CREASEY Mystery MAGAZINE

"For all that's good in Crime"

Murder in the Morning

by Dorothy L. Sayers

Features on Real-life Crime — Mystery and Adventure Fiction — Cartoons and Competition

AUGUST 1960

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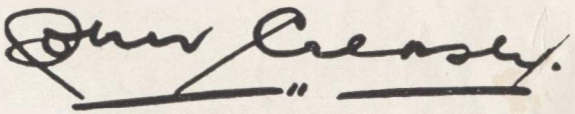
Cherchez la Femme

Must one have romance in a crime book? Must one have young lovers, necking, seduction scenes, or—very simply—a love interest?

On the whole I think one should have at least a love interest, although I doubt if it is really necessary to the book. The need arises out of the extra enjoyment that a little romance gives to most women readers— and, I suspect, to a surprising number of men!

So one needn't mix love and crime—yet most authors do for their readers' sake.

Sincerely,



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Murder in the

"HALF a mile along the main road to Ditchley, and then turn off to the left at the sign-post," said the Traveller in Mangles; "but I think you'll be wasting your time."

"Oh, well," said Mr. Montague Egg cheerfully, "I'll have a shot at the old bird. As the *Salesman's Handbook* says: 'Don't let the smallest chance slip by; you never know until you try.' After all, he's supposed to be rich, isn't he?"

"Mattresses stuffed with gold sovereigns, or so the neighbours say," acknowledged the Traveller in Mangles with a grin. "But they'd say anything."

"Thought you said there weren't any neighbours."

"No more there are. Manner of speaking. Well, good luck to it!"

Mr. Egg acknowledged the courtesy with a wave of his smart trilby, and let his clutch in with quiet determination.

The main road was thronged with the usual traffic of a Saturday morning in June—worthy holiday-makers bound for Melbury Woods or for the seashore about Beachampton—but as soon as he turned into the little narrow lane by the sign-post which said "Hatchford Mill 2 Miles," he was plunged into a profound solitude and silence, broken only by the scurry of an occasional rabbit from the hedgerow and the chug of his own Morris. Whatever else the mysterious Mr. Pinchbeck might be, he certainly was a

Morning

by Dorothy L. Sayers

solitary soul, and when, about a mile and a half down the lane, Monty caught sight of the tiny cottage, set far back in the middle of a neglected-looking field, he began to think that the Traveller in Mangles had been right. Rich though he might be, Mr. Pinchbeck was probably not a very likely customer for the wines and spirits supplied by Messrs. Plummet and Rose of Piccadilly. But, remembering Maxim Five of the *Salesman's Handbook,* "If you're a salesman worth the name at all, you can sell razors to a billiard-ball," Mr. Egg stopped his car at the entrance to the field, lifted the sagging gate and dragged it open, creaking in every rotten rail, and drove forward over the rough track, scarred with the ruts left by wet-weather traffic.

The cottage door was shut. Monty beat a cheerful tattoo upon its blistered surface, and was not very much surprised to get no answer. He knocked again, and then, unwilling to abandon his quest now he had come so far, walked round to the back. Here again he got no answer. Was Mr. Pinchbeck out? It was said that he never went out. Being by nature persistent and inquisitive, Mr. Egg stepped up to the window and looked in. What he saw made him whistle softly. He returned to the back door, pushed it open and entered.

When you arrive at a person's house with no intention beyond selling him a case of whisky or a dozen or so of

port, it is disconcerting to find him stretched on his own kitchen floor, with his head battered to pulp. Mr. Egg had served two years on the Western Front, but he did not like what he saw. He put the table-cloth over it. Then, being a methodical sort of person, he looked at his watch, which marked 10.25. After a minute's pause for consideration, he made a rapid tour of the premises, then set off, driving as fast as he could, to fetch the police.

The inquest upon Mr. Humphrey Pinchbeck took place the following day, and resulted in a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown. During the next fortnight, Mr. Montague Egg, with some uneasiness, watched the newspapers. The police were following up a clue. A man was requested to communicate with the police. The man was described—a striking-looking person with a red beard and a check suit, driving a sports car with the registered number WOE 1313. The man was found. The man was charged, and Mr. Montague Egg, three hundred miles away, was informed, to his disgust, that he would be required to give evidence before the magistrates at Beachampton.

The accused, who gave his name as Theodore Barton, age forty-two, profession poet (at which Monty stared very hard, never having seen a poet at such close quarters), was a tall, powerfully built man, dressed in flamboyant tweeds, and having a certain air of rather disreputable magnificence about him. One would expect, thought Monty, to find him hanging about bars in the East Central district of London. His eyes were bold, and the upper part of his face handsome in its way; the mouth was hidden by the abundance of his tawny beard. He appeared to be perfectly at his ease, and was represented by a solicitor.

Montague Egg was called at an early stage to give evidence of the finding of the body. He mentioned that the time was 10.25 a.m. on Saturday, June 18th, and that the body was still quite warm when he saw it. The front door was locked; the back door shut, but not locked. The kitchen was greatly disordered, as though there had been a violent struggle, and a blood-stained poker lay beside the dead man. He had made a rapid search before sending for the police. In a bedroom upstairs he had seen a heavy iron

box standing open and empty, with the keys hanging from the lock. There was no other person in the cottage, nor yet concealed about the little yard, but there were marks as though a large car had recently stood in a shed at the back of the house. In the sitting-room were the remains of breakfast for two persons. He (Mr. Egg) had passed down the lane from the high-road in his car, and had met nobody at all on the way. He had spent perhaps five or ten minutes in searching the place, and had then driven back by the way he came.

At this point Detective-Inspector Ramage explained that the lane leading to the cottage ran on for half a mile or so to pass Hatchford Mill, and then bent back to enter the main Beachampton road again at a point three miles nearer Ditchley.

The next witness was a baker named Bowles. He gave evidence that he had called at the cottage with his van at 10.15, to deliver two loaves of bread. He had gone to the back door, which had been opened by Mr. Pinchbeck in person. The old gentleman had appeared to be in perfect health, but a little flurried and irritable. He had not seen any other person in the kitchen, but had an impression that before he knocked he had heard two men's voices talking loudly and excitedly. The lad who had accompanied Bowles on his round confirmed this, adding that he fancied he had seen the outline of a man move across the kitchen window.

Mrs. Chapman, from Hatchford Mill, then came forward to say that she was accustomed to go in every week-day to Mr. Pinchbeck's cottage to do a bit of cleaning. She arrived at 7.30 and left at 9 o'clock. On Saturday 18th she had come as usual, to find that a visitor had arrived unexpectedly the night before. She identified the accused, Theodore Barton, as that visitor. He had apparently slept on the couch in the sitting-room, and was departing again that morning. She saw his car in the shed; it was a little sports one, and she had particularly noticed the number, WOE 1313, thinking that there was an unlucky number and no mistake. The interior of the shed was not visible from the back door. She had set breakfast for the two of them. The milkman and the postman had called before she left, and

the grocer's van must have come soon after, for it was down at the Mill by 9.30. Nobody else ever called at the cottage, so far as she knew. Mr. Pinchbeck was a vegetarian and grew his own garden-stuff. She had never known him have a visitor before. She had heard nothing in the nature of "words" between Mr. Pinchbeck and the accused, but had thought the old man was not in the best of spirits. "He seemed a bit put out, like."

Then came another witness from the Mill, who had heard a car with a powerful engine drive very rapidly past the Mill a little before half-past ten. He had run out to look, fast cars being a rarity in the lane, but had seen nothing, on account of the trees which bordered the road at the corner just beyond the Mill.

At this point the police put in a statement made by the accused on his arrest. He said that he was the nephew of the deceased, and frankly admitted that he had spent the night at the cottage. Deceased had seemed pleased to see him, as they had not met for some time. On hearing that his nephew was "rather hard up," deceased had remonstrated with him about following so ill paid a profession as poetry, but had kindly offered him a small loan, which he, the accused, had gratefully accepted. Mr. Pinchbeck had then opened the box in his bedroom and brought out a number of banknotes, of which he had handed over "ten fivers," accompanying the gift by a little sermon on hard work and thrift. This had happened at about 9.45 or a little earlier—at any rate, after Mrs. Chapman was safely off the premises. The box had appeared to be full of banknotes and securities, and Mr. Pinchbeck had expressed distrust both of Mrs. Chapman and of the tradesmen in general. (Here Mrs. Chapman voiced an indignant protest, and had to be soothed by the Bench.) The statement went on to say that the accused had had no sort of quarrel with his uncle, and had left the cottage at, he thought, 10 o'clock or thereabouts, and driven on through Ditchley and Frogthorpe to Beachampton. There he had left his car with a friend, to whom it belonged, and had hired a motor-boat and gone over to spend a fortnight in Brittany. Here he had heard nothing about his uncle's death till the arrival of Detective-Inspector Ramage had informed him of the sus-

picion against him. He had, of course, hastened back immediately to establish his innocence.

The police theory was that, as soon as the last tradesman had left the house, Barton had killed the old man, taken his keys, stolen the money, and escaped, supposing that the body would not be found till Mrs. Chapman arrived on the Monday morning.

While Theodore Barton's solicitor was extracting from Inspector Ramage the admission that the only money found on the accused at the time of his arrest was six Bank of England five-pound notes and a few shillings' worth of French money, Mr. Egg became aware that somebody was breathing very hard and excitedly down the back of his neck, and, on turning round, found himself face to face with an elderly woman, whose rather prominent eyes seemed ready to pop out of her head with agitation.

"Oh!" said the woman, bouncing in her seat. "Oh, dear!"

It looked like an open-and-shut case—until the unexpected witness spoke up

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Egg, ever courteous. "Am I in your way, or anything?"

"Oh! oh, thank you! Oh, do tell me what I ought to do. There's something I ought to tell them. Poor man. He isn't guilty at all. I *know* he isn't. Oh, please do tell me what I ought to do. Do I have to go to the police? Oh, dear, oh, dear! I thought—I didn't know—I've never been in a place like this before! Oh, I know they'll bring him in guilty. Please, *please* stop them!"

"They can't bring him in guilty in this court," said Monty soothingly. "They can send him up for trial——"

"Oh, but they mustn't! He didn't do it. He wasn't there. Oh, please do something about it."

She appeared so earnest that Mr. Egg, slightly clearing his throat and settling his tie, rose boldly to his feet and exclaimed in stentorian accents: "Your Worship!"

The bench stared. The solicitor stared. The accused stared. Everybody stared.

"There is a lady here," said Monty, feeling that he must go through with it, "who tells me she has important evidence to give on behalf of the accused."

The staring eyes became focused upon the lady, who instantly started up, dropping her handbag, and crying: "Oh, dear! I'm so sorry! I'm afraid I ought to have gone to the police."

The solicitor, in whose face surprise, annoyance and anticipation struggled curiously together, at once came forward. The lady was extricated and a short whispered consultation followed, after which the solicitor said:

"Your worship, my client's instructions were to reserve his defence, but, since the lady, whom I have never seen until this moment, has so generously come forward with her statement, which appears to be a complete answer to the charge, perhaps your worship would prefer to hear her at this stage."

After a little discussion, the Bench decided that they would like to hear the evidence, if the accused was agreeable. Accordingly, the lady was put in the box, and sworn, in the name of Millicent Adela Queek.

"I am a spinster, and employed as art mistress at Woodbury High School for Girls. Saturday 18th was a holiday, of course, and I thought I would have a little picnic, all by my lonesome, in Melbury Woods. I started off in my own little car just about 9.30. It would take me about half an hour to get to Ditchley—I never drive very fast, and there was a lot of traffic on the road—most dangerous. When I got to Ditchley, I turned to the right, along the main road to Beachampton. After a little time I began to wonder whether I had put in quite enough petrol. My gauge isn't very reliable, you know, so I thought I'd better stop and make *quite* certain. So I pulled up at a roadside garage. I don't know *exactly* where it was, but it was quite a little way beyond Ditchley—between that and Helpington. It was one of those *dreadfully* ugly places, made of corrugated iron painted bright red. I don't think they should allow them to put up things like that. I asked the man there—a most obliging young man—to fill my tank, and while I

was there I saw this gentleman—yes, I mean Mr. Barton, the accused—drive up in his car. He was coming from the Ditchley direction and driving rather fast. He pulled up on the left-hand side of the road. The garage is on the right, but I saw him very distinctly. I couldn't mistake him—his beard, you know, and the clothes he was wearing—so distinctive. It was the same suit he is wearing now. Besides, I noticed the number of his car. Such a curious one, is it not? WOE 1313. Yes. Well, he opened the bonnet and did something to his plugs, I think, and then he drove on."

"What time was this?"

"I was just going to tell you. When I came to look at my watch I found it had stopped. Most vexatious. I think it was due to the vibration of the steering-wheel. But I looked up at the garage clock—there was one just over the door—and it said 10.30. So I set my watch by that. Then I went on to Melbury Woods and had my little picnic. So fortunate, wasn't it? that I looked at the clock then. Because my watch stopped again later on. But I do *know* that it was 10.20 when this gentleman stopped at the garage, so I don't see how he could have been doing a murder at that poor man's cottage between 10.15 and 10.25, because it must be well over twenty miles away—more, I should think."

Miss Queek ended her statement with a little gasp, and looked round triumphantly.

Detective-Inspector Ramage's face was a study. Miss Queek went on to explain why she had not come forward earlier with her story.

"When I read the description in the papers I thought it *must* be the same car I had seen, because of the number—but of course, I couldn't be sure it was the same man, could I? Descriptions are *so* misleading. And naturally I didn't want to be mixed up with a police case. The school, you know—parents don't like it. But I thought, if I came and saw this gentleman for myself, then I should be quite certain. And Miss Wagstaffe—our head-mistress—so kindly gave me leave to come, though to-day is very inconvenient, being my busiest afternoon. But I said it might be a matter of life and death, and so it is, isn't it?"

The magistrate thanked Miss Queek for her public spirit-

ed intervention, and then, at the urgent request of both parties, adjourned the court for further inquiry into the new evidence.

Since it was extremely important that Miss Queek should identify the garage in question as soon as possible, it was arranged that she should set out at once in search of it, accompanied by Inspector Ramage and his sergeant, Mr. Barton's solicitor going with them to see fair play for his client. A slight difficulty arose, however. It appeared that the police car was not quite big enough to take the whole party comfortably, and Mr. Montague Egg, climbing into his own Morris, found himself hailed by the inspector with the request for a lift.

"By all means," said Monty; "a pleasure. Besides, you'll be able to keep your eye on me. Because, if that chap didn't do it, it looks to me as though I must be the guilty party."

"I wouldn't say that, sir," said the inspector, obviously taken aback by this bit of thought-reading.

"I couldn't blame you if you did," said Monty. He smiled, remembering his favourite motto for salesmen: "A cheerful voice and cheerful look put orders in the order-book," and buzzed merrily away in the wake of the police car along the road from Beachampton to Ditchley.

"We ought to be getting near it now," remarked Ramage when they had left Helpington behind them. "We're ten

FAMOUS MURDER CASES (2)

The discovery of human remains in several parcels was made on September 29th, 1935, at Gardenholme Linn, near Moffat. These parcels (and subsequently discovered items), were infested with maggots, decomposition being therefore determined in date by entomological study of the remains.

Identification was attempted by a team of experts comprising Professor John Glaister, Dr. W. G. Millar, and Dr. F. W. Martin, who observed that disarticulation and dismemberment of the remains had taken place and showed skill had been used. The parts were reassembled. This led to the conclusion that the incomplete remains comprised two female bodies.

(Cont'd.

miles from Ditchley and about twenty-five from Pinchbeck's cottage. Let's see—it'll be the left-hand side of the road, going in this direction. Hullo; this looks rather like it," he added presently. "They're pulling up."

The police car had stopped before an ugly corrugated-iron structure, standing rather isolated on the near side of the road, and adorned with a miscellaneous collection of enamelled advertisement-boards and a lot of petrol pumps. Mr. Egg brought the Morris alongside.

"Is this the place, Miss Queek?"

"Well, I don't know. It was like this, and it was about here. But I can't be sure. All these dreadful little places are so much alike, but——Well, there! how stupid of me! Of course this isn't it. There's no clock. There ought to be a clock just over the door. *So* sorry to have made such a silly mistake. We must go on a little farther. It must be quite near here."

The little procession moved forward again, and five miles farther on came once more to a halt. This time there could surely be no mistake. Another hideous red corrugated garage, more boards, more petrol-pumps, and a clock, whose hands pointed (correctly, as the inspector ascertained by reference to his watch) to 7.15.

