, she touched the glass.

As she did this, she met the staring, round eyes of a large fish with a silly face and receding chin. It gazed at her for a second, then flashed away, a number of smaller ones following it in alarm.

“How on earth have I come here? Oh, isn't it earth? Am I dead, and is this the next world?” Pandora asked herself, as she dropped back upon the bed and lay very still.

She had read several much-talked-of books about existence after death, and they all said that at first it seemed much the same as life on earth.

“I wish some one would come and tell me!” the girl said aloud.

Her voice sounded so natural, so petulant, like that of a spoiled and tired child, that she thought she must be alive, after all. But then the people in the books had thought that, too, and they weren't.

It was easier to imagine how she might have come to such a strange place after death than before. Because she was beginning to realize with gnawings of anguish that the dreams were not dreams. They were all true. The things had happened—except the part about Frances Gillett! She had been so desperately unhappy in prison that her heart might simply have stopped beating in sheer grief, and so she might now be dead. She had heard of people dying like that.

More fish were swimming back. Many had poised themselves to look at her, but if she moved they darted away with a flick of the tail.

“Supposing, though, I'm not dead?” Pandora went on questioning herself, when she had sharply pinched her own arm and found that she had all the sensations of flesh and blood.

Yes, supposing that! Who could have brought her to this weird room, and why should she have been brought?

The girl tried to reason the matter out. She had felt very tired in the cell, she remembered, and at last, late at night, had lain down to sleep. Since then—blankness. And now a room under deep, green water!

It must be day by this time, she told herself; for even here it was light enough to see everything in the place and catch the glints on fishes' shining scales.

The room was curiously furnished, at all events to Pandora's eyes. The walls

were of bricks, narrow, long brownish-colored bricks. Lying on the low bed, no higher than a divan, the girl could see no doors; but on the four walls hung pieces of tapestry, one of which might cover a door. These hangings looked old, yet they were not dilapidated, neither were they faded. In such a place, where sunlight could never enter, colors might remain fresh, Pan thought, for many years. The floor was bare, save for a tiger skin thrown down in front of the couch, and the only furniture, besides the bed, consisted of a small table of black oak, with beautifully carved legs, and two chairs of the same general style.

It was neither cold nor warm in the room, but the bed had a patchwork coverlet made of satins and brocades all in bright, contrasting colors, and put together in marvelous designs of stars and wheels. The sheets and a pillow case were of yellowish linen, thick and silver-smooth. Pandora thought of the Sleeping Beauty. When the princess waked up after her hundred years of dreams, she might have found herself in some such room as this; but she had been waked by a prince!

As clouds lifted from her brain, the girl tried sitting up more as a test to see whether she were really awake or not. Lifting her head from the low pillow, she felt a slight giddiness and nausea; and for the first time she became aware of an odor more powerful than the faint combination of lavender and mustiness that hung round the bed-clothing.

This second odor was not strange to her. As she sniffed it in curiously, it brought back a vivid memory of last night.

"Rawdon's new anæsthetic!" she said to herself.

The first time she had smelled it was in his laboratory, when he had described his experiments to her, and explained the advantage which his invention was

supposed to have over chloroform, ether, and other variants much advertised in these modern days. Rawdon was going to call his stuff daturiform, he had said. The semitropical flower datura figured in it, but there were two or three more plants, and the formula Rawdon was keeping secret—except from a few American and Italian scientists—until further experiments should have been made both in the United States and Italy. The advantages were that greater quantities of daturiform could be given than of chloroform or ether, without ill effects upon heart or lungs; a patient could be kept longer under the influence without danger, and nausea, on waking, even after a heavy dose, was slight and brief.

That day in the laboratory, Pandora had laughingly asked to have a little daturiform on her handkerchief. Whereupon Wells had given her a small bottle of the stuff fastened up with a little crimson wax, imprinted by his seal ring.

Last night—was it last night?—she had had good cause to remember the daturiform. And now, again, it was hanging about her like a cloud.

She could not, she was sure, mistake the odor. Did its presence and the drowsy faintness she felt mean that Rawdon had come to the police station at Ardry, got into her cell by some means, drugged her, and spirited her away while she slept?

Somebody had done the thing! And as Wells very jealously guarded the secret of his anæsthetic, it seemed more likely to have been he than any one else. Still, why should he have wished to get her out of prison and hide her, when her testimony could help him to prove his innocence?

The fact that there was a bed with scented linen, and a coverlet for warmth, looked as if her life were not to be threatened; and in any case, Pandora did not feel actively afraid. She cared

too little now what happened to her, to be frightened easily. However, she would have been more or less than human if the strangeness of her surroundings had not pricked her to curiosity. She got up again from the low coach, and lifted the piece of tapestry on the wall against which the head of the bed was set. Nothing was behind it save solid bricks; and on the opposite wall it was the same. But not so with the hangings on the two walls at the side.

Behind each of these tapestries—which poured out dust as they were lifted—was a door, a low, small door of dark wood which looked like oak. These two doors were destitute of knobs, but had queer old iron latches. The first was immovable, and must—Pandora thought—be firmly fastened on the other side; but the second latch lifted, and the girl opened the door without difficulty.

Her heart jumped at first, for it seemed that here might be a way of escape from this green-lit place of mystery, a way forgotten by her unknown jailer. When she had seen what was on the other side, however, she realized that there was no hope in that direction. The adjoining space—not much bigger than a commodious clothes closet—was a crudely fitted-up bath and dressing room.

"Anyhow, they want me to live, whoever they are," the girl said to herself; and this supposition was further confirmed when she noticed several dishes on the table in the sleeping room. There was some cold meat, with bread and cheese; also a bottle containing water. The sight of these things made Pandora wonder if her faintness were partly caused by hunger.

"The stuff isn't likely to be poisoned," she thought. "They would have got rid of me more simply without taking the trouble to bring me here, if that was their idea!"

She ate a biscuit or two, and poured

into a thick, old crystal tumbler a little of the water.

"I wish I knew whether this were breakfast or luncheon or dinner!" she remarked aloud. And then she noticed that an echo followed her words—an insistent, personal sort of echo, almost like a spirit speaking, invisible, imprisoned in the same room.

Courage and strength began to stream into her body again, after the food—almost too much consciousness of abounding vitality for a girl plunged deep in tragedy. As there could be no way back to happiness for her after last night—even if she were able to escape from this place—Pandora did not want to hear the call of youth and life.

"Where am I?" she asked of the echo. And promptly it replied. Yet—was it an echo, or something more? Was there another voice farther away behind the echo, a voice that was not an echo at all?

"Who is there? Who is calling?" Pandora cried, her ear against the wall, as the echo—which had seemed to her more than an echo—died away.

Again came the muffled answer—if answer it was, but it was very far off. It sounded no nearer now that her ear was at the wall than when she had stood in the middle of the room.

Her heart hammering, the girl went from wall to wall, and listened behind the screens of tapestry. There was very little difference between one side of the room or another for the sound, but she imagined that the voice came more distinctly from beyond the wall where was the locked door.

"If there's some one there, wait long enough after I've spoken for the echo to pass," Pandora called out loudly and distinctly. "Then answer, and I can be sure."

"Now," she thought, "this will be the test, and if there is some one, surely it must be a prisoner like myself. Oth-

erwise, whoever it is would have kept still or else tried to scare me and stop my making a noise."

Again the echo followed her words; but before there was time for the voice test, something moved behind the locked door. There was a sound as of another door being opened and cautiously shut, a sound such as the sliding door of a big wardrobe might make in being pushed back and forth in its groove.

The thought shot through the girl's brain that the mystery of her kidnapping would now be revealed, for better or for worse! The door was being unlocked. She heard the noise of a sliding bolt, and with a quick inspiration pushed her body close against the wall so that, even if she could not escape, she might hope for a glimpse of what lay beyond the door.

Suddenly it opened and, hardly knowing what she did, Pandora sprang boldly forward, striving to dodge a thrust-out arm. But the arm was strong, and pushed her back so violently that she might have fallen had she not caught at the tapestry. It was so dim behind this curtain, and so black was the space beyond the door that she could see nothing on the other side. Even the owner of the arm was but a dark shadow to her eyes, until she had been forcibly detached from her hold on the hangings and thrust into the room. Then, in the greenish light, Pandora saw a tall, stoop-shouldered man wearing a queer, old-

fashioned cape overcoat and a soft, wide-brimmed hat. His face was hidden with a black mask which appeared to be made of one or two thicknesses of crape. Even his eyes were covered, but the girl caught a faint sparkle from them, like that of a star filmed over by a thin, black cloud.

Once more the impression of a dream came back; for wasn't this figure too fantastic to be real? And there couldn't in any real world be such a room, with glass for a roof and fish swimming over it in deep, green water! Above all, there couldn't be such a man as this masked, cloaked creature, except in a queer melodrama. And yet—Pandora felt so vividly awake now! Her heart was beating so hard, and her breath was coming in such short gasps. She must give up the hope that she was caught in a dream.

Now the creature had turned away. He was sticking a key into the door—and taking it out again, having ostentatiously grated it in a rusty lock. Pandora thought that if only she had a hammer she would try to stun him as he stooped, and steal the key; but she had no weapon at all—unless she attacked the enemy with a chair. There was no time to run across the room and get one, however. Besides, the struggle would be too unequal! It would be sure to end in failure for her.

"Have you come here to kill me?" she panted.

To be continued in the next issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

WOULD-BE LYNCHERS FOILED BY SHERIFF'S RUSE

BY quick thinking and acting, Sheriff John Logan, of Polk County, Florida, recently saved Wilmer Collins, a negro, from being lynched. Collins was being taken to the Barlow County jail by the sheriff and three deputies. Just outside of Lakeland a crowd of about one hundred men surrounded the party's automobile. Facing the mob, Sheriff Logan declared: "I know every man among you. I swear each and every one of you in as a deputy sheriff. It is your duty to help us escort this prisoner to the jail at Barlow."

The sheriff's determined stand cowed the mob and saved his prisoner's life.

Why Benny Broke the Record

by *Dahlia Graham*

Author of "When Sarah Sang," etc.

HAD he been consistent with the tenets of his race and fitness with his physical characteristics and stature Benjamin Kantor would have favored the damsel of four foot nothing and olive-saffron complexion. He should have dreamed all the time on a level with soft, brown eyes and a maidenly plumpness forecasting a maturity of solid and somewhat heavy matronhood. In short, Benjamin should right away have made up his mind to marry Rebecca. But in between the long hours when he was not all-absorbed in making money he caught his mind wandering free and speculative regarding the future. Ben dreamed—not of Rebecca.

Following the day when his bank deposit reached the level warranting his betrothal to Rebecca Benjamin had at odd periods lived a double life.

Now and again in the street, on a trolley, or perhaps at some window, he caught the glint of gold. Then some emotion stirred within him that was neither conducive to contentment nor loyalty to the girl of his spoken choice. The shades of gold that stung Benjamin's interest and caused him to ponder elusive possibilities, varied all the way from pale yellow, to gold of a decided copper hue and—this same luring color invariably adorned the heads of tall, lissom girls; creatures of blond loveliness that not always merited a

second glance. Out of all these peeps and passing impressions Ben fashioned for himself an ideal. He made up a composite, mental picture of what he would consider to be a really beautiful girl.

This started him looking a little closer and oftener. He became more discriminating, more of a connoisseur in the various forms of the strictly blonde. In consequence of this intensive study Ben could find no single specimen that could compete with his ideal. For many weeks he steered a safe, uninterrupted course. The—

II.

Benjamin and Rebecca stood by the lag counter. In leather, velvet and beads, they were piled up in hundreds. There was something there to please almost every choice, except Rebecca's. Her black eyes darted hither and thither in fruitless search; her full lips pouted and were down-drawn. Her small, dimpled hands were moist with nervous strain, all because she could not find a lag to suit her.

Benjamin looked at Rebecca's flushed face. He noted the light reflected on the shiny polish of her nose; he observed the dusty flecks of powder dabbed on the extreme tip of that same. He noticed a number of things and summed them all up in one comprehensive word:

"Peaved," he thought, and lagged a little farther in the rear. Rebecca

moved along the counter, picking up bags and dropping them. She was not overthoughtful or polite to the sales girl who from time to time ventured to make a suggestion.

"Shopping! Huh!" reflected Benjamin in exclamatory but silent disgust. "Aw, don't I just hate it. She could just as well have come on Monday, 'stead of dragging me around. On a Saturday, too. We could have been having a good time at Coney or somewhere by now, if she hadn't got this bag bug in her head."

Ten paces away Rebecca started a wrangle with the tired sales girl.

Benjamin stepped aside and found a corner where he could look about him without being shoved in the ribs by some feminine elbow every two seconds. Bargain hunters are not very tolerant of impediments in the way of the chase.

At the end of the aisle was a soda fountain all decked with palms and sizzling pleasantly suggestive of long, cool drinks. To the right of Benjamin the store branched off into crowded alleyways flanked with tables and counters burdened with cheap goods. On his left the floor was far less thronged, and one aisle in particular offered a clear vista.

Behind the long, glass cases lounged an elegant young man of the modern Adonis type. He was the dispenser of high-class jewelry. At his hands, the store clients received the best that money could buy. In the glass cases were rings priced as high as ninety-eight dollars and seventy-five cents, and wrist watches marked down to fifty-seven dollars and sixty cents.