"I'm sure this must be it," said Miss Queek. "Yes—I recognise the man," she added, as the garage proprietor came out to see what was wanted.

The proprietor, when questioned, was not able to swear with any certainty to having filled Miss Queek's tank on June 18th. He had filled so many tanks before and since. But in the matter of the clock he was definite. It kept, and always had kept, perfect time, and it had never stopped or been out of order since it was first installed. If his clock had pointed to 10.20, then 10.20 was the time, and he would testify as much in any court in the kingdom. He could not remember having seen the car with the registered number WOE 1313, but there was no reason why he should, since it had not come in for attention. Motorists who wanted to do a spot of inspection often pulled up near his garage, in case they should find some trouble that needed expert assistance, but such incidents were so usual that he would pay no heed to them, especially on a busy morning.

Miss Queek, however, felt quite certain. She recognised the man, the garage and the clock. As a further precaution, the party went on as far as Ditchley, but, though the roadside was peppered the whole way with garages, there was no other exactly corresponding to the description. Either they were the wrong colour, or built of the wrong materials, or they had no clock.

"Well," said the inspector, rather ruefully, "unless we can prove collusion (which doesn't seem likely, seeing the kind of woman she is), that washes that out. That garage where she saw Barton is eighteen miles from Pinchbeck's cottage, and since we know the old man was alive at 10.15, Barton can't have killed him—not unless he was averaging 200 miles an hour or so, which can't be done yet awhile. Well, we've got to start all over again."

"It looks a bit awkward for me," said Monty pleasantly.

"I don't know about that. There's the voices that baker fellow heard in the kitchen. I know that couldn't have been you, because I've checked up your times." Mr. Ramage grinned. "Perhaps the rest of the money may turn up somewhere. It's all in the day's work. We'd better be getting back again."

Monty drove the first eighteen miles in thoughtful silence. They had just passed the garage with the clock (at which the inspector shook a mortified fist in passing) when Mr. Egg uttered an exclamation and pulled up.

"Hullo!" said the inspector.

"I've got an idea," said Monty. He pulled out a pocket-diary and consulted it. "Yes—I thought so. I've discovered a coincidence. Let's check up on it. Do you mind? 'Don't trust to luck, but be exact and verify the smallest fact.' " He replaced the diary and drove on, overhauling the police car. In process of time they came to the garage which had first attracted their attention—the one which conformed to specification, except in the particular that it displayed no clock. Here he stopped, and the police car, following in their tracks, stopped also.

The proprietor emerged expectantly, and the first thing that struck one about him was his resemblance to the man they had interviewed at the other garage. Monty commented politely on the fact.

"Quite right," said the man. "He's my brother."

"Your garages are alike, too," said Monty.

"Bought off the same firm," said the man. "Supplied in parts. Mass-production. Readily erected overnight by any handy man."

"That's the stuff," said Mr. Egg approvingly. "Standardisation means immense saving in labour, time, expense. You haven't got a clock, though."

"Not yet. I've got one on order."

"Never had one?"

"Never."

"Ever seen this lady before?"

The man looked Miss Queek carefully over from head to foot.

"Yes, I fancy I have. Came in one morning for petrol, didn't you, miss? Saturday fortnight or thereabouts. I've a good memory for faces."

"What time would that be?"

"Ten to eleven, or a few minutes after. I remember I was just boiling up a kettle for my elevenses. I generally take a cup of tea about then."

"Ten-fifty," said the inspector eagerly. "And this is——" he made a rapid calculation—"just on twenty-two miles from the cottage. Say half an hour from the time of the murder. Forty-four miles an hour—he could do that on his head in a fast sports car."

"Yes, but——" interrupted the solicitor.

"Just a minute," said Monty. "Didn't you," he went on, addressing the proprietor, "once have one of those clock-faces with movable hands to show lighting-up time?"

"Yes, I did. I've still got it, as a matter of fact. It used to hang over the door. But I took it down last Sunday. People found it rather a nuisance; they were always mistaking it for a real clock."

"And lighting-up time on June 18th," said Monty softly, "was 10.20, according to my diary."

"Well, there," said Inspector Ramage, smiting his thigh. "Now, that's really clever of you, Mr. Egg."

"A brain-wave, a brain-wave," admitted Monty. "'The salesman who will use his brains will spare himself a world of pains'—or so the *Handbook* says."

Old, irascible—but not yet immune to the lure of the fair sex, he killed the thing he loved . . . and paid the penalty.

The Greenwich Pensioner

by R. F. Songhurst

PENNENDEN HEATH is known to most people as being a pleasant residential part of Maidstone, where one may stroll on the heath itself, or otherwise pass a pleasant summer's afternoon. But in years now long past, the heath had a more unpleasant reputation, and was more celebrated for the fact that it was the chosen site for the execution of criminals convicted at the Assizes, than that it had been, from time immemorable, the meeting place for the ancient tribes of Kent when they wished to hold the modern equivalent of a Summit Conference.

The heath has passed under various names, and the name has, like Sam Weller's reply to a certain judge in *Pickwick Papers,* largely depended on the taste and fancy of the person concerned, rather than strict historic accuracy. It has been known as Pickenden, Penenden, Pinnenden, and in this particular case, Pennenden Heath.

The scene opens, in this case, in the Assize Court at Maidstone, where, in December 1822, John Smith, a pensioner of Greenwich Hospital, was indicted for the wilful murder of Catherine Smith, a woman with whom he had for some months lived.

John Smith is described in the old records as being "a fine robust old man, nearly Six feet high, with a firm and steady step, although nearly 80 years of age."

His crime of violence was committed at "The Cricketers" public house in Greenwich (no connection with the Maidstone inn of the same name) where, on the morning of

4th October, he called for a pot of porter at half past five o'clock in the morning (there were no licensing laws worthy of the name in those days). Having received his pot, he sat down and, addressing the landlord, remarked abruptly: "Hawkins, have you seen my woman this morning?" Apparently, he did not consider her a lady in any sense of the word, and when the landlord replied in the negative, John Smith said, "If you see her go past, call her in."

He then continued drinking his porter, and after about a quarter of an hour, "his woman," Catherine Smith entered. Most unfortunately for her, she was accompanied by another Greenwich pensioner, with whom she was obviously on only too friendly terms. The name of her "boy friend" is given as Levett, and the sight of him, or rather the sight of his lady in his company, roused the deepest pangs of jealousy in the heart of John Smith—but for the moment he sat back glowering and said nothing.

Catherine went to the bar, and ignoring John Smith, called for two glasses of gin. The landlord drew her a glass, and placed it before her, when she reminded him, rather reproachfully, that she always took it with peppermint.

The landlord was in the act of turning round to get the peppermint bottle, when in an instant John Smith rose to his feet, and pulling out a knife stabbed her once, in the right breast. Up to this moment, not a word had passed between them, and the unfortunate woman, reeling back against the bar, gasped out, "Oh, God, you have killed me . . . you have killed me!"

What happened to her new "boy friend" is not stated, but he certainly made no efforts either to help her, or to apprehend John Smith; in fact, he is not mentioned again at all, but after having been the unintentional cause of her murder just fades from the scene.

On the other hand, one cannot say that the landlord offered the dying woman much help, either, for as she stood, propped against the bar, with the blood oozing from her wound, he "urged her to run to the infirmary immediately"! Presumably he was more interested in the possibility of losing his licence (if he had one) than in either assisting her, or running for a doctor himself.

The unfortunate woman, clutching at her chest, stagger-

ed out of the public house, reeled some forty paces, and dropped down dead in the street; whereupon the landlord promptly seized John Smith, and said to him, "You wicked old man, how could you do so rash an act?"

His words were not exactly well chosen, but then, neither were those of John Smith, who in reply merely remarked, "She has been with that fellow all night!" and made no other comment whatever.

Later on he was searched, and the bloody knife was found upon him. Asked whether that was the instrument with which he had committed the murder, he said it was, and owned that it was his knife. It was an ordinary pocket knife, of the clasp variety, and when examined showed signs of recent sharpening; thus implying possible premeditation on Smith's part.

He was remanded for the Assize, and duly appeared before the Judge in the Court at Maidstone in December, when he gave details of numerous quarrels that had taken place between himself and the dead woman. He described how he had found the woman a situation, and lived with her, until he suddenly discovered that she kept company with a man called Levett, another Greenwich Pensioner, which distressed him exceedingly.

He told the Court that he "went to the Cricketers public house on the morning of the 4th of October, to get some beer, and that whilst he was there, he was cutting a stick of liquorice with his knife, when the woman came in with her lubber, and stood close to him; he had been drinking the night before, and the appearance of the deceased with her paramour affected him very much . . ."

The reaction of the Court to his next remark is not given, but he went on to relate that "the deceased having trodden upon his corns, he in a moment of rage committed the fatal deed."

I suppose that murders have been committed for lesser reasons, but one cannot visualise even a modern judge and jury accepting tender corns as an excuse for knifing a woman—not even when combined with jealousy—and in 1822 judges and juries were even less inclined to do so. The Judge having summed up the evidence, left the facts of the case in the hands of the jury, who immediately re-

turned a verdict of "Guilty," whereupon the prisoner was ordered for execution on the following Monday.

But John Smith had not completely finished with this world. Indeed, he does not seem to have worried over much about his sentence—possibly he felt that, at nearly 80, he had not much longer to live anyway—for the night before his execution, he sent for a gentleman of Maidstone, and bequeathed to him the following doggerel account of his crime, and his past life, with strict injunctions to make it public.

The words appear to be set to the same metre as an Irish song of that period known as the Croppy Boy. While the poetry is poor, nobody today can fail to be amused by the last two lines; though in 1822 many otherwise well disposed people metaphorically raised their hands in horror at such jesting on the part of a dying man.

Here then, are John Smith's verses, for what they are worth. Whether he actually wrote them is another matter, and one that can never be settled.

" In the County of Wicklow, I was born'd,
But now in Maidstone, die in scorn,
I once was counted a roving blade,
But to my misfortune had no trade,
Women was always my downfall,
But still I loved and liked them all,
A hundred I have had in my time,
When I was young and in my prime,
Women was always my delight,
But when I got old, they did me slight,
A woman to me from London came,
She said "With you I would remain,
If you will be constant, I'll be true,
I never want no Man but you",
And on her own Bible a Oath did take,
That she never would me forsake,
And during the time that I had life,
She would always prove a loving Wife,
And by that means We did agree,
To live together, She and Me,
But soon her Vows and Oath did break,
And to another Man did take,
Which she fetch'd home, with her to lay,
And that proved her own destiny,
So as Jack Smith lay on his bed,
This notion strongly run in his Head,
Then he got up with that intent,

To find her out, was fully bent,
Swearing if he found out her Oath, she'd broke,
He'd stick a knife into her throat,
Then to the Cricketers, he did go,
To see if he could find it out or no,
Not long been there, before she come in,
With this same fellow to fetch some Gin,
Immediately stabb'd her under the Chin,
And in five minutes, she was no more.
But there laid in her purple gore,
Now to conclude, and end my song,
They are both dead, dead and gone,
They are both gone, I do declare,
Gone they are, but God knows where."

On Monday, 23rd December, 1822, he was taken with grim formality to where the gallows was erected on Pennenden Heath. Before leaving the prison, he partook of the Sacrament, and appeared to be very penitent and resigned. On arriving at the place of execution, he addressed the crowd there assembled, and said that "women were the cause of his downfall".

He then prayed aloud in a most fervent manner until, the signal being given, the drop fell ejaculating to the last moment, "Lord have mercy upon me! Christ have mercy upon me!" and so was launched into eternity.

After hanging for some time, the body was taken to Greenwich College, where it lay one day for public view, and was afterwards dissected and anatomized.

Despite his crime, he deserved a better fate than hanging, having served in the Royal Navy the better part of his life. In old age he became acquainted with the woman who was to "cause his downfall", and hoping to settle down with her, found her a job in one of the wards of the hospital, as a helper, hoping at the same time that she would look after him, as he was growing old and infirm.

Today, of course, under modern laws, he would not have been hanged, but "detained until Her Majesty's pleasure be known" in some suitable establishment for the rest of his life.

John Smith has been dead a long time, but the site of the gallows is still to be found on Pennenden Heath, by those interested in such matters.

One False Note

by Marten Cumberland

Though destined to become a murderer, he was first and foremost a musician. Who would have supposed that that fact would be his undoing?

"COME IN, come in," cried Nicandro, hospitably, stooping and peering out, in his short-sighted way, at the man on the pavement. "My friend Ottaviani is the more welcome because I am alone. As usual, on Thursdays, Gustav has gone out, and the empty house gives me the shivers."

Ottaviani forced a smile to his pale face, and extended a hand to the composer.

"I hope you and Lucia will be very happy," said he, but he did not meet the other's eyes.

"Thanks, thanks," replied Nicandro, beaming. "We shall be happy, of course. Come into the drawing-room, and I will play you my new serenade, written for Lucia."

Ottaviani's dark eyes blazed with hatred, as he looked at the broad back of the composer swaying gently backwards and forwards as he played. Bah!

And this fool was going to marry Lucia, the lovely girl whose dark eyes were in such strange contrast to her golden hair, whose figure was as lissom and straight as a boy's. Ottaviani had once kissed her red lips, and she had rested in his arms for an infinite fraction of eternity . . . And now Nicandro would marry her.

At the thought Ottaviani's slim figures crept towards something that he had concealed beneath his coat before he left his rooms—something cold, hard, and shining.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

Nicandro swung round on the stool and looked at his visitor. His smile was expectant.

Ottaviani's fingers fell away from his breast pocket.

"I like it," he said, judicially. "Of course it is slight, but I think it is charming. Play it again."

Nicandro glanced at his watch.

"All right," he conceded. "And then we must hurry to our good friends, Burrows and Chester."

"We will go together," declared Ottaviani. "But first of all the serenade again—the Lucia serenade."

Once more the soft plaintive air rippled from under the composer's fingers, and Ottaviani leaned forward tensely, his smouldering eyes fixed on the other's broad back.

His hand went to his breast pocket, and this time he took out the stiletto and concealed it in his sleeve. Very softly he rose to his feet and took a step towards the unconscious composer.

"Nicandro!" he cried. "You will never play your serenade to Lucia! You will never have her, my friend, for you must die now!"

Nicandro turned with a gasp, but the stiletto flashed upwards and struck beneath the armpit.

Five minutes later, after washing his hands and the stiletto in the bathroom, Ottaviani let himself out into the street, and slipped away. He was unobserved; no one had seen him enter Nicandro's house, and no one had seen him leave.

At the Park gates was a constable, a heavy, stolid, bovine man. Soon he would hear of Nicandro, lying still and quiet in his fire-lit room; then, perhaps, the policeman's stolid countenance would betray some signs of life!

Chester opened the door of his second-floor flat, and greeted Ottaviani in his cold English fashion.

As Ottaviani hung up his hat and coat he noticed that his hands were shaking a little—excitement, no doubt. To hide any particular show of feeling, he whistled coolly to himself as Chester led him to an inner room.

Inside, around the gas fire, were Burrows and Lefevre. Lefevre had brought his 'cello along.

"Hullo, Otto," said Burrows, gruffly. "We want you to play the piano. Chester has had the effrontery to murder Schumann, but perhaps you'll rescue us from his tender

mercies?"

"I'll play with pleasure," said Ottaviani, smiling.

"By the way," said Chester, dropping on one knee to adjust the gas-fire, "have you seen Nicandro? We thought you two might come along?"

Smilingly, Ottaviani shook his head.

"I have not seen our dear Nicandro for three weeks," he said deliberately.

"Not for three weeks?" echoed Burrows, in faint surprise. "Really?"

His pale blue eyes rested for a moment on Ottaviani's face, and for some reason Ottaviani felt nervous, and also rather angry.

He looked steadily at Burrows.

"For three weeks I have been out of London," he said and crossing the room he fingered the notes of the piano. "What will you have?"

The Carnival was chosen, and in the midst of the finale there came an interruption; the telephone upon the table began to ring.

"Damned sorry, Otto," murmured Chester, lifting the receiver.

"Hullo. Who? Yes. Mr. Chester speaking. Who's that —Gustav? Your master, Mr. Nicandro, has been murdered? The police are in the house? Stabbed with a thin-bladed knife! Good God!"

Chester slowly replaced the receiver, and turned a white face towards the other men.

"Nicandro has been murdered," he said. "Stabbed to death in his house. His man Gustav returned ten minutes ago to find him lying dead."

Chester dropped into his chair and passed a handkerchief nervously over his shining head.

Lefevre jumped to his feet excitedly.

"*Bon dieu*! It is awful!" he cried.

Chester clenched his hands tightly together, and turned towards Burrows.

"Whoever did this horrible thing should suffer," he said, solemnly. "Why, Nicandro would not have hurt a fly! Why on earth was it done? There was no sign of robbery, Gustav said."

Ottaviani walked from the piano and stood in the middle of the room.

"Nicandro was my best friend," he said brokenly. "I agree with Chester, whoever did this vile thing should suffer for it. But the English police are such fools!"

Burrows had been silent, but now for the first time he spoke.

"The guilty man should suffer," he said.

He rose from his chair, and stood towering above the Italian.

"You are right, Ottaviani," he said, in a terrible tone. "Out of your own mouth you stand condemned. You coward, liar, hypocrite! You vile slayer of an innocent man! You killed Nicandro tonight."

Immediately Chester and Lefevre had turned towards the accused man, their faces ludicrous with surprise.

Ottaviani was deadly white. All his confidence and arrogance had slipped away from him like a worn-out cloak. He stood staring, wild-eyed, at Burrows, whose gaunt face glared accusingly.

In vain the Italian tried to stammer a denial. Somehow, he knew, he had been betrayed, but his brain searched wildly and unavailingly for the thing that had betrayed him.

Suddenly his fear changed to tempestuous rage. He spat out a curse, and his hand went out to his breast pocket. A stiletto gleamed under the electric lights, but Burrows had caught the Italian's wrist and held it easily.

Lefevre and Chester threw themselves on the murderer and held his arms.

"Better tie him up till the police come," said Burrows, and twisted the knife from Ottaviani's fingers.

"A pretty little weapon," Burrows remarked, holding the stiletto under the light. "No doubt this killed our poor friend, Nicandro."

With his face twisted with rage, Ottaviani laughed shrilly.

"It did!" he cried exultantly. "It killed your pig of a friend, and I only regret it did not kill him slower. He took my Lucia away from me—my beautiful Lucia, who loved me before that pig came with his money and his bad music!"

"You're a liar, Ottaviani," said Chester coolly. "Lucia never cared a jot for you. She only loved Nicandro, who

was worth a thousand such swine as you!"

Ottaviani's hands were bound, and Burrows rang up the police. The men seated themselves, or walked nervously about the room, awaiting the advent of the police.

Ten minutes later, a sullen and glowering Ottaviani was taken away in a taxi, and the three friends were left alone.

Chester mixed three stiff whiskies and sodas, and turned to his companions with a sigh.

"What a business!" he said, wagging his head sorrowfully. "Poor Nicandro! We shall have no more music tonight!"

"Poor old Nicandro!" said Burrows solemnly.

Lefevre turned to Burrows excitedly.

"Yes, yes," he said. "But how did you know Ottaviani had done it? Heavens! I never saw a man more taken aback in his life. At one moment he was so secure, so full of satisfaction—the next moment, pouf, he is exploded—like a pricked balloon! Was it bluff on your part, my friend?"

Burrows shook his head slowly. For the first time a faint smile crept into his pale blue eyes.

"Ottaviani, like all these clever criminals, made a false step," he said. "Only one mistake, but it will be enough to hang him."

"What was that?" asked Lefevre, and Chester looked inquiring at Burrows' face.

"When Ottaviani came in here," said Burrows slowly, "he was whistling softly to himself. Chester asked him whether he had seen Nicandro, and Ottaviani said he had not seen the composer for three weeks. I knew then that Ottaviani was lying, but I did not know why. Later, of course, I knew why he had lied!"

"How did you know Ottaviani was lying about Nicandro?" asked Chester sharply.

"Because," said Burrows, "he entered this room unconsciously whistling a little serenade that Nicandro composed only the day before yesterday. Ottaviani, therefore, must have heard Nicandro play the piece since it was composed—that is, in the last three days. He lied, and so made a mistake. I rather think he will pay for that one mistake!"

RUBBER GLOVES

by L. A. G. Strong

He was precise and exact—professionally so. But he left the human element out of his calculations.

DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR ELLIS McKAY stuck out his lower lip, and sat in pop-eyed contemplation of the report before him. Mason, the managing director of the firm, watched him with covert amusement.

Ellis looked up. "You're right. It couldn't have been an accident. Any finger-prints on this metal rule thing?"

Detective-Inspector Bradstreet shook his head.

"No," he replied, his soft Devon accent unmistakable even in the monosyllable. "'Tis smeared, like. An odd mark or two, though."

"Mark? Made by what?"

"Can't say, not yet."

Ellis got up briskly. "Well, we'd better go to the hospital and see this chap Jervis. I'd like you to come, Mr. Mason, if you would. Make it look more like a visit of condolence. He'll talk more freely if you're with us."

Mason smiled wryly. "If you like."

"Where's the hurry?" Bradstreet wanted to know. "Why not wait till he's fit to attend the inquest?"

"I've a fancy to hear what he has to say. And, if we adjourn the whole inquest, folk may smell a rat. Tell me about Jervis, Mr. Mason. What's his job with the company?"

"He's the accountant. Model employee. Nobody likes him. Does his own work perfectly, and criticises others."

"What was he doing in the engine-room? Surely his

work didn't take him there?"

"It shouldn't, in theory. In practice, he was all over the place, poking his nose into this and that."

"Do you allow that sort of thing?"

"I've had him on the carpet about it, more than once. Trouble is, he's always got a perfectly good reason. He's saved the firm a lot of money, these past few years; there's no denying that."

They found the injured accountant propped up stiffly, in a high state of indignation. At the sight of Mason, he burst out immediately.

"It's exceedingly vexatious," he exclaimed. "Young Kelly interfered most unwarrantably. His action was quite uncalled for."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that, Jervis," Mason replied soothingly. "He only wanted to save your life, you know."

"Save my life!" the injured man barked, then winced in pain at his own vehemence. His shoulder had been badly dislocated. "Save my life! I like that, I must say. He might have injured me most seriously." He broke off and squinted anxiously at Mason. "I want to be sure of my legal position."

"Your *legal* position?"

"With a view to compensation."

"That's not for us to decide," Mason told him. "We hand over all that to the insurance company."

"You may find," Ellis cut in, "that the doctrine of common employment is involved."

"Common employment?" Jervis gave Ellis his attention for the first time.

"Yes," Ellis went on, shaking his head. "Tricky business. I wouldn't care to pronounce on it."

Jervis swallowed and glared. Before he could reply, Mason took his chance.

"This is Chief Detective-Inspector McKay. And Inspector Bradstreet."

Jervis eyed Ellis suspiciously.

"What's he want?"

"There has to be an inquest," Mason answered. "And, since you can't attend——"

"But I must attend. It's imperative. No one else can explain——"

"That's where I come in." Ellis beamed at the flustered man. "You shall explain to me now, and Inspector Bradstreet here shall take it down word for word. We'll give you a typed copy, so that you can be sure that nothing you want to say is left out."

"It's most irregular," Jervis complained. "The inquest must be postponed."

"That's not possible, I'm afraid. But I'll see that your statement is put in, exactly as you give it."

After a brief objection, Jervis gave way. It was clear that his strength was not equal to an argument. Before he could get set to tell his story, Ellis startled him with a question.

"What were you doing in the engine-room, Mr. Jervis? Your duties do not naturally take you there?"

The accountant's reply was a monologue and may be so set down.

"I'd gone through to speak to Cole, the Chief Engineer, about the costings of his branch. I was not satisfied with their method of keeping accounts. Expenses not properly vouched; tools and material taken from store without any receipt, except someone's initials scrawled on a twopenny note-book covered with oily thumb marks. Most unbusiness-like. I'd been there several times on the same errand, but had got no satisfaction. Cole simply ignored all my suggestions and advice. I was not prepared to let it go at that. It was his manifest duty to establish a proper system, and I intended to tell him straight out that, unless there was an improvement, a very definite improvement, I would take the matter to the partners.

"As I came down the stair in the engine-room, I saw Cole at the end of the gangway, between the two turbo-alternators. He was leaning over the guard rail of number two, which was running. Kelly, a young fitter, was a couple of yards nearer him, oiling number one for its next spell. We generate our own current, and use the engines alternately, unless there is very heavy pressure of work, when both are needed. There should have been a man at the switchboard in the corner opposite the stair. No, I can't say whether he was there or not. In any case, he would have been out

of my sight behind Number One. No," (in answer to a question from Ellis) "there was no one at the bottom of the stair at right-angles to the gangway.

"When I reached the floor, I put on my rubber gloves, as I always do if the dynamos are working. I have been sneered at for taking this sensible precaution, but, as Mr. Mason will tell you, the firm maintains a strictly safety-first policy, and, as a loyal senior official, I always make a point of setting a good example."

Here Mason nodded.

"I am careful by nature," the accountant went on. "I once got a severe shock when putting in an ordinary electric light bulb; an experience which further impressed upon me to avoid unnecessary risks.

"Only a few seconds after I had put on my gloves, I heard a scream. It sank almost immediately to a whimper, and stopped. I ran towards the gangway, and Kelly shouted to throw the switches. When I turned the corner, I could see Cole writhing across the guard rail. I ran to pull him away, but Kelly flung himself on me, and knocked me down, just as the lights went out."

This was all of Jervis's statement that mattered. The rest of it was a repetition of complaints against Kelly for interfering. The idea that he should be grateful to the engineer for attempting to save his life seemed to rouse him to especial indignation. The most that Ellis and Mason could get from him was a grudging acknowledgment of Kelly's good intentions; and even these he seemed to think characteristic of a fool.

"Just one more question, Mr. Jervis," Ellis said. "I can see that you are tired, and we don't want to trouble you unduly. Can you suggest a reason for Cole's neglect in the matter of accounts?"

"Reason? The man was idle and careless. The fact that he was expert at one branch of his work did not justify his neglecting another."

"You are convinced it was just carelessness? There was no more sinister reason? I mean—you had no grounds for suspecting any sort of hanky-panky?"

"Hanky-panky?"

"No money missing? No stores going where they

shouldn't?"

Sitting up as straight as he could, the accountant glared at Ellis like an injured bird.

"You must have a very inadequate idea of my abilities as an accountant, if you imagine that I should not have detected anything of that kind."

"On the contrary, Mr Jervis, I was assuming that possibly you *had* detected something of that kind, and were checking up on it."

"Your assumption is quite unjustified, sir. I will not allow you to make me impute motives of that sort. If the accounts were kept as I had shown Cole they ought to be, any leakage would be apparent at once. Automatically. Under the system or lack of system in the department, it could only be done at cost of much time and trouble. But I was quite capable of doing it: and did."

"Forgive me for harping on this question, Mr. Jervis, but it seems odd that Cole wasn't anxious to straighten things out, when he was responsible for them. I am just wondering whether he had any particular reason for taking the line he did?"

Jervis snorted. "Whatever such conduct might mean in other men, it was not peculiar in Cole. It was part of his character. He always played the lone wolf in the firm. Refused to co-operate. Wanted to keep everything to himself. He resented anybody, no matter how much abler than himself, taking an interest in his department. But I would never for a moment question his honesty. It is not for me to cast suspicion on the dead."

In Body No. 1 the skull sutures were found to be without complete closure and age was assessed as less than thirty years, the recent, recognisable line of union of the spheno-occipital joint bringing this to a more defined range of between eighteen and twenty-five years. Radiology, and dissection of the jaw, revealed the presence of unerupted wisdom teeth which, though not definite confirmatory evidence, suggested a further defining age range of twenty-one to twenty-four. Other factors, particularly the long bones, were ancillary support to a likely age of twenty to twenty-three years.

Famous Murder Cases (2) cont'd.

"Well?" Ellis looked at his two companions. "How does it strike you?"

"It seems pretty straightforward," Mason answered. "Jervis is irritating and pernickety, as you can see, but we've always found him honest to a fault, and I see no reason to doubt his word. Do you?"

"One or two points strike me as odd, I must confess. However, I won't bother you with them at this stage. I would like someone to go over his accounts."

"Jervis's accounts?" Mason stared, managing to convey that the question was not quite in good taste. "Oh, certainly, if you wish."

"Tell me about Kelly. He's Cole's assistant, isn't he?"

"Yes. An excellent man. Shrewd, practical, popular with the staff."

"No grudge against Cole?"

Mason's eyes opened very wide.

"That's unimaginable," he said. "He was a most loyal assistant."

"Or against Jervis? I mean, we've all assumed that his motive was to save Jervis. Don't mind my nasty suspicious nature. That's what I'm paid for. Kelly might have been making sure that Jervis didn't interfere before the current had done its work."

"In that case, he'd hardly have called out to throw the switches."

"It would have looked very bad if he hadn't. He may have known that the other man was some distance from them. Well, Mason, thank you very much indeed for all your help. We'll meet tomorrow at the inquest."

The inquest produced no more than Ellis intended. The first witness, Cole's panel doctor, and the police surgeon who did the post-mortem, had little to say beyond agreeing that Cole's heart was not in good condition anyhow, and that his death must have been instantaneous.

Then came Kelly. The engineer harboured an obvious grievance against Jervis, but gave his evidence honestly and directly. Bidden by the Coroner to tell his story in his own words, he said that he was working a few yards from Mr. Cole, but didn't rightly see him killed, as his back was turned.

"I heard him scream, and I spun round, and he was squirming across the guard rail. He gave a sort of wheezing sigh, and the puff of life went out of him. I shouted to Jock to throw the switches, but it was too late. I served my time in the power station, and saw one of the lads wiped out the same way."

"What did you do next?"

"I jumped over the rail of the engine I was cleaning, and then I saw Mr. Jervis come running round the corner and making for Mr. Cole as fast as he could pelt. I knew what would happen if he touched the body. There was no time to argue, so I gave him a Rugby tackle, and brought him down before he could kill himself."

"Didn't you notice that he was wearing rubber gloves?"

"How was I to be looking whether he had rubber gloves, or a wrist-watch, and I lepping on him to save his life?"

There were titters at this, promptly suppressed by the Coroner, who went on to Kelly, "You did your honest best to protect him from what you believed, rightly or wrongly, to be grave danger?"

"Faith, grave is the word for it, sir. I'm as sure as I'm talking to you here that I stood between that little man and his coffin, gloves or no gloves. And a fat lot of thanks I got for it."

Kelly stepped down, and the Coroner observed that it seemed clear that the first shock was fatal, and that Cole could not have been saved, even if Jervis had reached him. It might be some satisfaction to Kelly, if the jury agreed in thinking that he had acted with great presence of mind. The jury did agree, and the Coroner added that he hoped Kelly's employers would take notice of this commendation.

At this point Bradstreet rose and asked that the inquest should be adjourned, so that an exhaustive enquiry could be made into the exact cause of the accident. The Coroner fell in with suspicious readiness.

"You have found nothing wrong with the machinery?" he enquired.

"Nothing wrong with the dynamo itself. Still, obviously, there must be something out of order, or such an accident could not happen to an experienced man."

The Coroner then addressed the jury, saying that it was

evident that the deceased man met his death from electrocution, but that at that stage they were not in a position to decide how the fatal shock came to be received; and the proceedings concluded formally with an adjournment to a date three weeks later, when the enquiries should be completed, and Jervis, an important witness, would be able to attend.

What did not come out was a piece of evidence which would at once have lifted the incident to the front page of the evening papers. Bradstreet's reply to the Coroner had been literally true. Nothing was wrong with the dynamo itself; but it had been tampered with, so that there was leakage of current from one of the output cables to a guard rail. A narrow slot had been cut through the insulation, probably with the edge of a file. In this was jammed one end of a folding metal rule, such as is carried by many workers in wood or iron. The rule was extended to its full length, and its other end had been forced under the lower guard rail and allowed to spring back, so that it remained curved like a bow in firm contact with the bared wires below and the rail above. In Mason's opinion, and that of a consulting engineer, it was quite impossible that this could be due to an accident.

After this, Bradstreet followed one line of enquiry, Ellis another. The closest investigation of Jervis's accounts failed to uncover any irregularity. Cole's, though unsystematic, were perfectly in order. Bradstreet, however, was able to report that Kelly had been paying attention to Cole's younger daughter, and that Jervis appeared to resent this The girl affirmed positively that she had had nothing to do with Jervis, and the information, which at first seemed to point to hostility between Jervis and Kelly, turned out to be more of a hindrance than a help.

"I believe we can do it on what we've got," Ellis said. "I'd prefer a motive, of course, but I doubt if we'll find a sane one."

"You think it's a lunatic's work?"

"You've heard and seen the same as I have, Bradder. What do you feel?"