"Cheap lot of junk," thought Benjamin and glanced proudly at his own glittering diamond. He remembered also the wad of bills he handed out in payment for Rebecca's solitaire. "I 'spose that dude kids himself he's the high-toned baby boy of the layout. He——"

Then something happened!

Benjamin gave no more bored thought to the salesman or to retrospect. All his attention was claimed by some one who was approaching the jewelry counter.

"Good gosh all!" he muttered, and stared and stared. "What a peach! A topnotch, three-karat looker, if ever there was one."

Viola Desmond was most certainly and decidedly a looker. What sort of a doer she was, remains to be discovered by Benjamin.

In his first glance Ben envisaged much. He took in the girl's attractiveness all at once, and it left him marveling and gasping.

He stood unobserved, worshipping.

For the time being he was enmeshed in the lure of a skin that was rose-pink and lotus cream; of eyes that were seductively deep blue and made him think of violets. Five feet eight of peachfulness! Here, in a department store above all places, was the dream girl in the flesh. Right there, standing with the grace of a thoroughbred at the jewelry counter, was his composite ideal epitomized in one living, ravishing creature.

Benjamin heaved a deep sigh of gratification and glanced round to see what Rebecca was doing. He sighed again this time with relief. He had seen that she had not yet bought a bag. For as long as Rebecca did not make up her mind, he was free to stay where he was and feast his eyes. One thing he was sure of: Rebecca would not give in and leave that counter until she had what she wanted. For the first time since they had become engaged Benjamin felt truly thankful for his promised one's streak of stubbornness.

III.

"I should jazz if she don't get what she's after for another hour," muttered Benny wickedly. "I'm happy. That girl makes that Percy boy look like an

anæmic hoodlum. She's got class. Shouldn't have thought she'd come here, though. Maybe she's thinking of buying something for somebody she don't give a hoot for."

This surmise did not seem to be borne out by the facts. Tray after tray of glittering bits of jewelry was brought out by the attentive salesman, and after passing under the inspection of Viola's glorious eyes, was put back. Once or twice Benjamin saw a slender-fingered hand delicately pick up a ring or a bracelet and each time replace it.

At last, when Viola was about to move away, the clerk bestirred himself to one last effort in making a sale. He went to an impressive-looking safe big enough to hold all the treasures of the Indies and brought out a collection of leather-covered cases. These, as one who offers presents to a disdainful goddess, he arranged on a pad in front of the girl. He opened the cases with reverent gesture, and Ben saw the girl's short upper lip curve in a smile when the clerk held up a ring set with a stone nearly rivaling in size the one worn by Benjamin. He heard her rippling laugh of pleasure, and he glowed in sympathy with the joy of her artlessness.

Yes, Benjamin was enjoying himself. He looked around to see if there were others drawing pleasure from the same source that he was. But Rebecca was still bag hunting; the sales girls were still rushing about. Business was going on as usual. The customers were all engaged in their own affairs. Apart from himself, and the clerk who was waiting on the girl, Benjamin could not see anybody else who was even looking at the wonder with the hair of glinting gold. Not immediately, but as Ben's eyes came back to the girl they took in a lurking figure. A feeling of disquietude came over Benjamin.

Some short distance from the jewelry counter, and behind the girl, was a stacked pile of rolls of cloth. Am-

bushed behind the barrier and trying to look innocent of all except of passing interest in the throng, was a quietly dressed man. He might have been waiting for his wife, but Ben knew better.

"A sleuth, one of the store detectives," he thought, and a horrid, sinking sensation of fear and indignation attacked him. His dismay deepened when, glancing to the other side of the store, he spied a woman standing with her back to the girl—also watching. She did not appear to be doing so, but Benjamin was sharp enough to know what she was really doing with the vanity case mirror she was holding a little to one side of her eyes.

"Pretending she's got something in her eye," he muttered. "But, she ain't, unless it's a picture of that girl."

Watchfully careful that he himself was not being observed, Benjamin drew further back in his corner and waited, unable to make up his mind what to think, and quite uncertain what he should do. It did not seem possible that so beautiful a girl; one so charmingly innocent looking, could be an object of suspicion. Yet—there were the signs plainly before him that she was being watched. The woman who had held the mirror had joined the man standing behind the rolls of cloth; and, though they talked as chance-met acquaintances, it did not escape Ben's notice that they both kept their eyes on the girl at the jewelry counter. Presently the clerk looked over at the man and the woman; stared for a second, then after a quick glance at the girl, as if to see that she was not watching him, he gave an almost imperceptible shake of his head. Directly following this Benjamin saw that the clerk was more attentive and seemed to be anxiously careful about the number of jewel cases that lay in front of his customer.

"One of them gave him the high sign

to watch out," decided Ben, "but Percy shows sense and don't think she's a crook. Neither do I—can't be. A girl like that wouldn't stoop to stealing a—"

It was then that Benjamin saw something happen that shattered his faith, though it did not destroy his infatuation for his personified ideal. Indeed he suffered as one who watches a beautiful bird about to be snared. Yet, unless he denied the evidence of his own eyes, Benjamin had actually witnessed the girl drop one of the jewel cases into her bag. The act had been performed slickly and with a deftness that was seen only by Ben. The detectives were still standing behind their rampart. The girl smiled at the clerk, shook her head, and made a movement of her hand indicative that he had nothing to suit her requirements. She started to move away from the counter.

Ben saw the clerk gather up the jewel cases—stop—look up suddenly; pale—then nod to the two behind the rolls of cloth. Like well-trained dogs they obeyed the signal. The man hurried one way to intercept the girl, the woman to the other end of the aisle.

There was no doubt that a "pinch" was about to take place.

The girl was coming straight toward Benjamin. He gazed at her untroubled face, and her beauty, now seen closer, gained in appeal. He noticed as she came still nearer that she did look a little bit nervous. It was now or never. Ben acted spontaneously and without real thought of what he was undertaking or what he was really going to do. One thing he was certain of. The girl was in dire danger, and as one who leaps before an onrushing car to save a child from being run down, so did Benjamin rise to the urge within him. He made no fuss about the matter. He just stepped forward. Curiously enough he did not omit the ceremony of raising his hat.

IV.

Viola flashed a downward look of alarmed surprise at the young man who barred her progress. Ben spoke in low, urgently quick words.

"Come back to the counter at once. You've been spotted. They're after you right now. Don't waste a second. I'll help."

The girl's red lips became pinched and white, but she forced a smile.

"You are not——" she commenced.

"I'm your friend," Benjamin said quickly. "Do you a good turn, if you'll move quick." Then as they walked back to the clerk, now staring at them with a puzzled look, Benjamin went on: "Say that you want me to have a look at that lavalier he was showing. I'll stand close beside you. You get that case out of your bag and—drop it. See?"

The girl nodded.

What took place after that was touch and go. There was hardly an appreciable fraction of time between the moment the girl got the case out of her bag, dropped it close to Benjamin's foot, and the arrival of the two detectives.

The man had his mouth open ready to make the familiar request to the effect that the lady was wanted in the manager's private office, but Benjamin forestalled him. He heard the case fall, stepped back and planted his heel firmly on the detective's toes. He stooped, and picking up the case, divided his excuses between the clerk and the detective.

"I knocked it off with my sleeve," explained Ben, and turning to the detective, added: "Excuse me, did I hurt you? So sorry."

The detective glared, grunted, and stood back. The woman walked on a little way and made show of being interested in the contents of a showcase.

There could be no doubt that the clerk, the male and female detectives, were all aware they had been cleverly played

with, but there was nothing they could do in challenge of Benjamin's trick.

Viola Desmond, now that the moment of peril was past, smiled down with bewitching gratefulness at her quixotic knight.

"I think," she said with a drawl of delightful impertinence, "we will not bother any more just now about that lavalier. Suppose we go?"

The slight emphasis on the *we* got right with the susceptibilities of Ben. He cast one look at the bag counter. Saw that Rebecca was now deeply interested in examining the inside of a bag, and said:

"Let's."

This one word launched Ben a big step farther in his adventure, but if we admit that no man who has an ideal is coldly sane and calculating; that Benjamin was within perfume reach of the physical embodiment of this same ideal; and that he was intoxicated with pride at his ruse, we can excuse his rashness.

If there were no illogical lovers, there would be precious little material for romance in the world. But as a saving clause, it should be mentioned that it was Ben's intention to go no farther than the door with the girl, to see her, as it were, safely off the premises.

He did. And when he had passed through the revolving doors with the girl to the freedom of the street, Viola had no call to play the part of a blond vamp to induce her cavalier to suggest a taxi and—a bite of something to eat.

It was early, but Benjamin knew his way about town and in less than fifteen minutes after that tense, crowded moment at the jewelry counter, the two of them were seated in a cosy corner in one of those side-street restaurants where young couples can dine in comfort and talk in peace.

While the waiter was taking Benny's order, the girl sat thoughtfully regarding her rescuer. Her face betrayed bewilderment and a dazed won-

der. In every possible way she expressed the direct, absolute antithesis of Benjamin. Ordinarily, she would not have seen him unless he had bumped into her; then she would have scowled prettily and never given him a second thought. But this was not an ordinary circumstance. Viola was vibrantly alive to the fact that she was indebted to this quick-eyed, pale-skinned young man. He had come from nowhere and literally snatched her from the jaws of jail.

"If it hadn't been for him, that's where I'd be on my way to now," she thought. "I wonder what made him do it? He's no masher. Looks as if he might have a bit of cash laid by, but he's not in the habit of throwing it around. I've never seen him before, so what's the answer?"

During the short taxi ride both Viola and Ben had been too near to the uncomfortable and too relieved at their escape to talk much. Neither knew any more about each other than Ben's infatuation for a dream girl had led him to champion a really and truly live one.

"Why did you do it?" asked Viola, leaning with clasped hands across the table.

Benjamin fumbled with his cigarette case. His hands trembled slightly and his eyes were troubled.

"You made a mistake. You didn't mean to drop that case in your bag; did you?"

Viola gave a quick frown. A way out of unpleasant explanations was offered to her, but she rejected it.

"I made no mistake," she said quietly and undeviantly. "I went to that store for the purpose of getting something that I could sell."

"Sell?" echoed Benjamin, and his glance swept over the girl. She wore no jewelry of any value, but she did not look obviously impoverished.

"I know what you are thinking," she went on; "you judge by what you see."

A girl—a man—has to be ragged and down at heel before they can claim to be really hard up. A girl should sell the clothes off her back or——” A bitter smile libeled for a moment the girl’s youth. After a pause she added: “I prefer to steal, or at least try to.”

Benjamin lighted his cigarette, and the match burned down to his fingertips before he dropped it. He kept his eyes down.

V.

“You need money?” he asked at last.

Viola gave a short, mirthless laugh. “I am not asking for any. I told you the reason why I tried to get away with that ring. That was all.”

Ben shot her an intense glance.

“Please sit quietly,” he said with a queer, crooked little smile. “Don’t move or speak. I am going to do something else that you will want to know the reason for. I don’t think I shall be able to tell you, so we’ll have our dinner and call it a day.”

This last was said in an attempt to give a humorous finale to a strained moment. While he talked Ben slipped his bill fold out of his pocket, opened it on his knees, and folded some bank notes to as small a slip as five twenties will crease to, and with his business card handed it to her.

“Put that in your bag, sister,” he said, “A bit of dough is a great little worry cure, and maybe it’ll do all that you wanted to do better than if you had—had sold that ring. Quick now, our soup’s on the way.”

There are high-pitched moments that allow of no adequate articulate expression. In the girl’s place, a man, by the mere fact that he was the recipient of an extraordinary and generous favor from another of his own sex, would have been able to find relief in grateful, but forcible language. To Viola, the embarrassment of her position denied her all-spoken words; but her tremulous

lips, her eyes, tender with gratefulness, were possibly more eloquent. Anyway, Benjamin was more than satisfied with what he read, and that was all that really mattered.

The soup came, and during the progress of the dinner Ben pieced together the not very exceptional, but none the less tragic, history of the girl. Over the demi-tasses she told her story without stress and very briefly.

“When mother died, I cut loose. Got a job in a small show, went on the road, and—been going ever since; except when I’ve been broke. It’s a hard life, I can tell you; but what’s a girl to do? Came here from Chi; the show went to pieces. All the girls beat it back while the going was good. I stayed on. Thought I’d get in as an extra. But there was nothing doing. I went to every agent in town, and it was always the same old put-off yarn: call again—to-morrow. I hooked what I could, but that didn’t last long. Room and board charges piled up, and there was only one chance that I could take—that I could think of. But it is strange how it has all turned out. I can’t believe it is true. No man has ever before been so decent to a girl. I cannot understand what made you——”

“There’s lots of fellows that ain’t so bad as they might be,” said Ben. “As for me, I ain’t much of a talker, but maybe I can say it in another way. We’re all alone and—well, I guess I won’t get thrown out.”

Benjamin got up, disappeared through a curtained arch and returned with a violin case. He opened it, took out the instrument and bow, and stood beside the girl. He flushed slightly as he noted the faint expression of amusement on her expressive face.

“Perhaps you would rather I did not——”

Viola bit her lower lip. “Please go on,” she said contritely; “I want to hear what you have to say.”

"Then I'll say it!" exclaimed Ben and gave the three opening notes of Drdla's "Souvenir."