The West-countryman shrugged his broad shoulders.

"There'll be a motive all right," he said, "even if 'twouldn't be enough to make you or me do the deed."

Ellis suddenly smacked his fist into his palm.

"Mrs. Cole. He might have told her something the girl didn't know."

Bradstreet opened his eyes wide. He rose from the table, and ambled out of the room. When he came back, an hour later, he nodded.

"Jervis spoke to Cole about Kelly's carrying on with his daughter. Cole laughed in his face. He told Mrs. Cole it looked as if Jervis was sweet on the girl himself. Fair roared with laughter, Cole did."

"Well. What do you want now?" Jervis stared peevishly at Ellis.

For perhaps half a minute Ellis did not reply. He gazed unwaveringly at the trussed-up accountant, then slowly began to shake his head.

"You planned it neatly," he said, "but you made a mistake."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I'm afraid you do."

Ellis gave him the traditional warning. Instead of turning pale, the accountant's cheeks went crimson. He stuttered for a moment indignantly; then all the fight went from him, and he collapsed.

"My breath," he said, after a few seconds. "Can't—get my—breath."

"Don't worry. I'll just ask you questions and you can shake your head or nod. You were going to get the rule, weren't you? That's why you had the gloves on."

Jervis nodded.

"Finger-prints," he whispered. "It was worrying me. I couldn't be sure."

"No, there were no prints. But rubber gloves can make marks. Sheer bad luck, from your point of view, Kelly's tackling you like that. You weren't able to get rid of the gloves. Don't try to tell us now. We can take a statement from you when you feel better."

"I will say nothing without first consulting my solicitor."

"Capital!" Ellis assured him. "We'd all prefer that."

The statement ran as follows:

"My solicitor has persuaded me to make this statement. He thinks it will be better for me not to give evidence at my trial. He suggests I am not well enough to do myself justice. He does not think that I shall be able to make the jury see, as I saw all the time, what a menace Cole was to the firm's very existence—quite apart from his intolerable inconvenience to me. He doesn't think it would be good tactics to prove that it wasn't my fault that the rule was left there. Yet Kelly was clearly responsible for that, as he is for my being here. Instead, he gets patted on the back for his presence of mind. Presence of mind, forsooth! Who showed any mind at all but myself? I overlooked nothing—except that a hooligan would rush to be a cheap hero at my expense.

"I foresaw every move; the current switched off, people afraid to stir in the darkness, while I, knowing every inch of the way, could slip along in the confusion to whip out the rule and get back with it safe in my pocket to Cole's body. Twenty seconds would have been ample for me. I know, because I practised and timed it often when I was working late. I used to wait till I saw the watchman cross the yard for his tea, and I knew the place was empty. Then I would go down to the engine-room, work for a few minutes with my file at the cable, carefully covering the cut with insulating tape so that it would not show; then a quick walk to and from the engine, with my watch in my hand; and back to my room, for the watchman to find me busy over my accounts.

"I took no risks. After all my preparations were made, I went to the spot half a dozen times before the right moment came. Some of the times Cole was not near the engines, or someone was standing where he would see me. Three times I got back unnoticed. And the other evening I talked with Cole. He had a stock catchword which he repeated like a parrot, until it made me almost physically sick.

"'How is H.M.S. Indispensable today?' he would ask, and bray with laughter. The man's insolence was unbearable. It had grown worse since that other matter, when I did no more than my duty by speaking to him. A girl of

that age needs someone older, wiser, more experienced. In any case, she cannot be trusted to judge for herself.

"But I thought it politic to show no resentment. I even would force a smile. I wondered what his fat jeering face would look like if he realised what my business was.

"My solicitor says that Counsel for the prosecution would make much of the fact that I wore rubber gloves, and that the jury would not believe my explanation. I cannot see why; it was a rational precaution that any prudent man would take. If I felt better, and stronger, I would have rejected his advice, and not listened to that fat red-haired detective. At least, he calls himself a detective, though I must say he does not look like one . . ."

After this, the document rambled and became incoherent, Jervis repeating himself again and again. Whether it was due to the shock, whether the fall merely speeded up what was happening anyway, or whether he started off his balance, nobody could be sure. By the time he came up for trial, however, there was no doubt at all, and, after a brief hearing, the Judge directed that the punctilious accountant be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure.

As Ellis commented to Bradstreet, nothing makes the police more suspicious than not finding finger-prints where they would naturally expect them. The Devonian considered this remark, then nodded slowly.

"Ar," he replied.

Body No. 2 was subjected to similar techniques, and detailed study, particularly of the skull sutures, concluded in an assessment of age as probably within the limits of between thirty and fifty, narrowed to a finer range of thirty-five to forty-five.

Estimation of suture was possible by direct measurement in the case of Body No. 2, Pearson's formulæ also being applied. Height was found to be 5 ft. 3¾ in. by measurement and 5 ft. 4½ in. by Pearson's formulæ. Body No. 1 could be determined by approximation and by the use of Pearson's formulæ; the estimated height was from 4 ft. 11¼ in. to 5 ft. ¾ in.—a femur, tibia, humerus, and radius were used for the application of the formulæ.

***Famous Murder Cases* (2) cont'd.**

THERE'S A LAW AGAINST IT

Thomas likes to live Rent-Free

by J. A. J.

The famous columnist of the *London Evening News.*

DO you remember the man who thought he had found the ideal home in the East End? This ideal home, though a little windy at times, was completely free from rent, because most of it had been knocked down by a bomb in the war; and so the man carried a rusty bedstead into the rubble, hung his lamentable coat on a drooping nail and was ready to live happily ever afterwards. But he had forgotten one small thing. The law, which is always careful of the health of the public, forbids people to risk their welfare by sleeping in draughts, and twice within a week this man, in the interests of society, was awakened from deep dreams of peace amid the ruins and led to court for judgement. The first time he was let off. The second time he was sent to prison for a week, with the most earnest advice that he should find a landlord who was willing to accept rent.

It would be useless to hide the fact any longer that this man's name was Thomas. Thomas, then, came out of prison after the week, looked up at the sky, and went straight back to the ideal home. He did not bother to dust the rubble. Nor did he do more than straighten the rags on the rusty bed. He hung his coat on the nail, waited until night fell, climbed on to the squeaking springs and slept the sleep that comes naturally to citizens who have found a rentless home.

"Now, now, now," said a voice.

"Bzzzzzzzz."

"But you can't do it."

"Bzzzzzz?" said Thomas.

Anyway, the morning came, and there was Thomas standing once more in the dock. The clerk of the court said to Thomas: "You are charged with wandering abroad and lodging in an unoccupied building and failing to give a good account of yourself and refusing to apply for admission to the Institution."

Those were a good many things to be accused of in one breath, but Thomas's answer was immediate. "Not guilty, sir," he said, hitching his shabby coat around him, "and I haven't any money."

"Sit down, then."

"All right."

"Evidence, please."

The constable was there with the evidence. "Just after midnight, sir," said the constable to Mr. Marnan, "I found this man asleep in an unoccupied house. I told him he was not allowed to sleep there, and as he had no money I directed him to the Institution at Camberwell. But when I returned at half past two in the morning he was still there, asleep. I asked him why he had not gone to the Institution at Camberwell. He said 'I just went for a walk round the block and then came back again.' I took him into custody, sir."

Mr. Marnan asked a question which might have occurred to anybody who heard of a man preferring not to pay rent. "Had he been drinking?" asked Mr. Marnan.

"No, sir," said the constable.

Mr. Marnan addressed himself directly to the man who had been haunting the ruined house. "Do you want to give evidence for yourself?" he invited. But Thomas shook his tousled head. "I haven't got any money, sir," he said. Mr. Marnan, whose tone was slightly edged, said, "You don't have to have money to give evidence." Thomas said: "No thank you, sir, I'll stay where I am, because I don't have any work."

"But you've pleaded not guilty," insisted Mr. Marnan, "and you are entitled to tell your own story." Thomas was

equally dogged. He said, "No, thank you, sir."

"In that case," said Mr. Marnan, "I'm bound to find the charge proved. Anything known?"

"Yes, sir," said the jailer.

"For the same thing?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the same house?"

"Yes, sir," said the jailer. "He's no money, and as you see he's only 34."

Mr. Marnan looked round for someone who could explain why a man of 34 refused to pay rent, and his glance lighted on the Probation Officer, and he said, "You've seen this man before?"

The Probation Officer looked resignedly at Thomas. "Twice, sir," he agreed. "I gather from him that he's been out of work for the last year. I know it's not so easy to get employment these days, but that trouble hasn't existed all through the last year. He could have found work if he'd really tried."

Judging by those facts, Thomas was no horny-handed son of toil. Mr. Marnan said to the Probation Officer: "There doesn't seem to be much we can do then?" The Probation Officer, who never despairs, said: "I'm always willing to assist him, of course, but I don't think probation is suitable."

"No," agreed Mr. Marnan, and he turned to the undesirable tenant. "You've only just come out of prison," he said, "and I don't want to send you straight back. I'll give you a conditional discharge. But remember this. If you go on doing this you'll run a real risk of being sent to the Sessions as a rogue and vagabond."

Sharp Sharper?

A good man may be stupid as well as good, but a bad man has got to have wits.

—Maxim Gorky.

JOHN CREASEY

Looks at New Books

Ambling this month through the books which were waiting for first a glance and then, if they appealed, for reading and comment, I came upon WHAT'S BETTER THAN MONEY? by James Hadley Chase (HALE, 10/6). Two reflections followed at once. First, the supreme importance that a title can have—is there a better one than Chase's latest?—and second, the curiously benign attitude which authors of crime stories seem to have towards one another. I suppose it springs from the knowledge that one's book will sell just as many copies as the public thinks it is worth, and the fabulous sales of one title don't affect the modest sales of another; or vice versa.

At all events, among my author friends the comment: "So-and-so's newest is good, isn't it?" comes far more frequently than a sour reflection. And James Hadley Chase's is good. He opens with an intriguing situation (in Hollywood), takes hold of the reader, and doesn't let him go. What is the story about? Blackmail of a tough guy by a tough girl.

From the very well known to the nearly new writer—Elizabeth Salter, who gives us THERE WAS A WITNESS (BLES, 13/6d.). Here the background is Australia, and it seems to me authentic, while the story of a murdered heir carries real conviction.

Now to one of the most successful of 'new' writers—Ed McBain, who gives us another 87th Precinct story, KILLER'S CHOICE (BOARDMAN, 10/6d.). It is told in that spare, economical and effective style which conveys its own thrill. Yet I had the feeling that it should be better. analysed this feeling, and came to the conclusion that the

dialogue, crisp, terse and good though most of it is, goes on too long. There is very little true narrative, and it reads rather like a play. True, the characters and situations come over very well, a tribute to the author's skill, but I think it needs more narrative, more 'weight' to make it as good as it could be.

A new writer, new to me in name at least, is Jeffery Ashford. His COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE (JOHN LONG, 11/6d.) has all the qualities that a good trial yarn should have, and the writing is taut and effective.

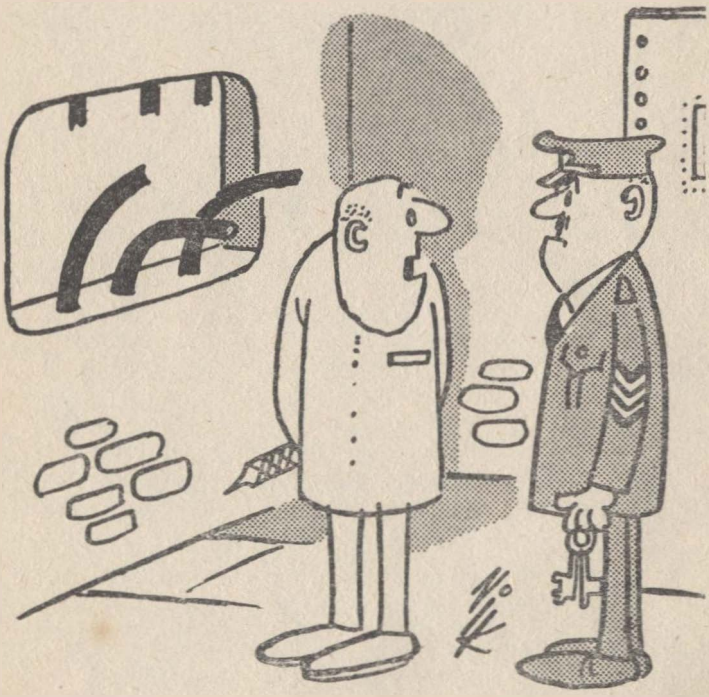
There is often a warm if somewhat spicy humour in the better but less pretentious American yarns, and GO TO SLEEP JEANNIE, by Thomas B. Dewey (BOARDMAN, 10/6) is one of these. Jeannie is the wife of the not-really-tough, but sentimental private eye, and no one could be more sleepily seductive or more dewy-eyed. I found her charming and real, her husband as real and pleasant, and the story clear-cut, lucid, exciting and authentic Hollywood and Californian West Coast. If ever a thriller could be called typically American in the best sense, this is it.

I suppose that for all that is typical of an English book in the best if slightly old-fashioned sense, we need go no further than THE CASE OF THE SAPPHIRE BROOCH by Christopher Bush (MACDONALD, 11/6d). Here we have the English private investigator, his Scotland Yard friend, and lucidly expounded problem as lucidly solved. It is scrupulously fair, not even remotely salacious or seductive—not perhaps *very* exciting. But did Mr. Bush intend it to be?

FORMULA FOR MURDER is an English semi toughie, lively, full of pace, full of vigour, and offered as a paper-back originally at 2/- by Brown Watson.

The much better known paper-back house of PAN gives us three titles at 2/6d., and each one excellent in its own way. I preferred FATAL WOMAN by Patrick Quentin, with a typically Quentinian twist—she was harmless, says the cover, until she was dead. The problem is immaculate. the characters as real as if I knew them as neighbours. THE HOUSE OF NUMBERS by Jack Finney is an American prison escape story, harsh, grim, real—perhaps a little too

real to be real! Then we go into welcome waves of fantasy and fun with Leslie Charteris and the Saint as they romped together in the gay 1930's. It is called THE SAINT CLOSES THE CASE, and could be called The Saint in London Town. It is full of deepdyed villains, luscious lovelies, and—but if you need to know more than this you haven't met Simon Templar.



"Quite a gale blowing up, eh?"

KISS OF JUDAS

by Edward Marjoribanks

By a kiss, she betrayed him into the hands of the officers of the law—to repent it in bitter self-accusation.

ANOTHER great trial suited to Marshall Hall's conspicuous and versatile advocacy was needed to bring him back to his old position at the Bar; and very soon the opportunity came from the same firm of solicitors which had first brought his name into eminence. In November 1907, Mr. Arthur Newton revisited Temple Gardens, and held a long conversation with Marshall Hall, after which the latter came into Wellesley Orr's room in a great state of excitement. "I want you to concentrate on this case entirely for the next three weeks," he said, throwing a mass of documents upon his table. "This is the greatest case I've ever had in my life. If you have an idea, however remote or far-fetched, come in and tell me. The man's innocent, and a chance idea may mean life or death to him."

The papers flung on Orr's table were the depositions in the Camden Town murder case; and it was on the wings of the prestige which Marshall Hall's conduct of this great trial brought him that he was to rise once more to take his place among the leading advocates of the day.

On the morning of Thursday, September 12, a young man named Bertram Shaw, employed as cook on the Midland Railway, returned from his night duty to his flat at 29 St. Paul's Road, Camden Town, in order to meet his

From "Best Murder Cases" edited by Donn Russell (Faber).

mother and introduce her to the girl who was about to become his wife. Her name was Emily Dimmock, but she was always known as "Phyllis". He had taken her, as he thought, from the life of the streets to marry her. She was already known as Mrs. Bertram Shaw. When he returned on that Thursday morning, he found his door locked; letting himself in by a borrowed key, he found poor Phyllis lying quite naked on her bed, her throat cut from ear to ear, so skilfully and savagely, that her head was only attached to her body by a few muscles. Otherwise, she was lying peacefully in an attitude of repose; expert medical opinion said she had died in her sleep at about 3 a.m. Only a few articles of trifling value were removed, and some other motive than robbery had to be found to account for the crime.

The murder became the sensation of the time; for weeks no arrest was made, and it seemed as if the whole affair would remain a complete mystery. But the Criminal Investigation Department of the Yard, under Inspector Neill, were busily making enquiries. It was discovered that, up to the time of her death, Phyllis could not keep away from her old mode of life. Unknown to Shaw, she was frequenting public houses and taking men home. The "husband's" night on his dining-car gave her both temptation and opportunity. As late as 11.30 on the Wednesday night she had been seen with a young man of "shabby genteel" appearance at the Eagle public house, and reports reached the police that she had been seen at a later time with another man, smarter and better built. Further enquiries showed that on Monday night and Friday night she had been seen, with the same young man with whom she had been at the Eagle on Wednesday, at a neighbouring house called the Rising Sun. The information as to the "shabby genteel" young man came from a young ship's cook, who almost at once came forward and frankly confessed that he had slept at 29 St. Paul's Road on the three nights before the fatal one: for the night in question the ship's cook could establish an alibi. His information about the other young man was corroborated by other girls of easy virtue; but, considering the number of men who had been her chance lovers, the discovery of the murderer among them seemed

a hopeless task. As Robert Wood, a young artist of twenty-eight, employed by the Sand and Blast Manufacturing Company of Gray's Inn Road to paint delicate designs on glass, said to one of his colleagues, "It is not surprising. These women never know whom they're taking home."

The police, however, had one important clue: well concealed in a drawer in Phyllis's room they found a post-card; on one side was a rather decorative picture of a woman with her child, on the other side was writing which appeared to be a message of rendezvous from one woman to another for Monday night. It was received by her on the Monday morning. "Phyllis, Darling," it ran—"If it pleases you, meet me at 8.15 at the [here followed a little sketch of the Rising Sun]. Yours to a cinder, Alice." It was addressed to "Mrs. B. Shaw, 29 St. Paul's Road, Camden Town". Now, when the police had first come they found a postcard album lying on the floor; several postcards had been taken out, and some lay scattered on the floor. Altogether, it looked as if the murderer had been interested in looking for a postcard before he went. Further, the police found in her room fragments of what appeared to be a torn and charred letter, and the writing appeared to be the same as that on the card of assignation for Monday. The ship's cook said that Phyllis had shown him both, that they were in the same handwriting, and that Phyllis had put the postcard in a drawer. It was therefore naturally considered that if the writer of these documents could be discovered an arrest would be justified. Inspector Neill remembered the postmark and the laundry mark of the Bennett case. They therefore decided to use the newspapers and to give the postcard in facsimile the widest publicity.

In the ordinary course, a few words on a postcard reproduced in facsimile would be very hard to identify as the writing of any one person. But suppose that a young woman has received long and frequent love-letters from a man over a period of years, so that she knows every sport and trick of his hand; suppose, further, that her lover is an artist and has a habit of embellishing his love-letters with little sketches—it might then well be that a girl would immediately recognise her lover's hand in a few words on

a postcard, reproduced in facsimile in her Sunday newspaper; and so it was. Ruby Young, a delicate-looking girl of refined beauty of the Rossetti type, with dark hair, pale face, and deep-blue eyes, was an artist's model. She had been a nurse, and had been seduced by a medical man; shortly afterwards she made the acquaintance of Robert Wood, a young artist, in whose work the great William Morris had shown a kindly interest. Wood fell in love with her, and she with him. He belonged to a very respectable middle-class Scots family living in London: he was of a very gentle and lovable nature, but his general popularity with everyone, men and women, had made him spoilt and vain; and, whereas respectability was a fetish with him, a strange vanity made him seek the acquaintance and pay court to attractive women of the streets. He himself said that this was only a foolish whim of his in his curiosity to know all sorts of people. Probably he and Ruby would have married, if she had not told him of her former misfortune. He gave her his mother's ring, became her devoted lover and constant companion, but never married her. He was poor, and she began to receive financial assistance from other men. Wood's discovery of this did not terminate their friendship, and she much resented any attentions paid by him to other women.

Her jealousy had lately caused a serious breach between them. Then, on Sunday, September 29th, she saw the 'Rising Sun' postcard in her Sunday newspaper, and recognised the writing at once as being that of her lover. She then recalled that he had been very strange in his behaviour lately. Up to September 13th, they had only met once, and then by chance, since the quarrel in July. But on that day she received a telegram from him asking her to meet him at a shop. They went to a restaurant, and Wood said to her, "Ruby, if any questions are put to you, will you say you always saw me on Mondays and Wednesdays?" She asked him why, but he merely pressed her till she promised. Afterwards they met several times, and he reminded her each time of her promise. Then, on Sunday, the 29th, came the publication of the postcard. Ruby had clipped out the cutting and put it in a letter to Wood which was lying on her table, when he himself called on her. He

was in great distress: "Rube," he said, "I am in trouble." "Yes," she answered, "I know you are—that is your handwriting." He then said: "Be patient, and I will explain all." He said that he had met Phyllis Dimmock in the 'Rising Sun' on the Friday before the murder. A little boy came in to sell picture postcards. She collected them and was going to buy one. Wood advised her not to, as they were "not artistic". He then produced some that he had brought back from Bruges, and she liked the one of the woman with the child. "There," she said. "That's a pretty one—write something nice on it for me." Wood had been showing Phyllis his sketches, and he then scribbled the words of assignation on the postcard, and signed it "Alice" at Phyllis's request, because "the governor might cut up rough", if he signed a man's name. He told her he would post it to her. Next day he met her again in the street, and she said, "You have not sent me my postcard." He did post it to her on Sunday night. On Monday he met her again in the Rising Sun; she was with a lame man whom she said "she hated". Wood told Ruby he had never seen her again after that night, and that he had spent Tuesday with his brother; on Wednesday he had been out walking alone, but he could not prove it. She asked him if he had written again to Phyllis, and he said he had scribbled and sketched for her in the Rising Sun, and she might have kept something in his handwriting.

Ruby and Robert then made a careful plan of where they would say they had been on the Wednesday. They arranged to say that they had parted at Brompton Oratory at 10.30, she to go home to Earls Court, he to King's Cross. Ruby then began to be nervous about this conspiracy. "Your word and my word will stand against the world," said her lover, in his histrionic way. He left her happily, confident that she would stand by him. They met again several times, and she went to see Charles Wood, a brother. He explained to her that it might be important for Robert to prove his whereabouts during the week of the murder. "I can answer for Wednesday, anyway," she said. Robert had confided in his brother Charles, just as he had done with Ruby. After anxious discussion, Charles had advised him to send the following letter addressed to Charles at

a poste restante, which was duly done. It was signed by Charles Wood, Bessie his wife, and Robert, and was expressed thus: "We are jointly anxious to assist the police, but we are very anxious to avoid the publicity and personal inconvenience of present communication. Being satisfied of his bona fides, we think it wise to await the result of the inquest. We are determined that if the necessity arises after the inquest that Robert Wood shall make his avowal to the authorities immediately."

Meanwhile, the thing was getting on Ruby's nerves. Robert kept worrying her "to be true", and she replied, "I will be true, but don't bother me." But she was a woman, very much alone in the world and frightened. She went to another friend, and put her predicament in a hypothetical way. "What ought a girl to do who is in that position?" she said. Of course her friend guessed the truth and told her that unless she told the truth he would do so for her. This frightened her, and she was introduced by her friend to a journalist, who obtained the whole story from her. This man in turn caused her to meet Inspector Neill outside Piccadilly Tube Station. Poor Ruby was now in a most unenviable position. She loved Robert Wood, and surely cannot have wished to give him away; but through her own indiscretion she was now almost compelled to help the police. Accordingly, on October 4th, she met Robert Wood in Gray's Inn Road. She greeted him with a kiss; he had an uneasy feeling that he was being watched. "I believe that man is a detective," he said. Ruby bade him pay no attention. But very soon Inspector Neill came up to him, and explained to him that he would have to detain him, as he had reason to believe that he had written certain postcards to Phyllis Dimmock. Wood replied that he had only written one, and, as he got into a cab with the Inspector, and saw Ruby crying hysterically, he, still

Items of clothing, some sheeting, and portions of newspaper were used in the wrapping of the remains as found—of these last a portion was of the "Sunday Graphic", dated September 15th, 1935, a special slip edition confined for sale to Morecambe, Lancaster, and surrounding districts.

Famous Murder Cases (2) cont'd.

confident of her loyalty, said in his pathetic theatrical manner, "Don't cry, girlie, I have to go with these gentlemen. If England wants me, she must have me. Be true." "Be brave," answered Ruby, "and leave that to me."

Well might Ruby cry; it was perhaps now dawning upon her that she had really caused her lover to be arrested for murder, an eventuality which she had not first considered possible. Trusting entirely in Ruby, as well he might, he made a long statement to the police, making the alibi which she had concocted with him the main point of a protest for being detained at all. This false statement was to bring him close to the gallows. Other investigations concerning him were not favourable to him. A young bookseller named Lambert had seen him with Phyllis in the Eagle as late as 10.30 on the Wednesday night. Wood had telephoned him the very next day, and begged him to say nothing about having seen him with a girl.

When Wood was arrested, the inquest on Phyllis Dimmock was already in progress, and it became necessary for his friends to be busy about his defence at once. His employers ridiculed the idea of his being a murderer, and for the sake of abundant caution retained Arthur Newton. Wood, they said, was gentle and amiable to a fault; and really the evidence against him was so slender that the clever solicitor at first thought the task before him was an easy one. But he was soon to have a rude awakening. When he applied for bail, Inspector Neill made the dramatic disclosure that Wood had been identified as a man who had left 29 St. Paul's Road at about five o'clock on the morning of the murder. The witness of this fact turned out to be a man described as a "carman", and as such I shall describe him throughout the trial. As he was going "to look for work", shortly before five on the morning of September 12th, he had seen a man with broad shoulders coming out of 29 St. Paul's Road, where Phyllis Dimmock lived, and walk away in the opposite direction. An electric lamp in the street had clearly lighted up his figure; he was wearing a long dark overcoat and a bowler hat, but the carman had identified him by a peculiarity in his walk. He had his left hand in his overcoat pocket, and he walked with his right shoulder advanced, swinging his right arm. Poor

Robert Wood, during the progress of that much adjourned inquest, had to attend many identification parades, and at one of these the carman had identified him by his "peculiar" walk. Just after he had touched Wood, a woman called "May", a friend of Phyllis, had identified him by his face.

But the real tragedy to Wood was the evidence of Ruby Young. The police, perfectly properly, in the course of their duty had, step by step, wrung the whole truth from her. This was not a pleasant or, indeed, an easy task. Inspector Neill himself said to me, "All through, the poor girl was a most difficult witness, and most distressing to handle. There is no doubt that she loved him passionately." But in the end when she gave evidence, breaking down again and again, she told "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" as regards the prisoner's conspiracy with her to manufacture the alibi. She went further, and, after Newton had poured scorn and contempt on the evidence of the "carman", she said that he had a peculiar walk, "such as no one could copy; he puts his left hand in his pocket, and jerks his right shoulder forward." When pressed by Newton, she said that if his sixty-five fellow employees came forward to say that he had no peculiarity in his walk she would still say that he had. Why she said this must always be open to doubt; she must have known that it would be a deadly piece of evidence against her lover; indeed, if implicitly believed, it was sufficient to hang him. Perhaps, when closely examined, she had said it inadvertently, not realising its full import.

The evidence of these two witnesses, powerful as it was when taken together, was severely impeached before they left the witness box at the police court. The carman was, I am assured by Inspector Neill, a perfectly honest witness who had come forward with the genuine conviction that he had identified the prisoner. But how much his evidence was worth is shown by the many inconsistencies in his evidence when it was probed by Arthur Newton. Again and again his confident testimony was impeached, and it became obvious that much more than this man's evidence was necessary to identify Wood with the murderer. A witness who may be swearing a man's life away by his

evidence must be accurate, and this man's memory was shown to be inaccurate in very material particulars. Dominated by the clever solicitor, the witness adopted Newton's suggestion that it was a drizzly, foggy morning. The answer, which was contrary to the truth, was accepted for a good reason; and Newton continued, "But of course you were able to see him quite clearly by the light of the arc lamp opposite?" "Yes," said the carman, "I saw it, positively." "And, as it was a dark morning, if the light had been out, you could not have seen the man?" "Any fool could tell you that," was the answer. Then came the surprise: Newton had long ago realised the value of detail in criminal defence. When he had put his cunning questions, he had in his pocket a lighting-chart from the electric lighting authority, stating that the current was switched off at 4.37, a quarter of an hour before the witness had seen the alleged murderer pass beneath its glare. The carman could hardly go back on his word, for he had sworn that he had heard a clock striking five.

A witness who may be swearing a man's life away must be accurate

No such preparation was needed for the cross-examination of Ruby Young. Her immoral life and the fact that she was, wilfully or no, betraying her lover, made her an easy object for attack. But, as to Wood's conspiracy for an alibi, she was obviously telling the truth, however bitterly the "Kiss of Judas" was charged to her account. All Newton's questions and eloquence did not save Wood from being committed to trial for murder.

Meanwhile, the faithful devil, Wellesley Orr, had been poring and puzzling over the documents in this baffling case. Wood had been identified by the carman as a man who had been at 29 St. Paul's Road in the early hours of Thursday morning: by the ship's cook, who had identified Wood as having been with Phyllis at the Rising Sun on the 9th; it was he who had sworn to the letter of assignation received on the Wednesday morning for the meeting at the

Eagle; he said the same handwriting appeared on the post-card making the assignation for the Monday, admittedly the prisoner's. Altogether, he was a witness who had to be dealt with very carefully, and very efficiently; he had several witnesses to prove an alibi for himself on the night of the murder. There was also the girl named May, who identified Wood as a man, called "Scotch Bob," who had known Phyllis for some time and who threatened and ill-treated her. Now Wood spoke with a slight Scots accent, and his name was Robert. She said that she had seen Phyllis with Wood late on the night of the murder, and that Phyllis was very frightened of him. The statement of this girl was, on the face of it, contradictory and impossible; she was not called at the police court proceedings, but her statement was, according to the custom then prevailing, supplied to the defence. In her statement to the police she said that Phyllis had told her at four o'clock on the Wednesday that she had had a letter to meet a gentleman friend that night, and that she was afraid to go, and afraid not to go, as it was "Scotch Bob," who had a terrible grievance against her. Phyllis had also shown a part of the letter to a sailor who had spent the Tuesday night with her, and had then burnt it.

Now May could not have seen Phyllis at four o'clock, as she was then with her "husband", Bertram Shaw, and, indeed, it was unlikely that they had met at all that day. Who then had told her about the incident at all? The only other person could have been the ship's cook. A sudden inspiration flashed across Orr's mind. The ship's cook and Wood—what a contrast they made! The one a brawny sailor man, the other a weedy little artist, exceptionably amiable, employed to paint delicate designs on glass. The only thing in common between them was their misfortune in having been with the murdered woman shortly before her death. But how, even in this regard, did their records compare? According to his own confession, the ship's cook had spent the three nights before the last one with the dead woman, on each night giving her a "present" out of his hard-earned savings, giving her less and less each night, till they were nearly exhausted. She must have been very attractive to him. Further, he had been waiting for her at

the Rising Sun late on the night of the murder. True, he could establish an alibi by a friend and his landlady, but so could Wood by his father and stepbrother. The only circumstance in which Wood's record compared unfavourably with the ship's cook's, except for the evidence of the ship's cook himself, was that Wood had been seen last with her—at the Eagle, by his friend Lambert. It was not that Orr saw the ship's cook as the real murderer, but, the more the cook's predicament was probed, the stronger would seem to be his motive to be seeking out and blaming someone else. He had seen Wood with her, and the suspicions of his simple and frightened mind naturally fell on this strange little man with the deep-set eyes. But how did the woman May know about the burnt letter, if she had not seen Phyllis on the Wednesday, as seemed almost certain? This was the woman who, unless her evidence had been disbelieved at once, would have brought the crime home to Wood. If the ship's cook had told May about the burnt letter, this would account, of course, for her knowledge of it. If he told her, why did he do so, and for what purpose did he discuss the matter with her? Might he not have known her, and gone to her for information about Wood and told her his suspicions about him? Might he not have asked her to help him establish his innocence, just as Wood had with Ruby Young? May's evidence was obviously tainted and a tissue of lies; why should she attack Wood, identify him as "Scotch Bob", and tell in great detail a story, manifestly false, of how she had seen Phyllis with him late on the night of the murder? There was absolutely no evidence of the ship's cook's acquaintance with May, but Orr felt sure they knew each other, and had talked the matter over thoroughly together. It was from a description which they had given to the police that they started their investigations. If the ship's cook's evidence could be assailed, Wood would be much nearer to safety.

As soon as the idea struck him, he went and put it to Marshall.