"Know it?" he asked.

The girl shook her head.

"All the better," said Benjamin. "You won't be able to compare me with any of the crackajacks. I only play—for fun."

Perhaps Viola thought she was in for an interlude of scratchy fiddling, or she may have surmised that Ben was really joking, but whatever was her state of mind, she speedily had evidence that Benjamin was really telling her something and telling it well. She felt her heart beat faster with the thrilling, pathetically wooing call of his chosen medium. And when she glanced up at his absorbed face it was an effort to remove her gaze from his shining eyes.

Benjamin was playing a dream; love music to Viola, or was it to the ideal? Soon, his bow hung on a quivering dying note. Then—silence. He put the violin back in its case and carried it away. When he came back, the girl sat pensively quiet. Her long lashes clung together in little, moist spears.

"Did you get it?" asked Ben in assumed lightness.

"I think so—but——" Girllike, Viola finished her uncompleted sentence with the beginning of another thought.

"You play in a orchestra?" she asked.

"Not me," exclaimed Ben cheerfully.

"I'm out to make money, real money. I aim to give my future wife all she wants," he finished meaningly.

Viola would have been very dull if she had not realized what was intended to be conveyed by this strange young man of poetic fervor, of generous impulse, and business-like practicability. She took refuge in the deliberate pretense of misunderstanding him.

"Then you are married or—engaged to be; you already have a girl!" she exclaimed and reaped better than she expected.

The statement caught Ben unready. He grinned in a shamefaced manner.

Viola seized her chance and made the most of it. It hurt her to be unkind to her benefactor, but, grateful as she felt, she was glad of the opportunity to be relieved of having to assume a deeper liking for Benjamin than she knew she could never genuinely experience. She spoke at length and concluded:

"I am no vamp: I'm not going to rob another girl of her—her steady."

"I'll break it——" commenced Benjamin.

"You will not do anything of the kind," declared Viola, standing up. "Tonight I shall be on my way to Chicago. Forget all about me. You have just been splendid. Don't go and spoil it all now by serving another girl a dirty trick. One of these days you'll hear from me. Now—good-by."

The girl held out her hand. Ben clasped it gently; then he softly kissed the fingers that lay in his palm. A moment later he clenched his empty fist. There was a click of high heels. He looked up in time to see only the flash of vanishing, glinting gold.

Viola was gone.

For that night—and several days Ben did not go near Rebecca, but gradually the dream girl faded and——

Three years later Benjamin, a bit over weight, and Rebecca much more so, sat at the end of the second row adjacent to the center aisle. Between them and the stage was only one row of seats and a low bank of ferns and flowers masking the concealed orchestra. Prosperity oozed from every pore of the pair of them. From Mrs Benjamin's pudgy fingers flashed sparks of rubies red and diamonds of pure water. Her husband was a good second to her in the number of karats he carried on his person. He scintillated like a Christmas tree, and when the curtain went up on Broadway's latest successful com-

edy, there was no more contented male in that theater than Ben.

Fortune had smiled upon him as she always does with those who insist on their material rights and plead for no favors. Solid position was Ben's, and his one romantic adventure had proved but a single prelude to the honest-to-goodness happiness he found with Beckey.

Viola was now a misty, vaporous figure in an old tale. A tale that Benjamin seldom thought of until—until the middle of the first act. Down the center of the stage danced a glorious, shimmering creature. Her resplendent costume dazzled, her eyes were violet-blue, her hair was of glinting gold.

Viola, the ideal, Viola, the amateur shoplifter, was now the principal in a tiptop show. Downstage she came until it seemed to Ben that she was never going to stop. Those violet eyes seemed to be looking straight into his own. He shrank back in his seat; shivered, and gave a sidelong look at Rebecca.

"What's the matter?" she asked placidly. "Feel a draft? Why! Just look at your face! It's all wet."

"I—I'm hot," grunted Ben, and puffed out his cheeks.

"Well, sit still and don't fidget so," admonished Rebecca. "Something you have eaten has disagreed with you. That's what is the matter."

"Guess you are right," and Ben nodded, and for the rest of the performance behaved much as a dazed man. When he raised his eyes to the stage he looked no higher than the feet of the performers.

"I think that girl with the mop of yellow hair was just a wonder," said Rebecca, when she sat back in her corner of the Benjamin limousine; "don't you?"

"Not so bad," replied Ben, and pretended to be very sleepy.

The next morning Benjamin found himself with a duplex arrangement of thoughts very disturbing and interfering with business.

"Darned fool I am," he thought with savage irritability, and sought distraction in faultfinding, and small, wordy conflicts with his employees.

About eleven o'clock came a special-delivery letter.

Benjamin eyed it suspiciously, got a whiff of perfume from the envelope, and retired to his private office.

The first thing he took out of the envelope was a crinkly, new bank note for one hundred dollars. Next, he read a gilt-edged correspondence card. It bore few words, yet all was said that should have been. The short message was typical of the outspoken girl who had dined just that once with Ben.

My husband joins me in thanking you for your very great kindness when I was most in need of a friend. Most sincerely yours,
VIOLA.

"That ends it," said Benjamin tearing the card into very small sections. "She's a thoroughbred all right." Then he heaved a big sigh and bustled out of his office.

"Now, then," he snapped marching up to a bunch of gossiping girls, "get busy, some of you. Whadder you think it is? A debating club? Here, Miss Adams, give those girls something to do. There's that new line of coats to sort out. Get them tickets fixed right on those navy suits, too. Gosh, you're all half asleep."

Later, when he was entering his hotel apartment, Ben thought once again of the girl with the hair of gold. It was to be the very last thought he gave her, but he found that fate had ready for him another little thorn to spurn old memories.

"I ordered some new records," said Rebecca after dinner. "We'll try them out, shall we? There's that one you

used to play before you got so fat and lazy. I always liked it. It is the top one."

Benny took up the shining disk, but it did not get as far as the machine. The toe of his shoe caught neatly under a

rug. He stumbled. Said a bad word, and the record snapped in his hands. He made a good job of it, too. The pieces scattered all over the floor.

The title of the record was: "Souvenir."

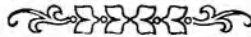


FAKE "COP" FREES PRISONERS

BY masquerading as a plain-clothes man a friend helped Dominick Gliberto, a twenty-two-year-old gunman and expert thief, to escape from the custody of the New York police recently. Detective Howard C. O'Leary left headquarters with Gliberto and a Chinaman, both of whom were to be arraigned in the Tombs court. The Chinaman's case was called first. Noticing a man in civilian clothes, who was sitting in the antechamber to the courtroom, and who was wearing a police shield, O'Leary turned to him and asked him to hold Gliberto until disposition of the Chinaman had been made. Five minutes later O'Leary returned and found that his prisoner and the obliging "detective" had disappeared.

There are two doors leading from the anteroom. One opens into the courtroom and the other into the complaint room. It is customary for detectives and other officers of the law to wait in the anteroom with their prisoners until their cases are called for arraignment.

Apparently Gliberto's friend had heard that O'Leary would have two prisoners in his charge, and knew that one would be kept in the anteroom while the case of the other was being tried. The bogus cop and the prisoner walked out of the Tombs unchallenged.



PEARL FRAUD DISCOVERED IN LONDON

SOME one perpetrated a tremendous fraud upon London jewelers recently by selling the imitation pearls represented as genuine ones. The faked jewels are so perfect that they withstand all ordinary tests. Like Oriental pearls, these imitations were sent to England already pierced. The discovery was made when a workman in one of the big jewelry shops was assembling a necklace out of pearls bought for ten thousand pounds. He found that one of the pierced holes was not large enough for the string, and so he tried to enlarge it. In so doing he chipped a piece out of the pearl, revealing a small mother-of-pearl bead inside a coating of pearl film.

London jewelers state that the fake is a product of eight or ten years of work spent in the development of Japanese pearl culture.

The method employed in making these false pearls is as follows. Oysters are taken from the sea and by a surgical operation a mother-of-pearl bead is inserted in the flesh of each one of the mollusks. The bivalves are then returned to their bed. After two months they are taken out of the water again, by which time the mother-of-pearl bead is found to be covered with a thin pearl film deposited by the oyster.

Imitation pearls of this sort are the same in weight, size, and color as Oriental pearls, and when tested with the teeth they grit and grate like the genuine ones.

Headquarters Chat

BRIEF and to the point is Mr. A. Mulligan, of Staten Island, New York. He says:

"DEAR EDITOR: I am very much interested in the Thunderbolt stories. I would like to know when the next one will appear. Hurry it up!"

Fortunately we can answer this letter, and, more fortunately still, we can answer it in a way that will please Mr. Mulligan and bring joy to the hearts of thousands of other readers.

Answer: "The Thunderbolt's Engagement," by Johnston McCulley, leads the next issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE. This being the case, we make bold to suggest that you lay plans at once, which will insure your getting this number. Any collection of coins of the realm, the sum of which will make fifteen cents, is needful to accomplish this end in a lawful manner. Also, unless you make sure to be among the first in line when your dealer opens his bundle, it will be wise to order yours now.

While we are on the subject of the next issue, may we call your attention to this: There will be short stories in it by Roy W. Hinds, Herman Landon, Frederick Ames Coates, Eric A. Darling, and other authors of equal note.

Here is a letter which brings sunshine into our lives, too, though there is a dark cloud in the last line:

"DEAR EDITOR: I thought you might be glad to know that your magazine brings a great deal of sunshine into my life. I am nearly sixty years old and go to business every day. I get my relaxation from the pages of your publication, and it affords me much pleasure and interest. It is by far my favorite magazine. Nearly all of the stories are worth reading, and you are to be complimented on your list of authors. My favorite is Christopher B. Booth. His Clackworthy stories, especially, are fine. I also liked his novel which appeared last November. The people seemed to talk out loud to me. Next to Mr. Clackworthy comes Thubway Tham, and third in my choice is Doctor Bentiron. Herman Landon also writes some good stories. I do not care especially for the Big-nose Charley stories. They seem vague and unreal.

"Englewood, New Jersey.

MRS. A. FORD."

Here is another reader who will be sure to get full value for his money next week:

"DEAR EDITOR: Have been reading DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE for four years and think it the best ever. Johnston McCulley is my favorite, with Herman Landon and Scott Campbell close seconds. Would like to have some more Spider stories and the completion of the Thunderbolt series. I also like the Clackworthy stories by Booth. The Early Bird sure is original.

"Best wishes for your magazine,

H. J. LANCETTE.

"St. Paul, Minnesota."

Here is an interesting and informative letter. That's right, Mr. Hollenbeck; we never saw a revolver smoke. We will keep our eyes peeled for this. Authors, please take notice: In future, no more smoking revolvers.

"DEAR EDITOR: While reading a recent issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE I turned to the Headquarters Chat, which is always an interesting part of your magazine for me. I noticed an article of R. M. Warner in regard to telegraphing finger prints. I take it that he does not believe it can be done. As I am a detective and finger-print expert I think I can convince Mr. Warner by stating that it can be done and is being done every day from almost every bureau. Of course, we use this method only in case of hurry-up calls; otherwise the full-end card is sent with necessary remarks.

"Also Mr. Warner seems to object to having romance in the stories. Well, if Mr. Warner could only handle some of the cases that I've had, even in the last five years, he would be very much surprised to find out that, no matter how serious a case is, from petty crime to murder, there is more or less a romance, or love, woven with it, and in almost nine cases out of every ten the cause is traced to it; so, you see, I am afraid your stories would not amount to much, and would not be true to life if there was no romance. Also I will say that the stories in your magazine have helped me and many another man of my trade to figure out cases which sometimes are very puzzling. They have just a hint now and then which gives us an idea for our own cases.

"I wish to say that no revolver smokes. I don't quite see where the authors get that idea. It is very absurd. A revolver never smokes. It always makes me laugh when I read such a thing in stories. But just the same your stories are very good—the best I have ever read, and oftentimes a great help. Best wishes for your magazine and its success. Yours truly,

"Portland, Oregon.

ELMER J. HOLLENBECK."



If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send Louise Rice, in care of this magazine, specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned, and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. She will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in the department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Rice cannot be responsible for them.

V. M. N. K.—I'll be frank, my boy, and say that I believe even your high-school training is a waste of time. Ordinarily I am for prolonging education, instead of cutting it off, but in your case you will learn so much more from actual experience than from books that it is a pity for you to keep on struggling with them. Your love of outdoor life and your tendency to learn through instinct rather than through deliberate intent both point to a line of life for you which is away from the academic. Ever think of taking up forestry as a pro-

fession? I am sure that you would like it, and that you have a natural aptitude for it.

J. E. G.—With you I'll be what some of my clients call "brutally" frank, J. E. G., and tell you that your writing shows me that your constant shifting from one thing to another is due, not to your hunt for a real talent, but to your instinctive desire to get a good-paying job without much work attached to it. There's a word which accurately describes your fault, and that is laziness. Don't be angry—but I suspect that you will be, for you are not without pride, and I seriously doubt whether you have ever stood off and got a good look at yourself. Try to do this now, and, if your inspection is honest and thorough, you'll end up by agreeing with me.