Just before the case began on the next day, Marshall Hall whispered to Orr, "I thought you'd like to know. I'm going to call Wood, and I'm going to cross-examine the

ship's cook on your lines."

The case opened on December 12th, at the newly built Palace of Justice which had arisen on the site of the Old Bailey. Marshall had clamoured for the demolition of the old building, and this was his first murder trial in the new court.

Now, as Mr. Justice McCardie has told me, Marshall, with his towering figure and piercing eyes, together with his general reputation for being a hard, ruthless, and relentless man, had a power of almost petrifying a witness. He now turned on the ship's cook all the electric force of his personality. An eye-witness has told me that the witness looked frightened before he spoke a word.

"Tell me," Marshall said, "do you know a woman called May?"

The witness, taken completely by surprise, first denied it, but then in a most hesitating manner admitted that he knew her by sight. The connection between this man and May, which Orr's cleverness had seen, was already established.

"Have you ever spoken to her?"—"Yes."

At this moment the witness began to speak in a low voice and to hang his head. "Look up, man," thundered Marshall; "look up and speak up—you are in a court of justice. When did you first speak to her?"

"I think it was at the funeral," said the man, dropping his voice again.

"Have you seen her since?"

The witness dropped his voice again even lower, and only those who were straining their ears to hear the man's words could catch them. "No," he muttered, "she accused me of something, and I haven't seen her again."

The admission was enough, and Marshall did not press the witness on this question; he was not seeking to make the witness appear to be the real murderer, but only a man frightened to death because he knew that suspicion would fall on him.

"Did you talk about the case at the funeral?"—"Yes, it was common talk."

"Did she give you a description of the man whom she said was known as a friend of Dimmock's?"—"Yes."

"Did that description tally very much with your description of Wood?"—"It tallied very much."

"So that you could easily have picked him out from May's description of him?"

Having established that the witness had been apprehensive, to say the least; that he was prejudiced against the prisoner; that he had discussed the case with May; and that she had given him a description which would have made it easy to identify the prisoner—Marshall passed on to cross-examine on the all-important letter. Wood had said that the scrap produced with his writing on it must be part of a page torn from a little address book on which he had been scribbling to please Phyllis, when they met; Marshall's keen eye had detected blue lines on the fragments which made the statement plausible. The witness still insisted that the scraps were part of the letter which Phyllis had shown him, but again began to hang his head. Again came the ruthless exhortation from leading counsel. "Look up, man, I tell you—we are in a court of justice—don't hang your head."

He was frightened to death, knowing suspicion might fall on him

The witness was severely cross-examined as to the part of the letter which he claimed to have read; he repeated his recollection of this as, "Dear Phyllis,—Will you meet me at the Eagle, 8.30 tonight. Bert." But, as the letter must have been posted on Tuesday night to be received by the first post on Wednesday morning, it was not really feasible that the expression "tonight" could have been used. Somebody in court laughed at the witness's equivocal answer when this point was put to him. Marshall, his nerves strung up to the uttermost limit, could not bear this. Turning round towards the place from which the laughter had come, he said, "I implore you not to laugh—a man's life is at stake."

After a short re-examination by Sir Charles Mathews, leading Counsel for the Crown, the ship's cook left the box with perspiration pouring down his face.

The first important witness called on the second day was a fellow lodger of the ship's cook, called to prove an alibi for him on the night of the murder. From this evidence arose one of the most dramatic moments of the trial.

Marshall Hall asked him, "Did he [the ship's cook] tell you he was very anxious to prove where he was on Wednesday night?"—"No."

"Did you know he was anxious to prove that?"—"No."

"Did you hear that he slept with Dimmock on the Monday, Tuesday, and Sunday nights?" continued Marshall, purposely inverting the sequence.—"Yes."

"Did he tell you?"—"Yes, in the course of a conversation."

"When did he tell you?"—"I knew on the Wednesday morning that he took her home."

"After knowing you only a few days, a man told you that?"

"He said he had been with Dimmock."

"That was a curious conversation for a man you had only known three days, to tell you he had passed the *three previous nights* in that way?"—"He did not say that; he merely mentioned he had been with her."

The next witness to face his enquiries was the carman. Marshall did not attack this witness's character, as Newton had at the police court. Nevertheless, he dealt with him very skilfully.

The third day provided a sensation by the production of the mysterious "Scotch Bob", who had known the dead

By co-related police work, and supporting evidence of a garment found among the remains, suspicion was finally directed to the house of Buck Ruxton, in Lancaster, Ruxton being a Parsee practising as a doctor (whose degrees of B.M., and B.S., were acquired in India, but having no British degrees). His wife, Isabella, and the nursemaid to the Ruxton children—Mary Jane Rogerson—had disappeared. It was recorded that they had not been seen alive by any outsider after September 14th.

Famous Murder Cases (2) cont'd.

woman. Thereafter the prisoner could not be confused with him, and the girl May's story became more incredible than ever, for "Scotch Bob's" late employer proved that he was far away on the night of the murder.

The really important business of the third day was the evidence of Ruby Young. The girl, when it came to the story of her last kiss and betrayal of Wood, and his words of farewell to her, burst into sobs, and could not continue her evidence for some minutes. Marshall Hall dealt gently with her; it was not necessary to be brutal to the poor creature who had been pursued with the maledictions of the crowd, now thoroughly roused on behalf of Wood, and who was to be almost lynched as she drove in a public conveyance well guarded by police. But as to the false alibi he put one question that compels admiration. "Having regard to Doctor Thompson's evidence that the deceased woman was murdered between three and four in the morning, has it ever struck you that this was a perfectly useless alibi for the murderer, but a perfect alibi merely for a meeting with the girl?" Ruby answered "No."

This question was the very foundation of Marshall's wonderful defence; once again he turned the most damaging evidence for the prosecution into a corner-stone of the defence. For this false alibi, so understood, might even tell in Wood's favour; it showed that his one concern was merely to avoid the publicity of being known as an associate of this girl, and not his trial for murder; or, if he was afraid of being arrested for murder, it showed that he did not even know at what time the girl had been murdered, and was therefore an innocent man.

The only dangerous part of Ruby's evidence was her statement, which caused a great sensation in court, that in his walk Wood "had a peculiarity which no one else could copy." But much of the sting of this was removed when she admitted that she would not have mentioned it at all had not the carman's evidence been ridiculed.

It had been generally expected that Marshall Hall would savagely attack Ruby Young, as Newton had done at the police court; his gentleness took everyone by surprise, and he always regarded this cross-examination as one of his best achievements.

Marshall Hall then rose and submitted confidently that there was no case against Wood to go to a jury, there being no motive, or reliable evidence of identification, or trace of the crime brought home to the prisoner. But, of course, the case went on, and Marshall opened the defence.

The defence was an alibi. The prisoner would say that he left the Eagle rather after eleven, and went straight home: his father and young brother had heard him come in at about midnight. There was nothing new in this evidence, but Marshall had again an important surprise witness who had only come to his knowledge during the progress of the case. This man, a ticket-collector named Westcott, had left 26 St. Paul's Road to go to his work at about 4.55 a.m. on the morning of the murder. He was broad-shouldered and had a brisk walk. He had been wearing a bowler hat and a long, dark overcoat. He had also seen in the street a man who bore a resemblance to the carman. But the real sting came in the end of the opening speech. Two witnesses, said Marshall, had given statements to the Crown that they had seen the woman in the company of a man, who was not the prisoner, as late as 12.30. The prosecution had not thought fit to call them, and he was compelled to do so for the defence, to the disadvantage of the prisoner, for now the Crown would have the right to cross-examine them.

The first witness called for the defence was the prisoner's father, a venerable old Scotsman. He said he remembered his son coming, on the night of the murder, into his room at about midnight; he came to fetch a clock of his own which the witness had borrowed. Robert had commented on the pungent smell in the room; witness had bought some lotion for a skin complaint on the day before, and had spilled some on the Wednesday. That was how he was able to fix the date. Sir Charles Mathews asked him at once when he had gone to purchase some more lotion. The old man said on the following Monday. Why?—Because he had not spilled the whole of the first bottle. Why hadn't he said that before at the police court?—"Because no one asked me," replied the old man truthfully, fighting for his son's life.

Young Charles Wood, a half-brother, corroborated his

father's evidence; and after him was called one Rogers, a jeweller by profession, by recreation a fisherman, and an officer of the Great Northern Brothers' Angling Society. This man lived in the flat below the Woods.

"Although a fisherman," began Marshall Hall, "your stories are not necessarily untrue?" Rogers then told his story: at about midnight on September 11th he had been preparing bait for the annual outing of his angling society, and he had seen the prisoner come in at about 11.50. He had come forward with this statement from the very first, and had been very angry at not being called at the inquest. The last witness for the alibi was Westcott.

"Are you conscious that you have got a swing in your walk?" asked Marshall Hall.

"Yes," said this bluff, broad-shouldered young man, "especially in the morning. They say it is a good exercise, and out with your chest." He then put on his bowler hat, turned up the collar of his overcoat, and walked up and down for the benefit of the jury. He was corroborated by another witness, named Barrett, who said that he had called him at 4.15 on that morning, and that he had always noticed a peculiar jerk in Westcott's shoulders as he walked. Wood's employer came forward to say that the prisoner was almost the pet of the works, of excellent ability and exceptionally amiable character. Marshall Hall then tendered the evidence of sixty-five of Wood's fellow employees. to the effect that Wood had no peculiarity in his walk, but Sir Charles accepted the evidence as given. Then the two witnesses, Sharples and Harvey, who were not called by the prosecution, but who at the very first had come forward to say that they had seen Phyllis with a man not the prisoner at 12.30 outside the Rising Sun, gave their evidence. They said that her companion was a head and shoulders taller than Wood, and "much smarter built."

Then, amid tense excitement, Marshall said, "I call the prisoner, Robert Wood." All eyes were on him as he walked to the witness box. It must have been a terrible ordeal. Everyone in court was watching for a peculiarity in his walk, and he wisely put his right hand in his coat pocket. As he passed by his father, he gave him a gentle smile, and said, "Well, dad, cheer up."

Marshall had been convinced by Orr that it was essential to call Wood in order to save his life, but the reason of his hestitation and anxiety soon became apparent. He was a very bad witness. He could not cast aside his affectations and his vanity even when fighting for his life. He was a young man who had been almost loved by his intimate friends, but to chance acquaintances he would have been thought, at the best of times, something of a *poseur*. Marshall put his first question with great force and dramatic effect.

"Robert Wood," he asked, "did you kill Emily Dimmock?"

But the prisoner merely smiled, and remained silent.

Marshall repeated the question, but much of its effect was gone. "You must answer straight," he said.

"I mean it is ridiculous," said the foolish young artist.

Marshall then, much distressed, implored Wood to answer his questions directly, but throughout his evidence the prisoner's inability to obey him caused him much anxiety.

On the sixth and last day of the trial, Wood had to face the ordeal of cross-examination by the terrible Sir Charles Mathews, then at the zenith of his career as a criminal advocate.

But, as a whole, as Wood himself admitted, the cross-examination was scrupulously fair. He was asked about the family ring which he had given to Ruby Young, and Mathews suggested that it was an engagement ring. "No," replied Wood, "it was something pleasing to her. She would add more to it than I would, perhaps." Then came a change in the prosecutor's voice—"Give us the English of that answer," he said. Under that same question from Mathews, Devereux the murderer had faltered a few years before, and lied himself to the gallows. When Wood was asked where he had been with Phyllis on Monday night, he merely answered that "he could not say". But the real crisis of his cross-examination arrived when Mathews came to the writing on the charred fragments of paper. Mathews had been able to decipher the following words and letters, "Will you . . . ar . . . of the . . . miss . . . Town S . . . ill . . . Wednesday . . . has . . . and . . . rest . . . excuse

. . . good . . . fond . . . Mon . . . from . . ." Mathews put to Wood a clever reconstruction of these fragments, which was as follows: "Will you (meet me at the b)ar of the (Eagle near Camden) Town S(tation on) Wednesday (8.15) . . . good(bye) fond(est love) from . . . ." This corresponded closely to the ship's cook's recollection of the part of the letter read by him. The word "ill," according to Mathews, referred to Wood's father's recent illness, and "Mon" was the first syllable for "Money".

Wood had explained these fragments to Marshall Hall in this way: Phyllis had on Friday night had all the contents of his pockets in her lap—papers, sketches, postcards, letters—and this writing may have been one of these. Indeed, if his sketches were half as clever and amusing as those made during his imprisonment, she may well have kept them. Wood was a man always drawing and scribbling. But, though he admitted that the words were in his handwriting, he could not explain them, or give their context. The words were so common that almost anything could have been written around them.

Wood was a bad witness — even when fighting for his life

He was closely questioned as to whether or no he had been in Phyllis's house at 29 St. Paul's Road on the night of the murder. Here Wood gave his evidence splendidly, and fell into none of the traps prepared for him. But at the end he again fell into prevarication. Asked very directly as to whether he had been in Phyllis's rooms on the night of the murder, he replied, "It is only to you, Sir Charles, that I should answer that question. I should be indignant with the average man. No."

Finally he was questioned about Ruby Young, and whether he had "given her up" in July. "I have never given up a friendship with anybody," he said.

His cross-examination had lasted nearly three hours, and Marshall briefly re-examined. The most damaging part of

Mathews' attack had been with regard to the charred fragments, and it was in this connection that Marshall addressed a masterly question. "Assuming that letter to be addressed to Phyllis Dimmock, which you do not admit, what is the necessity of indicating exact locality of the Eagle, which was in her immediate neighbourhood?"

Wood's inquisition was over; he had made a bad witness, but his very badness as a witness began to tell in his favour. Could this gentle, talented, and rather silly young man have murdered Emily Dimmock? At all events, it would have been fatal not to have called him. Whatever the uncertainty of his answers, anything was better than the almost certain comment of the judge on the silence of the one man who could have easily cleared himself if he had been innocent.

His debt to Orr was generously acknowledged by Marshall Hall at the very outset of his final speech. It is not often that a devil, not briefed in the case, obtains a compliment of this sort. The beginning of the final speech was in great contrast to that of the opening address. Marshall Hall began by reasoning very quietly with the jury. No motive or premeditation had even been suggested against Wood. Why, he had introduced Dimmock to his friend Lambert within a few hours of her death! The false alibi, in view of Wood's strange vanity, was really a point in his favour; his respectability, not his neck, had been his concern. The alibi he had sought to establish only covered the harmless hours of the evening. "Had he been guilty, his memory would have been tortured, not by the evening, but the dawn." Turning to the evidence, he began to speak again with passion. "What is the evidence of murder? The only iota of evidence against the man is that of the carman. If any one of you, gentlemen, had a poor suffering animal to kill, and whether you killed it or not depended on *his* evidence, would you kill it?" Then he passed to poor Ruby Young. "I would gladly have said nothing of her. I would have let her go from the witness box — poor, unfortunate, wretched woman, who has no doubt experienced many a moment of mad remorse for her part in this case—but for one thing. The evidence of the carman stood alone in all its glaring improbability till

December 4th, when, two months after the arrest of her lover, Ruby Young for the first time said that he had a peculiar gait, similar to that described by the carman. That statement was invented out of revenge for the suggestion that her calling was the calling which in fact it was. So far as she was concerned, it was a gross and vindictive lie . . . . You cannot hang a man on evidence such as that," shouted Marshall Hall, bringing his hand heavily down on the desk below him. "I defy you to do it; I defy you. I do not merely ask for a verdict of 'not guilty'—I demand it."

His part had been played magnificently; but, since he had called evidence, the Crown had the right to the last speech. Sir Charles took advantage of his privilege, and made a most dramatic oration, which, fine as it was, would hardly recommend itself to the present school of Treasury prosecutors, nor was it a speech which should have come as the last word.

Sir Charles did not scruple to use bold supposition to make good the chain of evidence. Again and again he said, "It might have been," and "Might it not have been?" "No blood found upon his clothes? Why? Gentlemen, when that dreadful murder was committed, might it not have been that he was wearing no clothes? No blood was found upon his hands? Why? The murderer had washed them in the room of death. This was a cold-blooded murder. It has been proved again and again that Robert Wood is a cold-blooded man, and cold-blooded under the most unnerving pressure. Might it not have been . . .?" After this peroration, into which all the pathos and bitterness of his emotional nature was packed, he concluded by the formal reminder that if there was any doubt, they must acquit the prisoner.