*Tell me what my handwriting reveals?
It fitted for. I have worked as a sailor,
tins, printer, and many other lines, but
to me. I am now thinking of taking the
accessories. Do you think I will be
the exclusive agency? I would like
sending a stamped, addressed envelope.*

Best thing you can do for the present is to stop thinking about what you want to do. Just take the nearest job and try to make good at it. If you will faithfully preserve this attitude for, say, a year, refusing to consider whether or not you will continue to do this work all your life, you will clarify your mind and be able, then, to look accurately at your possibilities.

E. J. B.—Yes, indeed, I do believe in trying to settle to some one line of work early. However, sixteen is a bit young for your handwriting really to show your "line," unless you were especially talented, and very few of us are that. Your writing at present shows its good sense. It expresses fewer freakish qualities than the writing of most boys of your age and has the indication of a rather steadier will power. Indication of talents in any one line is not given; but indications of general practical ability are. I should say that a business college would just about settle your questions. Your young brother's writing shows that he is more excitable and moody than you, and that he needs a great deal of careful training and discipline. If he really wants to be a success and to grow into a fine man, let him take care that he has interesting and really worth-while boy friends, and that he tries to gain a good education. When he is about your age he will be turning away from both, or I'm no character reader; but "forewarned is forearmed."

M. E. R.—Gracious, don't be silly, M. E. R.! Fancy my not replying to a DETECTIVE STORY reader because I didn't like her or him. Besides, I hardly ever dislike people. There's so much good in the worst of us that I find my sympathies running out to almost every one. Your health? Injured by your habit of introspection and your lack of buoyancy of spirit. Talents? For prac-

tical life. Get it out of your head that you are unusual; get it out of your head that you are "hard to understand." You have a sense of humor. Cultivate it. You have a lot of shrewdness. Drag it to the surface. Get busy on any job that's at hand and let your own inner self alone. You know the classic rule for a pimple? "It'll never get well if you pick it." Maybe you think that I'm frivolous, but I assure you that I'm in deadly earnest and talking rather deep stuff. If I were a psychologist, or any other long-named critter, I'd put it in big words. But there might be just as much meat in this homely talk as in four pages of difficult words. Eh?

PAT., Kern County, California.—No, indeed, I don't think that you are fitted for an indoor life; nor do I believe that you have a shred of literary talent. There! And I do believe that you possess rather an unusual mind, and I'm sure that you will make good use of it.

*I've been raised out of doors
all my life and am just starting out to
earn my own living. What line do
you think I am best suited in?*

Why not make a study of woodcraft, of forestry, of surveying, and so on. Three years in a school where such professions are taught, would do wonders for you. Your nervousness is only that of youth. And for goodness' sake keep away from motion-picture work. You are no actor, no matter what any director ever said.

SLAP.—Don't wonder you don't want to keep on working in a mill. Your handwriting shows that you are innately a worker with thought rather than with hands. Don't get the idea that the one is superior to the other, however; they're just different. If I were you I would see what interest I could work up in accounting, bookkeeping, office "systems," and "efficiency" methods. Have a good talk with the head of a business college, and I think you'll find out what you really ought to do.

A. L. VANDERHEYDEN.—Yes, you really have the inventor's "hand;" also the inventor's lack of practicality, his tendency to dream, his overtrustfulness and too great distrustfulness in alternate waves, and his liability to be at odds with all the humans with whom he comes in contact. There! That's what is called, in the vernacular, an earful. However, if you'll face those things squarely and make up your mind that you will correct them, you have as fair a chance as any inventor ever had to be successful and happy. You may think me unnecessarily severe, but I know inventors and have examined many examples of their writing, both famous and unknown. You are really talented and really a most difficult character. If you can make up your mind, as I said, to acknowledge the difficulty, you will be a long step ahead of the average man of your make-up.

BOONVILLE.—I don't know what happened to those specimens you mentioned. It's just barely possible that in filing your letter, before I got around to it, they may have been lost, but this doesn't often happen. I suspect you of having forgotten to put them in, for you are very absent-minded, very disorderly, and very much lacking in self-control. You really have a strong will, but it is so

badly used, and your understanding of life is so vague, that you might as well not have it. I do most earnestly advise you to "stop, look, and listen" instead of bustling about the world as you do, confused by your own lack of impulse toward definite ends, and responding to every influence which approaches you. You have a personality, dormant now, which could be trained into charm and effectiveness.

ROBERT W. E.—Your decisiveness in being able definitely to select a business, and in starting out at once to study for it, is reflected in your long "t" bar and in your firm pen pressure.

for me? If not
would you advise?
use state plainly,
t faults, etc. of
& you can detect,
my handwriting,
wish to correct
& as soon as possible.

Your faults are not practical but ethical. You are wholly absorbed in the question of success and give almost no thought to your spiritual development. You are selfish in your attitude toward love and friendship, and your inner eyes are closed to the finer beauties of the world. Didn't expect criticism on those points, did you?

Mrs. B. O'L.—Please look at the preceding specimen. Also, Robert, you look at this one.

I have become so
ted in them, that
nt you to analyze
w hand, writing,
well as the one I

It's a pity you two couldn't swap traits a bit. This is a writer who is idealistic, spiritual, tender, imaginative; who is perfectly capable of forgetting the best meal or the biggest sum of money ever laid before a hungry or impecuni-

ous mortal, for the sake of listening to the song of a bird. Fancy that, Robert! She is too lacking in self-assertion, and I'm willing to bet—a penny—that she is shamefully imposed upon by every one she loves. Eh, sister? I don't advise you to stop that, because you can't, but I do say to you that you can use good sense, even in your unselfishness. And your love of beauty and understanding of it ought to be used.

A FOOL THERE WAS.—What do you really want me to tell you? Well, in the first place, I don't believe half of your story. I think you are a foolish boy who may have hoboed a bit and perhaps got into trouble with some town constable, but as for all those desperate adventures—oh, tut, my dear. Yes, even two tuts! Your handwriting shows that you are an ordinarily nice fellow, and that you are not "mean" in any sense of the word. If you'll turn your attention to doing something interesting, instead of romancing about things, you'll come out all right.

MABEL.—My dear, I'm sorry for you, but the truth is that you got just what you deserved. I don't believe in this attitude of some women, that a man has to go off and make a small fortune before they will deign to cast an eye of favor on him. What did he ask of you? Eh? How good a cook are you? Can you sew? Are you a qualified home maker? And you're not healthy, you say? Don't you think a man is taking a big chance to suggest marriage to a sickly woman? I'll bet you never considered the question in that light, Mabel. I don't say that you ought to marry on a shoe string, as the saying is, but I think three thousand dollars a year a very respectable sum; also I consider that the young man acted with proper spirit in breaking off the engagement when you made that statement that you wouldn't marry on less than seven. Just the same, Mabel, your writing isn't so foolish as what you say, and I shouldn't be surprised if that ambitious mother of yours had had something to do with your driving this perfectly nice young man off. Also, and just the same, he might listen to reason, if a girl showed that she could talk it. Eh, Mabel?



HOW TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

CONDUCTED BY A. T. CRAIG

Mr. A. T. Craig is a master of the science that makes it possible for us to understand different persons' natures by studying their facial and bodily characteristics, so that we may know which of our acquaintances would make congenial social companions, which suitable business associates, et cetera. Unless your case is urgent, Mr. Craig would prefer that you wait until his articles treat upon the subject in which you are particularly interested. However, if you are confronted with problems that demand immediate attention, in dealing with some individual, write Mr. Craig fully of the conditions which bother you, give as complete a description of the person in question as you can, and, when possible, inclose a photograph. Mr. Craig then will give your case his personal attention. All photographs will be carefully returned, if a stamped, addressed envelope, of the proper size for the photograph, is sent. This service is free.

The Hands—Continued

THE short-fingered hand is always a driving power. Not without cause does the short-fingered hand double itself so readily into the form of a hammer. That particular type, which is pleasure-loving, lazy, and selfish, is marked by short, smooth, and rather beautiful fingers, does not invalidate the diagnosis, for that very type can drive more charity and help, money,

influence, and interest out of the average person than any other. It is this short-fingered, smooth-knuckled, fine-skinned hand in women which relentlessly drives men to beggar themselves for the sake of one approving caress from those fingers. It is the same type in man which is most often found running sweatshops and treating employees unjustly in all lines of industry.

The short-fingered hand, quite fat, with dimples in the knuckles, is an object at which a character student should look with some apprehension. When found associated with bodies which are not especially fat the inference is decidedly unpleasant. A great many of the most notorious and deliberately cruel murderers have this fat, rather pretty hand. The popular conception of a murderer's hand as being lean, dark, and talonlike is not borne out by the facts.



EXPERT DETECTIVE ADVICE

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM J. BURNS

Mr. William J. Burns is a well-known criminologist, who for years has been engaged in the study and investigation of crime and criminals. Any of our readers may consult Mr. Burns through this magazine in regard to any matter relating to crime and its detection, to psychological problems, and the protection of life and property against criminals and other evildoers. Letters seeking expert information along these lines should be addressed to the DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York. These letters will be answered personally by Mr. Burns, without charge. If stamp for reply is inclosed; they will be discussed in this department, the names and addresses in all cases to be omitted, when so desired.

The Store Detective

WOMEN are more often the department-store detectives. They have a particular genius for the work, and, in addition, it is easier for them to mingle with the shopping crowd without attracting attention to themselves.

Sometimes the store detective is one who has gradually worked herself up to this position from others. One of the best and most successful of store detectives, who has gone from good positions to still better ones for a number of years, began her career as a stock girl in a small store on the Pacific coast, where she surprised her employers by discovering the thieves who for a long time had depleted the stocks by a system of unusually well-concealed thieving.

Whether a graduate of the department-store selling force or not, the department-store detective must know a great deal about the stock of which it consists. She must, even more than the ordinary detective, be a judge of human nature. It is to the advantage of the store that there shall be no commotion when a shoplifter is found at work, and that the suspected or known thief shall be induced to go quietly to the manager's office. All this depends upon the ability of the store detective to estimate the person with whom she has to deal, and to determine how best to handle that person.

Strange to say, very wealthy and well-known women sometimes have a mania for taking things from shops. When they do so it is called kleptomania, and the store detective has to have a good memory for faces, so that she will not make the mistake of demanding the presence of such a woman at the office. One notorious case in a Western city is so thoroughly understood that store detectives limit themselves to making a mental note of what the woman takes. A bill is at once sent to her father, who pays it without question.

Sometimes the store detective is set to work to watch suspected employees. In that case she must be unknown to them. For this reason many of the big stores have two or three women detectives, who shift about and appear to purchase. By varying their costumes and using a mild bit of make-up, such as

wearing a wig occasionally, and so on, they remain unknown to all but a few. Sometimes a store detective has been unsuspected for a year or so, until compelled to interfere with a thief.

I would say that this was the one branch of the detective profession which was really a promising field for women. The pay is good, and the work, though constant, is not especially trying.

ANSWERS TO READERS' QUERIES

JAKE.—Apply to your local police station for information as to where the local revenue officers may be found. If you have any chance of appointment as a deputy it will be locally, where your reputation will be of assistance to you. Do not come to New York with the idea that you will find it easy to become at once a revenue agent, with good pay. These men are carefully selected. And often they are experienced detectives. You and a lot of the readers who write me should remember that in the detective profession, no more than in any other, is there a royal road to success. A business man does not become a great merchant overnight. Artists don't win fame and success without years of hard work. And think of what long years of labor and training the doctor and the lawyer must have before they can be sure of success. Why, then, should a detective jump into a good position and a well-paying one in a year?

S. L. F.—The Navy.—I doubt whether the man is a detective at all. If he is his conduct is astonishing. I have never heard of a bona-fide detective behaving like a crazy man, and that is just what this one is doing. As you are not in a position to demand his credentials, why not go to one of your superior officers and put the case frankly before him? I think it would be a wise thing to do. There is no real harm in the situation, but there is just the chance that the whole business might be something queer. Better clear it up.

ADAM KAHN.—There is no reason why you should not follow up any clues which you come upon. There is nothing in the law to prevent you from investigating the matter without authority from any one. But, of course, you will not have the facilities that an accredited detective would have. You have no right to demand explanations, no right to demand entrances, and so on. See that you keep strictly within bounds in this respect. There are some advantages, however, for you. You need not be thought to be doing anything in the matter, if you use a little caution, and you can ask questions innocently, which would instantly sound suspicious from the lips of a detective. Investigate that crowd of which you speak, for instance. You can easily become familiar with them. And if they are really all in on it, it is all but impossible that some one of them will not drop a hint of the fact.

MRS. ANNISTON.—Chicago was the first city to employ policewomen in large numbers. Up to the present time they seem to have been preëminently successful. Policewomen are concerned with the enforcement of all law and order, just as policemen are, but their special field is that of safeguarding girls, and of regulating the conduct of men at such places as public dance halls, et cetera. In a recent competition in Chicago the policewomen proved themselves to be fully the equal of their brother officers in the use of the pistol and in many physical exercises. A woman who wished to apply for this position should be sure that she is in first-class physical condition, and, while actual size will not count, the undersized woman, like the undersized man, will have little chance to get on any police force.

UNDER THE LAMP

CONDUCTED BY HENRY A. KELLER

THIS week's brain teaser was sent in for our perusal here by a reader who has followed the Under the Lamp department for the past two and a half years. His enthusiasm for ciphers, and everything pertaining to them, is as hearty as his experience with them is wide. He is Mr. B. E. Brigman, of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. All hail to him for making it possible for us to get a whack at what I unreservedly term a corking good cipher problem. It is really a cipher within a cipher—but this you will see for yourselves, all in good time.

It seems that The Eel, a leader of a band of thugs and "gerver men," was caught in a town not far from Roanoke Rapids, while trying to rob a bank. He was confined in the county jail, of which there was one in the town, to await trial. Now The Eel had a reputation for jail-breaking, and consequently a strict watch was kept on him. Even the few letters he wrote were most carefully censored. Here is one that he wished to have sent to a man known to the police as a crony on the fourth day of his incarceration.

Dear George:

At present I'm miserable, but I can't get out, so I'll try to make the best of a bad thing. I wish that you would come. Come any day or night. They are mighty good here. They let any one in. And any of my friends that wants to come, can come along with you, because I sure am some lonesome. If you care to see me, come Sunday and stay a while. Happy I will be. Will you come?

Jailer stays around close on Sunday to let visitors in. And if you can, get here early. The janitor here—he is a negro—will go with you to where the jailer lives. If any ladies want to come, I guess that it will be alright. Don't you think so? We have preaching here at eleven, so you will get to hear the sermon. It is a big event—mostly because there will be some singing.

Left the Reams station shackled up—in fact, like the wild man of Borneo. They are not going to let me leave this city. But you know that I would not leave. Certainly not! For I'd rather stand trial. I do not know what kind of a serious charge they will have for me. I know robbery will be one. But I'll tell you all about it when you come. Tell them all hello for me.

(Signed) Ed.

Find anything wrong with it? Neither did Sheriff Jennings, who had The Eel in charge, and who was morally certain that the wily prisoner would take any opportunity that offered itself to effect a get-away. Anyway the letter was sent.

And the next day The Eel asked that another letter be sent to the same pal. It is this:

Dear George:

Forgot to tell you that I wanted you to bring some Three Starts cigarettes. Be sure and bring them when you come.

Here is the answers to the examples you wanted me to work out for you. I was awful glad I had them with me, as they help to pass the time away.

2825-1	1230-1	1815-1	1211-2	2421-1	1130-1	2815-2	1123-2
2913-1	1930-1	3529-1	3124-3	1411-3	3524-3	1917-2	1830-3
1425-2	2425-2	3016-2	1119-3	22-3	17-3		

When you come, bring me some more.

And don't forget your old friend.

(Signed) Ed.

Sheriff Jennings, who had had some experience with cryptography, suspected the "answers to the examples" of being a substitution cipher—and correctly so. When he had worked it out he found it to contain full directions about the next job to be carried out by The Eel's band. But he let the letter, cipher and all, go through to its destination, because he saw in the episode a chance to make a grand coup by capturing the rest of The Eel's band.

The sheriff took his men and had them in hiding, all set to make his arrest, at the appointed time and place—but nothing happened. He waited till dawn of the morning following the night on which the crime was scheduled, and no one put in an appearance. But, when he returned to the county jail, he found the old negro, whom he had left in charge when he and his men had gone out to get The Eel's band, bound and gagged—and the prisoner had flown.

Now, then, how was it arranged? How did The Eel manage to communicate his plans for a jail delivery by means of the two letters? A careful study of them will tell. The figures represent an excellent substitution cipher; if you do no more than work that out, you will have solved a cipher problem that was made up for Sheriff Jennings' benefit. It cannot fail to give you much satisfaction and pleasure. But the real problem is to make the letters yield their secret of the plans for a jail delivery. Go to it. You will find the answers in next week's issue.

The answer to last week's cipher is: "Keep under cover. Dugan's out for you for the Van Peyster job. Don't worry about me and the kids. Liz." It was a substitution cipher, with 1 for a, 2 for b, 3 for c, and so on, to 26 for z, with extra figures used for a blind. The distinguishing feature of these extra figures is that, in the cipher, they ran consecutively, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0. The letter substitutes are the figures that break this sequence.

Dugan got away. He remained in hiding two months, then went to Canada. His family joined him there.

WEEKLY PAROLE FOR SAMOAN PRISONERS

OFFENDERS against the American civil laws in Samoa enjoy at least one privilege that is not granted to inmates of the penal institutions in the United States. Every Saturday afternoon at the American post prisoners are released from jail and given a holiday; they are not required to return to the American headquarters until six o'clock on the following Monday morning. The prisoners usually spend this time visiting relatives.

MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that those persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

When you hear from the person you are seeking, tell us, so that we may take your notice out. Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

MUELLER, PAUL, and **BERTHA HORCH**.—Their son Adolph was placed in a Catholic home on Staten Island when he was five years old, and has neither seen nor heard anything of his parents since that time. He was born at 239 Pearl Street, New York City, on May 26, 1896. He left the home when he was fifteen years old and went to Texas, where he still lives. He has made every effort to find his parents, but without success. There had been five children, but only one other was living at the time of his birth. The parents were both born in Germany, and were about thirty-two years old when Adolph was born. If any one can give this young man some information about his parents he will be deeply grateful, and will appreciate any assistance that may be given him in his search. Adolph P. Mueller, care of this magazine.

SNOOK, MRS. ONNA E.—She left home on December 24, 1920. She is twenty-six years old, but looks younger. She is five feet in height, weighs one hundred pounds, has a light complexion, blue hair and gray eyes. Any information will be gladly received by H. J. Snook, 8000 West Second Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

IRVING.—Where are you and the "Walking Box?" Send your address to me in care of this magazine, "Slats" and I wish to know where we may find you. "Joe."

BROADAWAY, V. A.—He was in Brest in November, 1917, and was last heard of at the Chateau Thierry offensive, since which time it has been impossible to get any news of him. He was a structural engineer, and was formerly connected with a Boston firm. He is about thirty-one years old, five feet eleven inches tall, with black hair, a gold front tooth, and the third finger of his left hand is missing. There is some important news for him from England, and any information that will help to find him will be greatly appreciated. A. G. Tice, care of this magazine.

BUTCHER, NATHAN BURTON and HENRY.—Nathan was last heard of in Oakland, California, in 1918, and Henry in Los Angeles, in 1913. Their sister would be glad to hear from them and will be glad to hear from any one who can tell her where they are. Mrs. Ella M. Cordeur, Placerville, California, M. R. A.

BAILEY, CHARLES, who was at Eagle Hunt, New York City, in December, 1919. Please send your present address to L. A. C., care of this magazine.

ELLIOTT, VERA, GERALDINE, and EARL.—Their sister is anxious to know what became of them after their mother died and their father broke up housekeeping. She will be very grateful for any information that will help her to find her brother and sisters. Mrs. Ernest Swan, 23 Canton Street, Portland, Maine.

MIGLIETTI, ROMALDA, of 119 Locust Street, Waterbury, Connecticut. She is missing with two of her little girls. Any one knowing where she is will do a great favor by notifying her husband, Luigi Miglietti, at the above address.

HUTCHISON, ALFRED F. B.—When last heard from in Pensacola, Florida. Four years ago it was heard that he had gone to New Mexico. He is nearly six feet tall, slim, with brown hair and gray eyes. Any news of him would be greatly appreciated by his broken-hearted wife, Mrs. D. Hutchison, care of this magazine.

SKINNER, FRANK ROYSTON.—He was born in Royal Oak, Maryland, and is about fifty-three years old. When he was twenty years old he moved to Wichita, Kansas, and seven years later he went from there. He was seen in Houston, Texas, about twenty-two years ago, and has not been seen or heard of since. Any information about him will be greatly appreciated by his nephew, Fred Whitlock, 625 South Lawrence Street, Wichita, Kansas.

EDWARDS, JAMES FRANK.—He is a railroad man, dark, with curly hair and a deep scar over his left eye. He is about five feet nine inches tall, twenty-eight years old, and has been gone seven years. He was last heard of in Birmingham, Alabama. It was rumored that he had been killed on the railroad, but this was never verified. His mother is getting old and is longing to know something definite about her son. It would make her very happy to get news of him, and she will be deeply grateful to any one who knows anything of him who will be kind enough to write to her. Mrs. Mattie A. Edwards, Box 21, Waverlyboro, Mississippi.

BRIDGES, WILLIAM, HENRY, and VIRGINIA.—Their eldest Mary has not been seen since 1875, and would be very happy to hear from them, or from any one who knows them and can tell her where they are. She was married to Joe A. Long at Decatur, Texas, in 1871. He has not been heard from his brother JESS LONG, since 1875. Any news of these people will be gladly welcomed. Mrs. J. A. Long, Atoka, Oklahoma.

BURNS, RALPH.—He enlisted in the army in April, 1920, in Detroit, and later was killed in a railroad accident. He was twenty-two years old, five feet nine inches tall, with light complexion and brown hair. Before he enlisted he was working for a construction company in Detroit. It is thought that the name of Burns may have been an assumed one. He said he had a sister in Los Angeles. A friend would be glad to communicate with his relatives, and will appreciate any assistance in finding them. O. Hoover, Box 225, Oceanport, New Jersey.

ROLSTON, PAUL.—He has not been heard from since September, 1920. He enlisted in the army and went to Camp Knox, Kentucky, in August, 1918, and was sent from there to Virginia, where he was in the photographic department at Langley Field, Hampton Roads. From there he was sent to Sarasota, Florida, where he was in the Aero Squadron. When he was last heard from he was back in Virginia, and his people do not know what became of him or whether he is dead or alive. If any one who knows what has happened to him should see this and will write to his sister, the favor will be greatly appreciated. Susie Rolston, Pendleton, Kentucky.

OLTSON, SANFORD P., formerly of Twenty-second Ambulance Company, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. If any members of this company know his present address, or anything about him after he went overseas, they will do a great favor by writing to M. M. G., care of this magazine.

ROSE, J. T.—When last heard of was living at or near Oklahoma City. Information will be appreciated by J. B. Rose, 1012 South Ninth Street, Tacoma, Washington.

PETTENGELL, ELIZABETH.—She was last heard from in 1903 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. She was separated from her husband when her son was four years old. He was taken to Chicago by his father, and his mother remained in New York City. He has never seen her since and would be happy to get some news of her. If she sees this she hopes she will write to him. Any information that will help him to find his mother will be most gratefully received. William F. Pettengell, 235 First Street, Jersey City, New Jersey.

SMITH, ARMOND.—He was last seen in Los Angeles, California, in 1912. His brother is anxious to hear from him. W. D. Bell, care of this magazine.

SORENSEN, EMILY.—She spent her childhood in Nevada, Wisconsin, and moved to Davenport, Iowa, when she was twelve or thirteen years old. She has dark hair and gray eyes. Any one who knows where she is will do a favor by sending her address to Francis Hayes, Box B, Taft, California.

COOPER, ROBERT, and his wife, whose maiden name was SPORE. They were married about 1901 at Saluda, Colorado. If they should see this they are asked to write to Cleve Henry, care of this magazine.

KEISTER, EL.—When I heard of he was in the western part of Texas. Any news of him will be greatly appreciated by his son, C. Keister, care of this magazine.

TONELSON, ALBERT A.—He was last heard of in Cleburne, Texas. His father is seriously ill, and would like to see him. Any one knowing where he is will do a great favor by writing to his sister and sending her his address. His parents are brokenhearted at his absence and will be happy to get any news of their son. Mrs. J. G. Mars, 113 East Ninety-sixth Street, New York City.

REASONER, GUS.—He has not been heard from since 1905, when he was in Toledo, Ohio. He had black hair and eyes and a fair complexion. His mother and brother are dead. His sister-in-law will be grateful to any one who can give her news of him. Mrs. Susie Reasoner, Route 4, Summerville, N. J.

ROSKOS, FRANK.—Fifty years ago he came to America from Koenigsbuth, Germany. Any information about him will be greatly appreciated by Joe Patrick, P. O. Box 25, Millsville, Pennsylvania.

BETWAY, GEORGE.—He was last heard of at Fort Myer, Virginia, in 1914, when he was discharged from the army. He was in Troop K, Fifth Cavalry. His old buddy would be very much to hear from him, or from any one who knows his present address. E. R. B., care of this magazine.

OGDEN, ROY.—In 1916 he was put in the Children's Home in Akron, Ohio, and he was adopted. Nothing has been heard of him since that time, and his adopted name is not known. He has blue eyes and light hair, and will be sixteen years old in July. His sister is very anxious to find him and will be glad to hear from any one who knows him. Lucy Ogden, care of this magazine.

CROSS, JAMES VIRGIL.—He was last heard from in 1913, when he was at Liberty, Missouri. His mother will be deeply grateful to any one who can give her information about her son. Mrs. Mary Stoutenburg, 2241 North Market Street, Wichita, Kansas.

LUDWIG, CHARLIE.—He came to America when he was sixteen years old, and was last heard from in Conneautville, Pennsylvania, in 1912, where he had a chicken farm. He is now about fifty years old, five feet eleven inches tall, thin direct-cut eyes, dark hair and complexion, and a prominent nose. Important information is awaiting him if he will write to W. E. Ludwig, 106 Ellenwood Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio.

COLE, LIEUTENANT CHRISTOPHER C. formerly with Quartermaster Department, and late with Bureau of War Risk Insurance is asked to send his address to this magazine. A friend has something of interest to tell him.