He had spoken for two hours; the judge then began to sum up. There was dead silence in court, as every ear was strained to listen and discover which way the judge was going. They had not to wait long, and, as it became clearer and clearer that the judge was making point after point against the prisoner, the crowd in court, full of his sympathisers, became restless and uneasy.

The public had taken poor Wood and his family to its

heart. From three o'clock a crowd had begun to collect in the misty December afternoon outside the Old Bailey, and by six o'clock it numbered many thousands, and overflowed out of Newgate Street towards Ludgate Circus. As Arthur Newton listened to the judge's heavy indictment, a police officer whispered to him, "If there's a conviction, I don't know what will happen." Indeed, fifty mounted police were in reserve outside against an emergency. In court the feeling was intense, and, as the judge went on, the people's restlessness changed into open dissatisfaction and criticism. There were repeated and audible observations of "grossly unfair", and so forth, which could not have failed to reach the judge's ears. Marshall Hall himself did not neglect to let scorn and indignation play over his expressive features, and began to "talk to the jury with his eyes". However, there was one man who remained quite unmoved —the prisoner. During the whole trial he had busied himself in sketching every witness and many persons of note in court. He had a rare gallery of celebrities as his sitters: Lily Elsie, who smiled at him, Gertie Millar, Lady Tree, Pinero, Henry Irving, Hall Caine, and many others.

But, quite suddenly, there came a most dramatic moment. The judge paused and spoke in a new tone: "Although it is my duty to further the ends of justice, so that criminals are brought to justice and are properly convicted, however strongly circumstances may go against him, in my judgment, strong as the suspicion is, I do not think the prosecution have brought the case home against him clearly enough." The listeners were amazed, and a loud cheer burst out from them and continued in spite of the usher's staccato calls for silence. When silence was restored, the judge continued: "Although it is, of course, a matter for you, and for you alone, gentlemen, it is my duty to point out to you that, unless you find that the evidence is so much against him as to warrant a conviction, you must give him the benefit of the doubt. I think, gentlemen, I have spoken plainly to you. You are not bound to act on my view."

Was the change planned or spontaneous? Certainly many of the eye-witnesses thought that the judge, who had seemed hostile to the prisoner throughout the trial, had really intended to sum up against him. Who shall say? The

mind of a judge is at least as difficult to read as those of other men. Judges are but human; and it may be that, in his very summing up, the judge, looking at the slim, aesthetic youth in the dock experienced a change of heart. It is no libel on a judge to say that he once, in a matter of life and death, changed his view—even at the eleventh hour.

The judge concluded his dramatic address at 7.45, and retired to his private room as the jury filed out. A great hum of conversation immediately arose, and the general opinion seemed to be that the jury would be out for some hours. But at eight o'clock someone noticed that the usher had returned, and exclaimed excitedly, "They are coming back." Marshall looked up nervously; he had not expected this sudden unanimity, and remembered the fate of Bennett. But the foreman, in answer to the formal question, said "Not guilty" in a loud voice. A great cheer rose in court, and many of the women were in tears.

"Grab that gun! And you, sir, keep 'em up and let's have no funny business. . . ."

Concluding our Thrilling Story of Mystery and Adventure —

Mountain of the Blind

by JOHN CREASEY

AT first it was just a walk; a clumsy and awkward one, because the rocky ground was so uneven, but the ascent was not steep and the fierce heat seemed to have died out of the day's sun. Anson did not set too fast a pace, but his steps were long and deliberate; Sarah had to take almost two for every one of his.

Hours passed. The land levelled out a little; there was a narrow path, almost smooth, between outcrops of jagged rock. Sarah put out her hand to steady herself and a lizard which she hadn't noticed darted away, scaring her. She snatched her hand away and shivered; in that heat! Alex was just behind her.

Not far ahead was a scene of startling beauty. A great herd of zebra and wildebeast, with springbok and water bucks in even greater number, was moving across the land. On the fringe of these beasts were a dozen giraffes. Soon darkness fell, and still they walked . . .

Bob came across and gripped her arm.

"Nearly there," he said. "Mark's reached the place where we're going to camp for the next few hours. It's in a little defile behind some rocks. The fire can't be seen unless you pass close by. There's a bit of a climb here. I'll carry you." Before she could protest he had bent down, slid his left arm round her shoulders, put his injured arm beneath her knees, and hoisted her up. "Alex!" he called.

"let one of the boys guide you."

"All right."

Bob went on, striding steadily, then holding her closer to him as he began to climb. Was it imagination, or was there a tautness in his grip; was he pressing her closer to him than he need? She could see his face, turned toward her, clearer now in the faint flickering of the fire which a boy had built. She heard a crackle, as of burning wood. She saw the glow in Bob's eyes.

He said: "If we find Dennison, I'll tell him I'm sorry about this." He hugged her very closely, and bent his head, she felt the hardness of his lips on hers, the hard kiss of a man who knew little about kissing, who wanted to possess, and in that moment had no thought of gentleness.

"Bob," she said, "I—"

He broke across her words harshly. "Don't say it," he said. "Just don't say it." It was almost as if he divined the fact that she was going to say "I love you." Then he stopped climbing, the firelight seemed brighter, and others were there, and making camp for the night.

Sarah heard the sounds of the men about her, felt the crispness of the morning air, realized that for the first morning since she had left England she did not feel too hot. She pulled on her shirt and slacks, then pushed back the flap of the tent.

The last time she had seen the earth it had been brown and parched, as if nothing green would ever grow; now she looked with astonishment on thick grass, on small trees and shrubs, with green leaves, on taller trees which were bright green, too. She turned around, to see if there was green in the other direction, and saw Bob, standing a little way off.

"Bob, what's happened? Why is it so green?"

"Spray from the falls," he answered promptly. "They're still 30 miles away, but there's a slight prevailing wind in this direction and you don't need much water to make things grow out here. Hear the falls?"

"Just."

"In a few hours they'll be almost deafening," Bob told her. "Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, but I thought you wanted to start early."

"One of the boys spotted a hunting party from the plant on this side of the river, after that herd we saw yesterday, so we had to wait. We'll be on our way in half an hour. There's enough water for a wash if you don't splash about too much."

"That's wonderful," Sarah said. "Bob—"

He said: "Don't say it, Sarah. Forget that I was a fool last night, and remember we'll be lucky to get out of this alive. If we let distractions put us off the main objective we might get ourselves into serious trouble."

"Yes, I know," Sarah said, and she felt a deep, irresistible compulsion to go on: "Bob, before we get to the plant, before we find out for certain what happened to Hugh, I want you to know that I love you."

Bob did not move or speak, and his lips were set; only his eyes held the expression she wanted to see, carried the message she longed to hear.

He said: "Thank you for that, Sarah." Then he added: "Join us as soon as you're ready," and walked on.

When Sarah came up she looked fresh and attractive, but took no special notice of him. After breakfast, Anson called Mark, the eldest boy.

"Look for tracks all the time," he ordered.

"Yes, baas," Mark said, and shook his head sagely. "Baas, Ah know one thing you want to know. About the mountain."

"What's that?" Anson asked sharply.

"It makes big noise."

"That's the water going over the falls."

"That is some of de noise, baas, not all of it. If baas will lie down, like go to sleep, him hear it."

Anson went down, first on his knee, then awkwardly on to his left side, then at full length on the ground which was coated with green, and where there was none of the chalky dust of the other side of the mountain. The drumming sound was at least as loud as it had been last night, and now he realized that there was the deep, throbbing note of great machines, deep within the earth.

As Anson felt the throbbing of those machines he looked into Mark's bright, questioning eyes. Anson sensed the boy's fear, and fear of the unknown was deep in him, too.

About them was the quiet of the morning. Sarah and Maxwell were some distance off, watching.

"Do you know what is happening, Mark?" Anson asked gruffly.

"Baas, no can be certain, but in long ago the river he run under mountain. If river run under mountain today pushed by big pumps, it make this kind of noise, baas. Mark believe the river being made to go in old way, baas."

"Can you imagine why?" demanded Anson.

"No tell why, baas," Mark said. "But I believe that happen, baas, and if it happen, big floods will come. That one sure thing, baas, one dam' sure thing."

"Did you tell Mr. Jameson about this?" he asked.

"I sure did, and he went right away to see Mr. McGuffy. But Mr. McGuffy, he said it was a big dream, so Mr. Jameson, he went right away to Affra plant."

So Jameson had gone to challenge Affra, had betrayed his knowledge, and made sure that he would be murdered.

"All right, Mark," Anson said. "Say nothing to anyone else, and go and join your brother. Go as far as Saka's Ridge, and report back to me there as soon as you can be sure the hunting party is on the other side."

"Sure thing, baas," Mark said, and went off.

Anson went to Sarah and Maxwell, and as they walked on, told them what Mark had told him.

"And we don't need any more telling why it's being done," he said. "They're trying to change the course of the river so as to carry ore down to the coast. It's the kind of fanatical purpose Russ would have—give a land-locked territory access to the sea or a great river, and it's worth 10

The progress of the case required careful attention to a task of considerable magnitude.

It was shown that the ages and measurements of the remains tallied closely with the known descriptions of Mrs. Ruxton and Mary Rogerson, and with ancillary detail now discovered it was possible to implement investigations by the experts. Others joined the 'team', these being Professor Sydney Smith, Dr. Arthur Hutchinson, and Professor J. C. Brash, whose particular studies were devoted to pertinent parts of the Moffat remains.

Famous Murder Cases (2) *cont'd.*

times, 100 times, what it is worth today."

After a short pause, Maxwell asked:

"What's wrong with doing that?"

"Nothing's wrong," Anson answered, "except that it will carry the bi-bi fly all over Central Africa."

Alex looked badly shaken, and his voice was husky as he asked:

"Where was the old river supposed to run?"

"Beneath the mountain on the northern side," Bob answered. "The old bed was filled with swamp water—we've known for years that it was the main breeding ground for the bi-bi fly."

Sarah found the hated word bi-bi forcing itself into her mind, and with it came the beginning of horror and dread.

"They would have to empty the bed of swamp water to give the river a clear run," Bob went on. "The only way to do that would be to pump the swamp water out, and it would have to go somewhere. If they drilled some bore holes from the heart of the mountain, they could pump it upwards. The mountain is honeycombed with caves and old mine workings, and all of these would be flooded eventually. Like Two Star was flooded, and Big Spur is being flooded now. There won't be a tributary or a backwater free of the flies. It will throw the work against them back by 100 years. We won't be worried about a mountain of the blind, it will be a continent of the blind!"

Alex put in, slowly: "They know what the world would think, or they wouldn't have held Hugh, they wouldn't have trapped Namu, and they wouldn't have fought to keep you out of the territory. How do you think they will go about changing the course of the river, Bob?"

"They'll blast away the rock near the falls. They'll change the flow of the falls just as the collapse of rock did way back. They must be tunnelling behind the falls, and what we can hear are the drills and the pumps."

"If they're as near the end as that, how can we stop them?" Sarah found herself asking.

"First we have to make sure exactly what they're doing," Anson replied. "Now we're really in a hurry."

An hour later Sarah saw a ridge of rock, miles long, which looked almost black. It had jagged edges sticking

out against the sky, and near it stood two of the boys. Bob quickened his stride, and a boy came hurrying toward him. Bob stopped, as the boy talked and gesticulated, then nodded, turned around, reached them and said:

"We're all right for a while, the hunting party went back. We should be able to see a lot from Saka's Ridge. Be ready for a shock," he warned her. "You too, Alex."

"I don't want any more shocks," Alex said.

The roar of the water seemed to get louder every step they took. The great rocks ahead must hide the actual river, Sarah told herself, and she felt a quiver of excitement.

Suddenly the roar of the water seemed to be intensified a thousand times, it was a deafening continuous thunder, the sound trapped here by the great ridge of rock, and reverberating from it. She felt Bob's hand tight on her arm again. She saw a kind of white cloud beneath her, and did not quite understand until, still holding her, he led her forward to a spot where the earth seemed to fall away into a great chasm.

She stared down upon the Seba falls, seeing the enormous cloud of spray which hovered above them and, below this cloud, the awful foaming, seething terror of the falling mass. It was grandeur beyond all she had ever conceived. It boiled and writhed downwards, into a great cauldron of white-whipped water, lashed into fury. It seemed to have a hypnotic effect, as if it meant to draw her down.

Bob said, close to her ear: "Look to your right."

To the right was a vast stretch of the river, and she thought it must be nearly a mile wide. The strange thing was the stillness of it there, the smooth surface with hardly a ripple except where it fell upon rocks which stood in its path. It surged past these and closed itself to a smooth surface again.

"Now look across the river, and down that way," Bob said.

She saw the Affra plant.

It was as fantastic, in its way, as the falls. Here in the heart of the wild land, close to nature's undisciplined might, was a great factory. It was at least 1,000 feet below the spot where they were standing, the bush spread out behind it, as if to confine it against the bank of the river

below. She saw chimneys rising up, tiny from here, but huge compared with the low buildings of the crushing plant itself. She saw square concrete buildings, power stations, rows upon rows of small buildings, winding roads, electrical pylons, great stretches of wire, even a radio mast.

"How the devil can we get over there?" Alex asked.

"Tonight," Bob answered; and although he kept his voice low, he managed to make himself heard. "We go up river—" he pointed—"where there's a chain of small islands connected by rope bridges where we can cross. It's not so difficult to get down once we're on the other side."

Alex shouted again: "What happens if we get caught?"

At last they reached the heart of the mystery— and even greater danger

"We mustn't get caught until we know when they're planning to finish the work," Bob answered in that strange, still voice. "Look over there." He pointed straight across the falls to the other side of the river. "They're new," he went on. "And that looks like a shaft that's been sunk recently. They'd need to sink a shaft and then tunnel inside the rock face behind the falls so as to put the explosive inside." He stopped again, only to go on: "I'll send Mark and Luke over to see what they can learn. Mark!" he called, and the boy came hurrying. "Mark," he repeated, "I want you and Luke to cross the river, and find out . . ."

"Bob," Sarah said, "do you seriously think you've a chance of finding out when they're going to blow up the falls? Do you think the boys have a chance of getting back?"

"Mark will come back," Bob said confidently. "There are so many Asigis, and the plant has so many shifts that even the overseers can't tell one boy from another. The place is over-run with messenger boys, houseboys and odd-job boys. I wish Mark was all we had to worry about."

He paused, then shouted: "Mark! We will meet you on the other side after sundown."

"I will bring news," Mark said.

"I know you will. Find out where Dr. Namu is, too, and

how much sickness there is."

"I do all you say, baas," the boy declared solemnly.

When Mark and his brothers had gone, Anson led the way to a shady spot behind the big ridge.

Sarah peered through field glasses at the mine. Half a dozen men were moving about; then she saw that there were men moving, in pairs, carrying things between them.

"Can you see the lettering on those crates?" Anson asked.

She could see that there was some kind of lettering, but could not make out what. She sensed that Anson was watching her intently.

"T," she said, hesitated, and then added with a rush: "TNT!"

"Sure?"

"Of course I am!" She was frightened by the implications, too.

Then Alex came up and took the glasses, as Bob said savagely: "What wouldn't I give to be over there?" He sat up, and brushed the dust off his clothes. "If you look in the other direction you can see the Bridge of Islands."

Alex turned around, peered through the glasses for what seemed a long time, then handed them to Sarah. By concentrating, she could make out the ropes which stretched from island to island, making a kind of bridge. Then she saw something moving about in the water; something like a man's head. Could it be? Her fears faded in a sudden attentiveness, and she stared more intently. It looked like the round shape of a man's head, and now and again water broke over it, hiding it completely; at other moments it looked as if an arm was stretched out, holding on to something between the head and the island.

"Bob, there's something in the water. It might be a man."

For a second, Anson stared. Then he began to run. The bridge was broken.

Some distance ahead of him, Anson saw Mark running off the higher land down towards the river's edge. Mark splashed into the water and was now waist deep in the water, holding on to the broken part of the rope bridge. There was no sign of Luke or the other brothers. Anson

saw at once what Mark was going to do—wade out as far as he could, and hope that by holding on to his end of the broken bridge he could prevent himself from being washed away, and could reach the struggling man.

Mark leaned back with all his strength, and they drew the unknown nearer, backed inch by inch. Then Anson called out:

"I can get him now."

Then Anson's fingers closed tightly around the thick wrist, and he thought: "We've done it, he's all right." He backed away a few inches at a time, still clutching the remnant of the bridge, and drawing the other through the water. He did not see or hear Mark. He thought nothing of that, but gasped for breath as he got a little higher out of the water.

Then he glanced around, expecting to see Mark, but no one was near him.

He cried out: "Mark."