TIEFENBACH, HERMANN H.—He left Norwich, Connecticut, in the fall of 1918, with his mother, for California. He is about five feet six inches tall, with dark hair and dark eyes, and is of stocky build. Any one who knows where he is will do a favor by sending his address, or asking him to write to Private Don Anisys, Company B, Thirty-first Infantry, Cuartel de Espana, Manila, P. I.

HAMBLY, MARY. who left England with her husband, George Hambly, for New Zealand over forty years ago, would like to hear from her brother John, and her sisters, Martha, Jane, and Annie. They are thought to be in San Francisco. Any information about them will be gladly received by their niece, Esther Hambly, care of this magazine.

KOTELMAN, HARRY T.—He is forty-two years old, five feet eight inches tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, and is of light complexion. He has been missing since 1899, and was last seen at Diamond Springs, California. His family would be very happy to get some news of him, and will greatly appreciate any communication that will assist them to find him. Paul H. Kotelman, care of this magazine.

RICH, CHARLES GEORGE, or his wife **DOROTHY,** whose maiden name was Mrs. E. L. Rich, information will be greatly appreciated by T. Y. L., care of this magazine.

WEAKLEY, FRANK H.—He left his home in Nashville, Tennessee, in December, 1909, and went to Goldfield, Nevada, where he secured employment with a daily paper published in that city. On February 17, 1911, he went to Las Vegas, Nevada, with a boy named Tommy Burke, who left Las Vegas the same night, and has stated that Frank told him that he was going to a hotel in Las Vegas near the railroad roundhouse. This is the last that has been heard of him, and it has been impossible to trace him from that day. He was very fond of adventure, and it has been heard that he was in correspondence with some unknown person in reference to joining the Madero forces in Mexico. He is now about thirty-four years of age, six feet tall, with brown hair, blue eyes, and dark complexion. He is well educated and well read. Every effort has been made by the distressed parents to find their son, but without success, and they hope that readers of this magazine who have done so much good work in helping to find lost loved ones will once more do their best to relieve the sorrow of a broken-hearted mother, two devoted sisters, and a loving father. Any information that will give the slightest clue will be most gratefully received by a sister, Mrs. E. S. Hance, 705 West Main Street, El Paso, Texas.

B. DUSOLD.—I saw your inquiry in this magazine. Please write to me at once. O. W. C., 808 Kearney Street, San Francisco, California.

C. R. L.—Please write to me. B. Grant, care of this magazine.

VAUGHN, ROGER D.—He was last heard from in Danville, Virginia, in March, 1919. He is sixteen years old, with brown hair and eyes and a ruddy complexion. Any news of him will be gratefully received by L. O. Vaughn, Box 172, Riverside, California.

KEEVER, MRS. GERTRUDE.—When last heard of she was living on a ranch near Brighton, Colorado. She had one son, Walter. Also her sister, **MRS. ELLA GLENN,** who lived on a cattle ranch somewhere near Denver. Their father, Louis Evans, left Kentucky about forty years ago with his family, and went to Denver. Any information about these people will be gladly received by their cousin, who has not heard from them for twenty years. Mrs. Ada Ward, Route 2, Box 157, Paducah, Kentucky.

ZORZI, F., of Columbia Falls, Montana, member of the Forty-first Division, A. E. F., at St. Aligman, France, is asked to write to J. H. Maier, Box 187, Bradley, Illinois, who will be very glad to hear from him.

COOK, VOLKERT, O. T.—He was last heard of in New York City. He traveled a great deal and was lost sight of by his relatives. His nephew would be glad to get news of him, if alive, and if dead, would like to know where he is buried. E. M. C., care of this magazine.

SCOT, JOSEPH.—He is a farmer, and when last heard of was living on a farm on Spence Island, Canada. News of him, or of any member of his family, will be gratefully received by Mrs. Elizabeth Nichols, 1117 California Avenue, Butte, Montana.

COOLEY, E. R.—He is about thirty-eight years old, five feet seven inches tall, with curly dark-brown hair, gray eyes, and medium dark complexion. He was in Fremont, Nebraska, about thirteen years ago, and when last heard from was in St. Paul, Minnesota. His home was in Denver. Any one having information about him will do a favor by writing to Mrs. J. H., care of this magazine.

MALLOY, BUSTER.—Write as soon as possible, and let us know where you are. Henry Louis Eunice, 9339 Pershing Avenue, Apartment 463, St. Louis, Missouri.

FRYE, LAURA IRENE.—When she was four years old she was placed in a private home by the Ladies' Aid of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and when last heard of was in Oil City. She is now eight years old. Her mother, who has married since the child left, would be glad to hear from the people who have adopted her. She has dark-brown eyes and light hair. Any assistance in this matter will be most gratefully remembered. Mrs. H. B. W., care of this magazine.

KITTS, EVELYN.—She is about nineteen years old, and has been missing since June, 1914, when she left Knoxville, Tennessee. If she sees this she is asked to write to F. Smith, Box 926, Lynch, Kentucky.

COLLINS, DARWIN S.—He was last seen at Ford Bayard, New Mexico, about 1877. His old pard would be glad to hear from him or from any one who knows of him. He was a true friend from the West, and news of him would bring great joy to his old pard, F. E. Hall, 2850 Clifton Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

D. D. H.—Please come home, or write. I need you very much. Your wife, Pansy.

HIRSCH, FRANK.—He was last heard of in Syracuse, New York, where he was employed by a typewriter company. His niece, Agnes, would like to hear from him. Mrs. Morris, 459 Manhattan Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

SEAL, FRED, formerly of Company C, Ninth Training Battalion, Camp Pike, Arkansas. Any one knowing his whereabouts please communicate with P. D., care of this magazine.

HERRINGTON, NORMAN EARLE.—He was in the navy, and was discharged at the close of the war. On February 25, 1919, he left Oxford, Iowa, in a car, and has not been heard of since. His mother will be deeply grateful for any news that will help her to find her boy. Mrs. Annie Herrington, 718 Broadway, El Centro, California.

CARROLL, WILLIAM C.—Please write to your wife's relatives at Longworth, Texas, and forget the past. You will be most welcome when you return.

KESSINGER, MRS. GRACE LEWIS.—She disappeared from Alton, Illinois, in 1918, and has not written to any member of her family since that time. She is now twenty-three years of age. Any news of her will be most gratefully received by F. Burge, 3320 Bradley Street, Upper Alton, Illinois.

NOTICE.—I have connections by the following names: **MIGNON MERICK, CLARENCE M. BARNES,** who lived in Oregon in 1902, and **WILSON GREEN,** who lived in Texas. My mother's maiden name was Terrah Snyder. I would like very much to get in touch with some of my relatives. M. Gossett, 59 North Twenty-third Street, Paris, Texas.

DELANEY, JAMES (BLACK JACK).—He was last seen in Chicago in May, 1919, and was heard from in January, 1912, when he was in San Francisco. He used to fight ring battles, traveling from town to town. He could kick his weight, two hundred pounds, in wild cats any time. He is five feet nine inches tall, with dark hair and big brown eyes. He is left-handed. Any news of him will be gratefully appreciated by his friend, Robert Collins, 1264 Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois.

HILER, BALDWIN.—He left Sonora, Ohio, in 1882, and went to Iowa. When last heard of he was on a cattle ranch. His nephew would be glad to get some news of him. Charles E. Hiler, care of this magazine.

CARROLL, JOSEPH R.—He has been missing for over ten years, and when last heard of was a skating instructor in New York. He formerly lived in Atlantic City. Information that will lead to communicating with him will be greatly appreciated by a relative, Mrs. H. B., care of this magazine.

JERMYN, WILLIAM.—He was born in Aberdare, Wales, and left there about forty years ago. He would be now about fifty-nine years old. His home in America was at Taylor, near Scranton, Pennsylvania. He left that place about thirty or thirty-five years ago, and went to Kansas. His sister, Mary Ann, would be very pleased to hear from him or from any one who has known him and can give her news that would help her to find him. Mrs. M. A. Gratzin, care of this magazine.

FINLEY, FRED.—He is forty-five years old, five feet nine inches tall, of rather fair complexion, and is carpenter by occupation. He is very much grateful to any one who can give her news that will help her to find her brother. Please write to Mrs. Lulu Devors, Portersville, Ohio.

BETKER, GOLDIE LEONA.—She was taken from the Children's Home in Untonwont, Pennsylvania, about twelve years ago, and was sent to the Indiana Industrial School. From this place she was adopted. It was said, by a wealthy farmer, and she has not been heard of since that time. She was born on March 6, 1900. She had dark hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. Her sister is very anxious to find her, and will be deeply grateful to any one who will be kind enough to give her any information that will help her in her search. She has tried every other means, and hopes to succeed through some of our readers. Mrs. Ell Jordan, care of this magazine.

PERKINS, JOSEPH CLARENCE.—He is forty-five years old, weighs two hundred pounds, is five feet seven inches in height, has light hair, blue eyes, and wears glasses. There is a birthmark on the right side of his neck. He left his home over six and a half years ago, and was last seen in Cleveland, Ohio, by his daughter, over three years ago. He works at paper hanging, painting, mill work, and as janitor. He is German and speaks with an accent. His daughter will appreciate any information that will help her to hear from any one who can give her news of him. Miss Zulina Perkins, 21 Carter Street, Zanesville, Ohio.

CLARK, JOHN.—He is sixty-two years old and was last seen in Sheffield, Pennsylvania, in 1906. If any one can tell where he is, or give any information whatever about him, they will do a great favor by writing to his son, Stephen, Walter Clark, 1723 Spann Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana.

REYNOLDS, FRANK B.—He left Lewes, Delaware, about forty years ago, saying he was going West, and has never been heard of since. He is now about sixty years old, and his old mother is still waiting for him to return, and hoping that she may see him again before she dies. He was about five feet eight inches tall, with light hair and blue eyes. It is thought that he may have gone to California during the gold rush of 1880. If any of our readers can give some news of this man they will earn the deepest gratitude of his dear old mother, who is always hoping and praying that her lone lost son may come home to her some day. Please write to his nephew, Charles J. Reynolds, care of this magazine.

BURKE, WILLIAM.—He is eighteen years old, and was last heard of in Buffalo, where he was employed in a lunch room. He is asked to write to his old pal, Fred Gerard, 875 Albany Street, Schenectady, New York.

SCHOGGINS, JAMES.—When last heard from he was in Grand Rapids, where he was working for a telephone company as a lineman. He is thirty-nine years old, five feet seven inches in height, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, and has auburn hair, gray eyes, and a fair complexion. Any information about him will be sincerely appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Henry Sorell, care of this magazine.

WHEELER, JOHN.—He is thirty-nine years old, about five feet ten inches tall, with light hair and a fair complexion. He was born in the town of Gethersburg, Maryland, Canada, twenty years ago. His mother's maiden name was Mary Moran, and he has twin step-sisters named Eva and Ethel. His brother, who has not seen him for twenty years, will be glad to hear from him or from any one who can give him information about him. E. L. Wheeler, care of this magazine.

JONES, CLYDE WEBSTER.—He served with Company A, Thirty-first Infantry, A. E. F., in Siberia, during the World War. Any one who knows his whereabouts, or the address of his sister, will do a favor by writing to M. C., care of this magazine.

MATAYA, JOHN.—He was last heard of in June, 1920, at San Diego, California. He has brown hair and eyes, is about five feet five inches in height, and has a good amount of weight on his feet. His wife and son would like to hear from him or from any one who has seen him since he was last heard of. Mrs. Alice Mataya, Whitefish, Montana.

JACKSON.—A man who has lost sight of his people for twenty years is very anxious to find them. He has been at a loss as to how to set about looking for them until he saw our missing column, and he has felt sure that some of our kind readers will be able and willing to help him in his search. His relatives are **BOB and JANE JACKSON** and their children, **WILL and THOMAS**, three daughters, **WILLIE, LOTTIE, and SAMMIE**. They were last heard from in Arkansas, and he has felt sure that they will help to find these long-lost relatives will be highly appreciated by George Pree, 716 West Second Street, Argenta, Arkansas.

SAWYER, DOROTHY.—She was in Waltham, Massachusetts, about eight years ago. She has married since then, and it is believed that her husband is dead. If she sees this she is asked to write to J. A. T., care of this magazine.

BODMER, CHARLOTTE.—She is about thirty-five years old, and was last heard of in Cleveland, Illinois, in 1904. She has blond hair and wears blue glasses. Her father, Leo Bodmer, is dead. Her brother and nephew would be glad to hear from her or from any reader who can give them news of her. Please write to Frank Bodmer, 155 East Genesee Street, Buffalo, New York.

FREBERG, AGNES. of Barnum, Minnesota, who has not been heard from since September, 1920, and **ANNA LUNTINGER**, of Cloquet, Minnesota, are asked to write to A. R., care of this magazine.

BERICK, MRS. PERCY W.—She formerly lived at Pleasant Beach, Washington. She had one child when last heard from. Her maiden name was Teresa Gazayaba. Letters sent to her have been returned by the post-office authorities marked, "Address unknown." Any information about her will be most gratefully received by her cousin, Edna, to whom she writes, H. W. Bates, 907 Second Street, N. W., Canton, Ohio.

GREEN, CLYDE C.—He was last heard of in September, 1920, at San Antonio, Texas. He left there to go to St. Louis, about two years old, but has not been heard of since. Also

Mrs. LEO EDWARD BROS.—Eighteen years old, and a blonde. She was last heard of in August, 1920. Her maiden name was Brillhart. Any information about either of these two will be gratefully received by a relative, E. I. B., care of this magazine.

KAUFMANN, ARNOLD ARTHUR.—He arrived from Palestine in 1916, and was last heard from in the Bronx in 1917. He is asked to write to Luke Bennett, care of this magazine.

ALLEN, AGNES MARIE.—She moved from Carthage, New York, to Seattle, or to Portland, Oregon, in July, 1910, and was with a musical-comedy show at Vancouver, British Columbia, in November, 1911. She was last heard from at that place in 1913. She is about twenty-six years old, five feet five inches tall, and weighs about one hundred and thirty pounds. Any one who can give information that will help to find this young lady will be gratefully remembered. W. E. Ritter, care of this magazine.

HOWLAND, EUGENE M.—He was last heard of in the oil fields of Texas about four years ago. He is about forty-eight years old, has light, curly hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. He is about five feet five inches tall. His wife and children would like to hear from him. Mrs. B. M. Howland, care of this magazine.

CAMERON, PETER.—At one time he worked in coal mines near Fort Dodge, Iowa. In January, 1883, his wife died, and he gave his daughters to a family near Fort Dodge, and went to North Dakota, about twenty-five miles north of Coates town, where he owned a farm on a place now known as Hinford. He left there in 1889, and has not been heard from since. Any one who can give information about him will earn the deepest gratitude of his daughter, who has tried every other means to find him, but without success. She has great faith in the readers of this magazine and hopes that she will get some news of her father through their kind assistance. Mrs. L. Cameron Paine, 2318 North Federal Avenue, Mason City, Iowa. Lock Box 563.

GILWORTH, H. P.—He was stationed at Camp Jackson, South Carolina, remount department. A friend who served with him would like to hear from him. He has received no answer to letters sent to the address in the reader, and he is asked to write to Jess J. Lantieri, 2197 Euclid Avenue, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

MARSTON, MRS. HAZEL.—She is twenty-four years old, five feet six inches tall, and weighs one hundred and forty pounds. She has a dark complexion, round face, large, dark eyes, some front teeth missing, and she does not speak plainly. She has been missing since August, 1920, and it was heard that she was in Bartlett, Ohio. Any one who knows where she is will do a great favor by writing to her husband, Herbert Marston, 1521 Starkweather Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

HENDRICKS, REUBEN.—He was sent to an orphan home in Richmond, Virginia, when he was a small child, and was in the United States Army for a number of years. He has light brown hair and blue eyes. His aunt is very anxious to find him and will appreciate any information that will help her in her quest. If he sees this she hopes he will write to her, as she has important news for him. Miss Edna Hendricks, R. F. D. 3, Box 131, Lynchburg, Virginia.

TOLER, WILLIAM. who was stationed at the receiving ward of the base hospital, Camp Pike, Arkansas, and whose home is supposed to be in Mississippi, is asked to write to L. Leagett, 2615 Fannin Street, Houston, Texas.

SMALL, LEON.—When last heard from he was with a construction firm at Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada. He is asked to write to his old friend, John S. Pratt, 7 North Congress Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

LEIBERT, RICHARD W., formerly a resident of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and last heard of in Washington, D. C., working for a newspaper. His old buddy, H. O. Boers, would like to hear from him, care of this magazine.

BENNIE.—It is of importance that I hear from you. K. C. M., 32 Meyers Street, Mount Hope, Massachusetts.

MALCHER, EDWARD.—When last heard of he was with some amusement company. If he should see this he is asked to write to Fred Malcher, Jr., C. S. N. Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia.

HUSKEY.—In 1857 or 1858, a little boy about three years old, with blue eyes and light, curly hair, was taken by a woman and given by her to Alexander Huskey and his wife, who abandoned him in 1860 in Duquoin, Illinois, and he never saw or heard of them again. Before leaving him Mrs. Huskey told him that his name was Henry Frederick Baker. He was taken by the first woman from somewhere in New England. Any one who knows of a child having been lost or stolen at that time will do a great favor by writing to Huskey, care of this magazine.

SULLIVAN, KATE, who left Cork, Ireland, about thirty years ago, was last heard of in the Andromeda Mountains twenty years ago. Her nephew is anxious to find her and will be deeply grateful to any one who can tell him where she is at the present time. John Barry, care of this magazine.

SMITH, CONRAD, generally known as **BILL**. He left his home in June, 1920, and his mother is very much upset at his absence. His father is blind, and he is believed badly by his mother. He was last heard of in Los Angeles. He is five feet eleven inches tall, with brown hair, blue-gray eyes, and fair complexion. Any information about him will be gratefully received by Mrs. Mattie Smith, care of this magazine.

ATTENTION, PLEASE.—Eighteen years ago a baby girl, six weeks old, was left at a convent in Toronto, Canada. A note was pinned to her dress which read: "If you are unable to take care of this little girl, she was born on the 21st of March, and is not a child of shame. God bless you if you take care of her, and please God I may come back for her some day. Her name is Ellen May, and her mother's heart breaks to part with her." If her mother, or any one who knows anything of her, would write, it would make this young girl very happy. Ellen May Morrison, care of this magazine.

JALLAND, FRANK MYNORS.—He was last heard of at the Samuel's Hulbert Hotel, Jamestown, New York, in February, 1916. Any one knowing his present address will do a great favor by sending it to his sister, Mrs. H. Gorman, care of this magazine.

SCHWABLER, MRS. JOSEPHINE.—She was born in Brooklyn, and her maiden name was Itzels. Her children, George, Martha, and Emily, were placed in a home in Brooklyn in June, 1902, and were sent to the Children's Aid Society in 1908. Their father was a lithographer, born in Germany, and deserted his family in April, 1902. The children were adopted and would be glad to get some news of their mother. Any information that will help them find her or their family will be deeply appreciated by her son, George Hulson, care of this magazine.

TINK, WILLIAM, who, in 1900, lived at 19 Longley Street, Newgate-on-Tyne, England. Any information that will help to find him or any of his relatives will be gratefully received by W. D. Tink, care of this magazine.

LIGHT, LARKAL.—When last heard from, about ten years ago, he is a fruit merchant in Chicago. His sister is very anxious to find him, and will greatly appreciate any information that will help her in her search. Mrs. Jaffe, 635 East Ninth Street, New York City.

COUNCILMAN, LUELLA DAISY, and GEORGE C. PERRY. They were last heard of in San Francisco in December, 1920. They are asked to write home and let their relatives know where they are. Also **SARAH ISABELLA FRUSI** would be glad to hear from her relatives. She was born at Osceola, Wisconsin, on the 17th of September, 1872, and was adopted by a family at Fond du Lac, named Finn. She had two half brothers who went with her mother to Minnesota with the grandparents. She wishes to know if they are alive, or if she has any relatives living. If so, will they please write to her? Mrs. Isabella Councilman, Box 192, Eugene, Oregon.

BOYO, EDWIN GLOVER.—He was last heard from in Halifax, July 9, 1919. A friend would be glad to get news of him, and hopes if he sees this that he will write to F. M. C. S., care of this magazine.

HANMARIN, ERIC EWALD.—He was last heard of December 8, 1911, at Etna, Washington. He was second engineer on a pilot boat during the previous summer, and worked until December 1st, when he went back to Etna, where he said he had friends. He was born December 7, 1887, in Dalarne, Sweden, where his parents live, and are very anxious to hear from him or to get news of him. Any information will be gratefully received by John Heim, Box 44, Pittsburg, California.

SNYDER, J. L., who left Round Mount, Nevada, in July, 1916, or any one knowing his present address, please write to Miss Nell Collingsworth, Taft, California.

BRADY, WILEY J.—He was last heard from in 1909, when he was in the army, stationed somewhere in Indiana. He is now about forty-eight years old, five feet six inches tall, with dark brown hair and blue eyes. His former home was in South Carolina. An old friend, who has not seen him for twenty years, but with whom he corresponded up to 1909, would be glad to get news of him, and will be grateful for any information that will help to find him. G. L. Kidwell, care of this magazine.

BARDON, ELMORE JOHN A.—He left his home at 42 Main Street, West Springfield, Massachusetts, on the 23rd of March, 1914. He was thirty years old and was born April 4, 1919. He is about five feet eight and a half inches tall, and has dark hair and gray eyes. His mother would like him to write to her, as she is in pain and worrying about him. Mother, care of this magazine.

MARSHALL.—I was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1890, and was adopted by an aunt who took me to live with her in Boston when I was twelve years old. We lived there for two years, and then went to Canada. Shortly after I had left my own home a son was born to my mother, who died when the baby was a few days old. I heard that my father gave it to some friends to adopt, and I seem to remember that their name was something like Hoyne or Hoyle or Hoyett, but I can not see this. If the boy is not about ten or twelve or eighteen years old, I am very anxious to find him, and if I succeeded in my search, I shall do my best for him and will be a true brother and friend to him. I shall be deeply grateful to any one who can give a clue that will help me to find my brother. D. Marshall, care of this magazine.

CRAGG, JOSEPHINE E.—She left Philadelphia on the twelfth of July, 1920, in the morning, and intended to have gone to Atlantic City. She is twenty-two years old, about five feet three inches in height, and has hazel eyes and brown-reddish hair. A burn scar runs from the point of her chin to the base of her neck. She may be employed as a domestic. Her husband and her mother are worrying about her and will be deeply grateful to any one who can give them any clue that will help them to find her. Any information will be thankfully received by her husband, James E. Cragg, 57 East Rich Street, Columbus, Ohio.

CAMP, EDNA.—She has not been heard from since 1905. She may be known by the name of her stepfather, Frowed. She is lame in her right foot, has red hair and blue eyes, and is now old when she was last seen by her brother, who will be grateful for any assistance in finding her. Charles L. Camp, care of this magazine.

DE GRAFF, HENRY GEORGE.—He was last heard of over thirty-five years ago, when he left Columbus, Ohio, for New York City. His daughter, who was an infant when he left home, is most anxious to know something of him, or any of his relatives, and will be deeply grateful for any information. He may be known as De Grief or plain Grief. Georgia de Graff, care of this magazine.

JONES, THOMAS.—He is about thirty-two years old, and was last heard of in Winnipeg about ten years ago. Any information regarding him will be gratefully received by his brother, John Jones, Box 63, Wapella, Saskatchewan, Canada.

CARR, ISAAC SCOTT.—He left his home in Manayunk, Pennsylvania, in 1891, and was last heard of in St. Louis, Missouri. He would be about sixty years old now. If he, or any one who knows where he is, will write to his daughter, the favor will be very much appreciated. Mrs. Eva Hicks, Taft, California.

JOHNSTON, MRS. ANNA.—Her maiden name was Fogson, and she was last seen in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her daughter has not seen her for nearly twenty years, since she was four years old, and would be very happy to get some news of her. Mrs. George Karow, care of this magazine.

RUSSIN, ALFRED.—Why don't you write to mother? We have moved to your old birthplace. Father is still at the C. B. Write in care of this magazine or to father's office. If you don't remember the address, just put city and State and we will receive it.

WRAY, ALBERT L.—He is about forty-six years old, and was last seen in Quincy, Massachusetts, fifteen years ago. He was a soldier at Fort Myer, Virginia. He may be known by the name of Gray. J. B., care of this magazine.

RICHARDSON, CHARLES G.—He was born in Washington in 1905, and was placed in an orphanage by his mother when he was one year old. No trace of him can now be found, and his older brother hopes that, if he should see this, he will write at once. A good home awaits him. Any kind reader who knows him, or can give any news of him whatever, will be a great favor by communicating with his brother, George T. Richardson, care of this magazine.

CAHNAVAN, JOHN.—He left New Bedford, Massachusetts, some twenty-eight years ago, and went West to be a cowboy. His sister would like to find him, and will be very grateful to any one who can tell her where he is or what has become of him. Mrs. Bella Brady, care of this magazine.

LEONARD, SERGEANT.—When last seen he was in the Medical Corps with the Fifth Engineers, A Company, 704. France. His home is somewhere in or around Brooklyn. He is asked to write to his old buddy, L. N. K., care of this magazine.

CORBIN.—I was adopted from a Protestant institution in Jamaica Plain, Boston, when I was very small, by a man named James J. DREWITT, of Ayer Junction, Massachusetts, by whom I was given the name of William J. DREWITT. My own name was Henry J. Corbin, and my father's name was James J. Corbin. If any one can help me to find my parents or relatives, I shall always be deeply grateful to them. William J. DREWITT, 1417 Thirtieth Street, Denver, Colorado.

REED, ALEXANDER. who used to live in Falls City, Washington, and was in St. Maries, Idaho, in the spring of 1915. He is asked to write to S., care of this magazine.

CULLON, MISS. of Buffalo, New York. She was with the Y. M. C. A. at Bordeaux, France, and the boys called her "Mother." One of them, who was a private in Company A, M. T. C. R. V. 312, Bordeaux, would like very much to find her. Ronald Cliff, care of this magazine.

ATTENTION.—To any of the soldiers of K Company, Sixteenth Infantry, First Division, who were with Lieutenant Richard J. Fuller when he was killed, some time in October, 1918, in the Argonne. If they will write to his old buddy and give particulars of his death, it will be greatly appreciated. His wife is quite ill with worry, and has been unable to get any information about her husband. Please write to Dwight J. Murray, Route One, Box 93, Elma, Washington.

FIELD, WILLIAM.—He is sixty-four years old, German, horseman, and followed the races. He was a buyer of horses for the government, and was last heard of in New Orleans in January, 1920. He is asked to write to George E. Weir, care of this magazine.

TERRILL, LYDIA, EDGAR, EFFIE, EARNIE, and **MABLE.**—When last heard from they were living at Cambridge, Canada, in 1914. Their father would be glad to hear from any one of them. Morgan Terrill, care of this magazine.

CHILLENWAH, NOAMI AMAA.—Please write to me. I have scouted everything in New York. P. T., care of this magazine.

SPRAGUE, O. E.—He is about sixty-two, old, six feet six inches tall, and has light hair. He was last seen in Barberton, Ohio, in 1914. Any one who knows where he is will do a great favor by writing to A. G. Sprague, 111 Lake Avenue, Elyria, Ohio.

WILLIAMS, LULU SHERWOOD.—When last heard from she was living in St. Louis, Missouri, and was married to Hincey Tucker, formerly of Moberly, Wyoming. An old girlhood friend would be glad to hear from her. May of the Castanet, care of this magazine.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.—About forty-five years ago I was taken from a Mrs. Chickering at Worcester, Massachusetts, by the late Henry V. and Mattie E. Snow. I never heard who my own people were, and would be glad to hear from any one who knows something of my history. Mrs. Cora E. Goodwin, 590 Cornelia Street, Utica, New York.

SARAH.—Let everything be forgotten, and let me come back to you and the babies. Write to me in care of this magazine.—Clarence.

ROBINSON, MYRTLE.—When last heard of she was in Hawthorn, Nevada. She has two children, a girl and a boy, named Margaret and Frankie. Their home is in Denver, Colorado. Any information that will lead to their present whereabouts will be gratefully appreciated by an old friend. E. S. Reed, Dos Palos, California.

PRICE, RAYMOND.—He was last heard from at Bowling Green, Florida. He is asked to write to his brother, Emory J. Price, K Troop, Fourteenth Cavalry, Camp Dodge, Iowa.

DOISE, GARNET.—He is about eighteen years old, and was last heard of in Louisiana. Also **JOHN LESTER**, last heard of in Joplin, Missouri, about a year ago. He has light-brown hair, brown eyes, and is about five feet six inches tall. Also **RUBY BISHOP**, last heard of some months ago in Joplin or Webb City, Missouri. She has light hair, brown eyes, and is about five feet in height. Any assistance in finding these people will be greatly appreciated. E. J. O., care of this magazine.

JOSEPH, E. V. B.—When last heard from he was in a hospital with a broken leg in Rockford, Illinois, and was about to leave there in a few days. He is twenty-two years old, five feet four inches in height, with light-brown hair, gray eyes, and a fair complexion. There is a scar over his right eye. His mother wants him to write to her. She is quite ill with worry. All is forgiven. Any news of him will be gladly welcomed. A. E. B., care of this magazine.

KENNEDY, JAMES A., formerly of Nebraska, and last heard of in Detroit, Michigan. Any information will be greatly appreciated by K. K., care of this magazine.

SOLOM, MRS. JOHN.—Her maiden name was Ella M. Clare. When last heard from she was living in New York, in 1905. Any information will be gratefully appreciated. J. C. Clare, 208 1-2 Grand Central Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

LARKIN, ART. F.—Write to R., at 928 East Fifty-second Street, second apartment, Chicago, Illinois.

COLLINS, PATRICK and MARTHA.—Their children, Carl, Frank, and Jack were placed in a home in Tarrytown on March 4, 1907. William was put in a home on East Eighty-sixth Street, New York. The mother's maiden name was Donovan, and she was employed in a department store. The father was a designer for some gas or electric company and worked in Boston, Cleveland, and New York. Any one knowing them or any of their relatives would do a very great favor in the boys by writing to C. Charles Collins, care of this magazine.

LEAVITT, HENRY S.—He was last seen in Gold Bar, Washington, last August, working for the Wallace Falls Timber Company. His old buddy who was with him on the other side during the war is anxious to get news of him, and will be glad to hear from any one who can tell him his present address. Any information will be greatly appreciated. Dave Scherner, care of this magazine.

DOYLE, CHARLES S.—He was last seen in Casper, Wyoming, in October, 1919. If he sees this he is asked to write to Jeff Newlin, 223 1-2 Ferry Street, Little Rock, Arkansas.

ALAN, ROSE SIMS, the wife of Jimmie Alan, of Aberdeen, Scotland. She was last heard of in 1914, when she was in Fort Worth, Texas. A friend would be glad to have her present address. J. D. H., care of this magazine.

WILFORD, ROBERT MANNING.—He is about thirty years old, and is from Memphis, Tennessee. At one time he was employed in a railroad office in Chicago. During the war he was a naval aviator. He is asked to write to his old friend, Harry M. Martin, 312 Lansing Street, Utica, New York.

DAVIS, WALTER D. D.—Please come home or write.—Mother.

NOTICE.—If any one in Toledo, Ohio, knows the true name of a baby girl who was taken by J. F. Webber, they will do a great favor by writing to her. She was born September 19, 1902, and left Toledo when she was about four years old. Any information that will help her to know something of her parents or relatives will be most gratefully appreciated. Irv N. Webber, care of this magazine.

BROWN, ROBERT J.—He was last heard of in Minnetonka, Minnesota, where he was running a hotel. He is about five feet five inches tall, between forty and forty-five years old, of fair complexion, and is an Englishman. He should see this he is asked to write to his son, who will be glad to hear from any one who can give him news of his father or tell him his present address. Robert S. Brown, 3707 Morgan Avenue, North, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

MURPHY, ROBERT H. and FRANK W., brothers. Robert left Tecumseh, Nebraska, thirty years ago, and was heard of at Wheeland, Wyoming, seventeen years ago, and was last heard of three years ago on his way South, when he stopped at his old home at Tecumseh, but not finding any of his family there, he told an old friend that he was going to Arkansas to engage in the sheep business, and would write to his folks as soon as he was settled, but nothing has been heard of him since. He is about six feet tall, with blue eyes. Frank W. left Oklahoma twenty years ago, in company with a man named Jim Meadows, and was last heard of seventeen years ago at Maybell, Colorado, where he was prospecting and surveying. If these two men knew how badly their brother and sisters want to hear from them, and how happy it would make them, they would certainly write and let them know where they are. Any one who can give information about them will do a great favor by writing to their sister, Mrs. I. T. Stone, Winnett, Montana.

WALKER, ROBERT.—About thirty years ago he was taken away from his home in Duquoin, Illinois, by a man named Ed. Bergool, who took him to Pennsylvania, and his people have never seen or heard of him since that time. The son of his sister Esther, who has heard his mother often speak of her only brother, hopes that something may be heard of him through a friend, and would be happy if he could give his mother a surprise by finding her lost brother. He is probably known by the name of Bergool. Samuel Franklin, care of this magazine.

SANDHAM, ANNIE, who was born at Troy, New York, in 1857 or 1858, is anxious to find some one who can tell her something definite that will prove that she is the daughter of George Augustus and Ann M. Sandham, who left a fortune of \$10,000 to others because their daughter could not be found. She had been given for adoption to a Mrs. Van Tassel. Any assistance in this matter will be gratefully received. Annie Sandham, care of this magazine.



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A pound a day the very first week without medicine, special foods, starving, baths or exercise. Results in 48 hours!

At last a simple secret has been discovered by the world's greatest food specialist which enables you to eat a pound a day off your weight without the slightest discomfort. In fact you will enjoy your meals as never before.

Thousands of men and women who have tried strenuous diets, special reducing baths, salts, medicine and violent exercising without results have found this new scientific way a revelation. A pound or more a day from the very start can be counted on in most cases and with each pound you lose you will note a remarkable increase in energy and general health.

Women so stout they could never wear light colors or attractive styles without being conspicuous marvel at the sudden change that has enabled them to wear the most vividly colored and fluffily-styled clothes. Men who used to puff when they walked the least bit quickly—men who were rapidly becoming inactive and sluggish—unable to enjoy outdoor exercise or pleasure, find their return to youthful energy almost miraculous.

How the Secret Works

The whole thing about this wonderful new way to reduce, which makes losing flesh a pleasure instead of a task, is a simple system of food combination worked out by Eugene Christian.

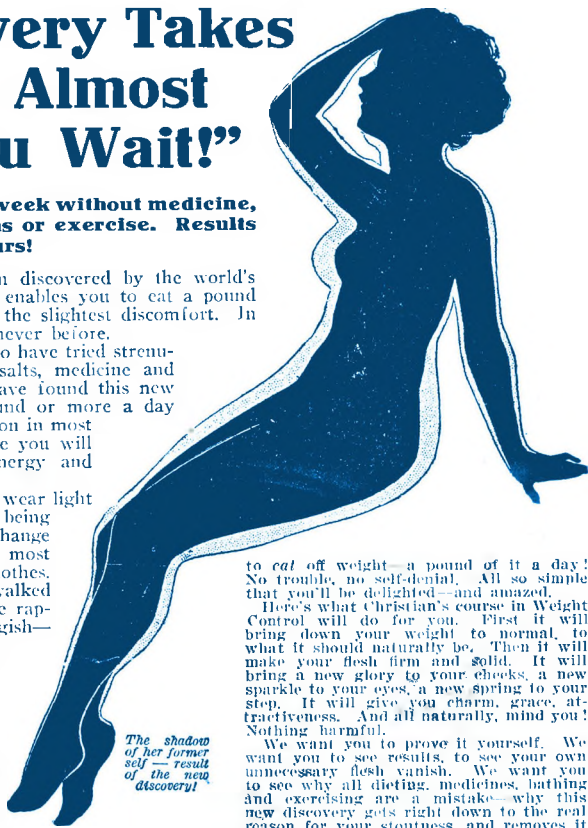
Some of us eat food that is immediately converted into muscle, bone and blood. Others eat food that is immediately converted into useless fat. In this latter case, the muscles, bones and blood are robbed of just so much strength and nutrition. That is why fat people succumb first in case of illness.

Eugene Christian, the famous Food Specialist while engaged in one of his extensive food experiments, discovered the perfect cure for the "disease of obesity" as he calls it. He found that merely by following certain little natural laws food is converted into essential tissues like bone and muscle, while only enough fat is stored up to provide the necessary energy. Elated with his discovery and what it would mean to thousands of men and women, Christian has incorporated all his valuable information in the form of little, easy-to-follow lessons under the name of "Weight Control, the Basis of Health," which is offered on free trial.

There are no fads in this course, no special baths, no self-denying diets, no medicines, no exercises—nothing but pure common sense, practical help that will do just what we say—take off flesh "While you wait." Eat all the delicious foods you like, observing of course the one vital rule. Do whatever you please, give up all diets and reduction baths—just follow the directions outlined in Christian's wonderful course, and watch your superfluous weight vanish.

Nothing Like It Before

You've never tried anything like this wonderful new method of Eugene Christian's before. It's entirely different. Instead of starving you, it shows you how



The shadow of her former self—result of the new discovery!

to eat off weight—a pound of it a day! No trouble, no self-denial. All so simple that you'll be delighted—and amazed.

Here's what Christian's course in Weight Control will do for you. First it will bring down your weight to normal, to what it should naturally be. Then it will make your flesh firm and solid. It will bring a new glory to your cheeks, a new sparkle to your eyes, a new spring to your step. It will give you charm, grace, attractiveness. And all naturally, mind you! Nothing harmful.

We want you to prove it yourself. We want you to see results, to see your own unnecessary flesh vanish. We want you to see why all dieting, medicines, bathing and exercising are a mistake—why this new discovery gets right down to the real reason for your stoutness, and removes it by natural methods.

No Money in Advance

Just put your name and address on the coupon. Don't send any money. The coupon alone will bring Eugene Christian's complete course to your door, where \$1.97 (plus postage) paid to the postman will make it your property.

As soon as the course arrives, weigh yourself. Then glance through the lessons carefully, and read all about the startling revelations regarding weight, food and health. Now put the course to the test. Try the first lesson. Weigh yourself in a day or two again and notice the wonderful results. Still you've taken no medicines, put yourself to no hardships, done nothing you would not ordinarily have done. It's wonderful—and you'll have to admit it yourself.

Mail the coupon NOW. You be the sole judge. If you do not see a remarkable improvement in 5 days, return the course to us and your money will be immediately refunded. But mail the coupon this very minute, before you forget. Surely you cannot let so positive an opportunity to reduce to normal weight pass, by unheeded.

Remember, no money just the coupon. As we shall receive an avalanche of orders for this remarkable course, it will be wise to send your order at once. Some will have to be disappointed. Don't wait to lose weight. But mail the coupon NOW and profit immediately by Dr. Christian's wonderful discovery.

The course will be sent in a plain container.

Corrective Eating Society, Inc.

Dept. W-1268 43 West 16th St., New York.

You may send me prepaid in plain container Eugene Christian's Course "Weight Control, the Basis of Health," in 12 lessons. I will pay the postman only \$1.97 plus postage in full payment on arrival. If I am not satisfied with it I have the privilege of returning the course to you within 5 days. It is, of course, understood that you are to refund my money if I return the course.

Name
Street