He heard only the rumble and the hiss of the water, but saw the boy, 100 yards away and struggling helplessly beyond the island. He dragged the rescued man back inch by inch and realized that the man had collapsed now that he was so near safety, but that was unimportant. He saw Sarah on the bank, but did not see Maxwell. He saw the horror on Sarah's face as she watched Mark being carried remorselessly toward the falls, and he himself felt a great despair.

Then he recognized the rescued man. It was Dr. Namu.

It was an hour before Namu was sitting up with his back against a rock, his face still grey-tinged, his eyes very bloodshot. Every now and again he trembled from the shock of what had happened, and every now and again he looked at Anson as if he did not know how to say what had to be said.

"Did you see any other boys?" Anson asked.

"There were two, at first, and they tried to help me, and were carried away," the doctor said huskily. "Then two more came. I remember nothing else."

"What happened at the plant?" Anson made himself ask.

"I was held prisoner there because of what they are

going to do. I escaped, and hoped that I might reach your bungalow, that there might be a way to stop this terrible thing. Do you know—"

Anson said: "I know, Namu. Can you tell me when it is to be?"

"It is to happen tomorrow," Namu said. "They have the explosive near the tunnel. By tomorrow night the awful thing will be done. All this was told to me by Mr. Russ himself, Mr. Anson. I asked him why he should keep me at the plant against my will, when I had gone to help him because his son is going blind. I was able to operate and perhaps save the sight of one eye, and then I found that there is much blindness at the plant and a whole clinic is needed there. I was appalled, Mr. Anson, there has been no bi-bi blindness on the mountain before. I have given my whole life to curing this bi-bi blindness, and to preventing it," Namu went on hoarsely. "My time, my little skill, the money of my family and of my tribe—and now all my hopes are gone because of this wicked thing. And there is no way to prevent it."

"We can't just wait here," Sarah said, and realized at once the pointlessness of the remark.

"Namu, how much did you see?" Bob asked a few minutes afterwards. "Is the explosive in the tunnels yet?"

"I understand that they are laying the fuses and preparing the detonators before they take the explosive inside, they are very careful with it. The explosive is being brought up from the dump and stacked near the opening of the shaft and tunnels," he went on, "but—what difference does it make?"

"We've got to get over there," Bob said. "Once we get to the other side we can stop it."

"But how?" Sarah found herself crying.

"Simple enough," Alex answered her, and he leaned back almost lazily, flicking a fly off the end of his nose. "If we can blow up those stacks of TNT before it's taken down into the tunnel, it will make a big hole in the ground but it won't make any difference to the flow of the falls or the course of the river. Will it, Bob?"

Bob said: "Did I ever tell you that I'm glad you came?"

"But how are we going to get to the other side?" Sarah demanded. "Even if you're right, even if you could blow up the explosive, how can you cross that river? You've seen what happens if a man loses his footing between here and that island, and there isn't a way of getting across. Unless farther up the river—"

"Nothing for 100 miles," Bob cut off that hope. "We've got to cross here. We've 50 feet of rope to do it with, and we've got to find a way."

After a long pause Alex said: "I know a way."

"How?" Bob asked at last.

"Did I ever tell you that apart from living in comfort and ease, and writing with a certain facility, I have one outstanding ability?"

Sarah thought: "What does he mean? What can—" and then she remembered.

"No! Alex—"

"I can swim," Alex said, ignoring her. "I once swam the length of the Golden Gate, and they gave me a medal for it." Bob made no comment, but seemed to be weighing this. There was a different expression in his eyes as Alex went on: "This is how I see it, Bob. We fasten the rope you've got to this end of the broken bridge. We can't repair the bridge itself, but we can make a line which we can cling to, to haul ourselves across. The other bridges seemed all right from a distance."

"It is true, they are quite secure," Namu assured him. "This bridge was broken to make sure that no one could cross the river."

"It is possible," Bob agreed.

"Mr. Anson, gentlemen," said Namu, very clearly. Even against the roar of the river the resonance of his voice was noticeable. "This is a task which only I must perform. I am more used to swimming in such currents."

"Forget it, Doc," Alex interrupted. "Remember that whatever happens, there will be plenty of work for you to do. I'm expendable, but any specialist in bi-bi blindness is worth his weight in uranium."

Bob stood up, suddenly brisk.

"And I can't do it because Mr. Russ had my shoulder torn. Your job, Alex."

"I am not sure—" Namu began.

"Doc, we're sure, and I go," Alex said. "It'll be my pleasure!"

"Don't joke about it," Sarah wanted cry. She fought for composure, and did not think any of the others guessed at her panic. There was this awful risk to take, and beyond it lay her own dread of going through that torrent.

"Sarah, I want you to go up river, no more than 100 yards," Bob said. "Watch the wood and trees drifting down and make a note of anything which lands on that island—either side, but preferably the side nearer us. One won't be a good enough guide; two will do, three will be pretty safe. Mark the spot where the branches start from —or rather a spot from which Alex can start. Got all that?"

"Yes." It was something to do.

Don't take too long," Bob urged.

She went off, stumbling over the rounded stones and yet, when she stepped off them, sinking nearly ankle deep in mud. Great trees were being hurtled along, and huge branches as well as smaller pieces of driftwood. She saw the blown-out, balloon-like carcase of a zebra, stopped, and watched. It seemed to be going straight toward the island, but at the last minute it was swept away.

A deer was carried past, and drifted in exactly the same way until it hurtled past the island. It looked as if beneath the surface the river was divided, 10 yards or so from the tip of the island, and that everything heading for it was thrust past to one side or another. A huge, dark log came down, obviously hewn farther up river. She marked the spot where it passed her, followed it until it neared the spot where the other things had been thrust to one side. It reached calmer water, floated almost gently, and bumped against the pebbly bank of the island.

Anson and Maxwell went to the spot where the bridge was secured, the broken end stretched out into the water and sucked beneath the surface 10 feet or so from the bank. They began to haul it in. The bridge itself was made of hempen rope, strengthened with steel wire strands, and the pressure of the water made it seem very heavy. Namu came to join them, and they hauled at the bridge like men in a tug-of-war. Anson found himself saying aloud: "One—two

—three—heave!" Slowly it came in, a twisted mass of rope, rather like a thick net.

They dragged the broken end ashore, and Anson studied it carefully.

"It was broken near the island," Namu announced.

"Now we've got to splice my rope on to it," Anson said, "and make it long enough to stretch to the island again. Splicing another of your achievements, Alex?"

"No."

"Did I ever tell you I was in the merchant navy?" asked Anson. He squatted down and began to work on the ropes.

It took a brave man to plunge into that treacherous river . . . would he succeed?

Maxwell took the free end of the long rope which was spliced to the bridge's hand-rope, put it around his waist, and said: "Tie a good knot, sailor." Anson secured it around him with a bowline knot as Maxwell looked at Sarah and said drily: "See you on the island."

He turned away deliberately. Anson saw the dread in Sarah's eyes and shared it. He waded out with Maxwell leaving Namu and Sarah on the side of the bank. Gradually the water rose knee high, and now it splashed noisily. At waist height, water was thrusting fiercely against them and it was difficult to keep their footing.

Maxwell turned, contemplated a spot in the river, and plunged forward. On the moment of impact he was tossed furiously to one side, and disappeared. He bobbed up again, but he had not yet started to make strokes; he was floating. His face and his feet showed above the water, that was all, and he went by as swiftly as one of the logs, but his head was toward the island, and he would not know whether he was going to reach it or not.

Anson saw him turn his head to look around. He was going straight for the island, faster and faster, absolutely at the mercy of the water. He was tossed up into the air—

There were five bridges, four of them over the greatest fury of the river. Sarah did not know how she steeled herself to go over them, sick both with fear and from the motion, with Bob ahead and Alex behind her. It was a lifetime in itself, a lifetime of terror.

But they reached the farther bank.

"What we need is a long fuse and detonator," Bob said, matter-of-factly. He had opened a large waterproof bag, like a knapsack, which he had carried on his shoulders. In it were some sandwiches, chocolate, matches, an automatic pistol and a small pair of field glasses. "With a detonator we could probably get away with it and live." He was eating a sandwich, and they were sitting in the shade of a banyon tree on a rise in the landing from which they could see the falls. From here, the countryside looked supremely beautiful and peaceful.

"What we need are some Molotov cocktails," Alex said. "None of the stuff is inside the tunnel yet, anyway. It'll take some time to carry it there."

"A dozen boys could do it in two or three hours," Bob argued rationally; he could be incredibly calm. "They won't need much longer. What we've got to pray for is that they don't start loading it tonight."

Sarah was watching the natives unloading the trucks. Except for one or two buildings, the plant was not visible from here, but the whole drop of the falls was in front of their eyes, and the men, the trucks and the little rails on which the carriages were moved looked tiny and insignificant. The stacks of explosive were no higher than the

The dental history obtained by the police provided some support that the bodies were those of the missing women, while the Glasgow Police were able to show that dermal prints obtained from Body No. 1 gave as many as twenty points of similarity with prints on articles obtained from Ruxton's house. Feet casts were also made and these fitted with shoes belonging to both the missing women, though this was considered as supporting rather than definite evidence.

Famous Murder Cases (2) cont'd.

men, about five and a half feet, and there were seven of them. That explosive was calculated to blast tens of thousands of tons of rock away, so—what would it do to people?

"Supposing we can't get a long fuse and a detonator?" asked Alex.

"We might be able to make your Molotov, there's a garage and petrol down there. Or we could break open a packet of the TNT and leave a trail, set it alight, and pray that no one sees it. I've got the track laid out in my mind already." Bob was still unbelievably, almost callously, matter-of-fact. "If it's seen, then there's only one possibility left."

"I know," Alex said, grimly.

"What possibility?" asked Sarah.

Bob said: "Those stacks of TNT are close together. If one goes off, the lot will go up. A pile of the loose powder touched off by a match will see the end of it, and the end of anyone within 50 yards of the spot. But don't get ideas. Neither of you can have the privilege of first attempt. It's mine."

Sarah didn't speak.

"When it's getting dusk, Alex and I will go down and see what we can find. I know the habits down at the plant, and observing sundowner time is a kind of religion. Everything will stop as the sun goes down, and work won't start again for at least two hours. They'll leave guards by the shaft but the guards will be making sure no careless smokers go near. The probability is that we can blow up the stuff between now and the time Russ has finished his dinner."

That was the first time bitterness crept into his voice.

"Do you really think it could be as easy as that?" Sarah asked.

"If it's going to be easy at all, it will be as easy as that," Bob said. "But we might be caught. It depends on how many guards they have, whether they have trip wires down there, just how uneasy they are because Namu escaped. If they know he escaped they might think he'll have a go at stopping it himself. If they catch us, you'll hear the commotion, and you'll probably see something of it, too; they're bound to have lights on."

AUGUST: the month named after Augustus Caesar, so they say. Famed for wisdom, he planned ahead—as you can do if you turn to page 128.

She nodded.

"Alex, this is when we get started," Bob said. "The time when the guards will be most relaxed will be just after Russ has gone. They'll be keyed up for him, and then they'll take it easy. That will be our best chance."

"Then let's go," Alex said.

He was actually moving away from them as he spoke, and crouching so to make sure that he could not be seen if anyone glanced up from below. He made very little sound, but there was a rustle of dust and dirt after him.

Sarah stood up, and Bob studied her face, as if he were making sure that there was no line, no curve, no tiny mark, that he would not remember. Suddenly she felt his body against hers, felt the passion in his lips and the responding passion in hers.

Then he let her go, and stumbled away.

Anson watched Russ and the lanky assistant manager move away from the entrance to the shaft.

Over the entrance a single electric light shone brightly; there was no shortage of electricity here. A huge moth was butting against the light and a dozen flying beetles were hovering, too, among a cloud of small insects. Russ brushed some away from his face, spoke to the other man, and then called one of the Sebanese guards, who had been standing rigidly to attention. Anson could hear his voice but could not make out what he said. The guard saluted, military fashion, and backed away. Russ turned and went off. The guard turned to the others who had been standing stiffly to attention, obviously to pass on the orders. The sound of footsteps came clearly, and then the rumble of a carriage that was taking Russ and his assistant down to the main plant, and the living quarters.

Maxwell whispered: "This is where the guards should

slacken off."

"If Russ hasn't put the fear of God into them," Anson muttered. He watched the Sebanese as they stood, four of them in a row, being harangued by the man to whom Russ had spoken. His voice was raised for a moment, then he stood back. The others turned and marched off smartly, then moved away from one another and took up their positions—one at each corner of the area covered by the TNT dumps. No one could possibly get closer to them without being seen; as if to make doubly sure, the man went to the shaft entrance and stepped inside. A moment later brighter lights shone out on the shaft entrance and on the TNT.

Maxwell said mildly: "There goes our chance of getting out of this alive."

"All the protection is against anyone coming from our direction—not from the plant," Anson said.

"Logical enough, surely."

"Very logical," Anson agreed. "But if we get down to the plant level and then come up, they won't be suspicious of us."

Maxwell said slowly, reflectively: "I see what you mean."

"I know the plant fairly well," Anson went on. "At least, I've been down there two or three times. I'll go down first. You stay here and keep as far away from the dumps as you can."

"Bob," Maxwell said.

"Yes?"

"If we don't see each other again, I'm glad to have known you."

"Thanks," responded Anson in a brittle voice. "If we do see each other again I'll have a special medal struck for swimming the Seba river." He started down the path, going quite easily. Light from the stars and a faint glow from the electric lamps below showed his outline for a few minutes, then he disappeared, leaving Maxwell with only the roar of the river for company.

Anson remembered this track. He had come down it once before, and knew where it forked off toward the native compounds; the workers were not allowed to use the main trail except on duty. Some of them might be about tonight, he had to be as careful as a hyena.

He reached the corner of the first building, a warehouse. Next to this was a garage. Beyond this were the factory buildings, the great concrete mass which housed the crushing mills; and these were silent now. There was no night shift tonight; everything pointed to a celebration following a day of achievement. There were no guards here either; why should there be? The garage doors were wide open, and inside were the jeeps which were used here—there were no private cars, but there were miles of roadway about the plant and the mines, some transport was necessary.

The helicopters were standing in a fenced-off compound, just in sight.

There were the bungalows, up on the hillside, overlooking the falls. Lights glowed in them, yellow and friendly, but they were too far away for any noise to come from them. There were a dozen in all, and a communal house, too, a kind of club for the white men and one or two Indians and educated coloureds; there was only a partial colour bar here.

Here, it was quite dark.

Anson passed the huge closed doorway of the crushing mills, and the only sound was that of the water over the falls, which were used to turn the mills, to generate the electricity, to give life to the Affra plant. He was near the corner and within sight of the railway which led up to the top of the falls and to the TNT dumps, when he smelled petrol again. He stopped abruptly, because it seemed very strong. He looked about him, and saw a big dark patch; someone had spilled petrol here.

That Molotov cocktail would do it! A bottle or two of petrol, lit by a flaming torch, and—up it would go! Now he felt a feverish anxiety, not to lose another second. The idea of a fuse and detonator no longer mattered. He could fill a couple of bottles of petrol from the garage, there would be dozens of jerricans, and there would be tins or bottles which he could fill out of which he could make that Molotov cocktail. The vital thing was not to save himself but to make sure that Alex and Sarah should not be hurt. He turned back to the garage, reached it, and stepped inside. There was darkness and silence, but soon he became accustomed to the darkness and could make out the

shape of the jerricans. He kicked against one, and it gave a dull echoing sound. He picked it up, and the stench of petrol came overpoweringly. He coughed, and that sounded very loud. He wanted to put on a light, so as to look for a bottle, but a light would be seen from outside; if he closed the doors he might get away with it though. He went back to the doors, and in the starlight and the light from the distant lamps, he saw that they were sliding doors, worked on runners. He began to push, the noise was slight, but to him it seemed very loud, louder when he closed them from the inside. His heart was pounding, but he did not waste a moment in searching for the light switch and pressing it down.

There was hardly a chance
that they could come out alive
—but the job must be done

There were several beer bottles on a work bench, and he snatched three up, filled each with petrol, splashing it about the floor, and coughing as the fumes caught at his throat. Then he saw several mops, dusting mops used for cars. He snatched them up, thrust six of them inside the jerrican and drew each out, dripping with petrol.

Sweat was dripping off him.

He thrust the soaking mops into small empty cans, where they wedged tightly, and looked around. In a corner was a galvanized wire basket, filled with bottles of oil. He took the bottles out, and loaded the basket with the petrol and the mops. He put out the light and opened the door a few inches. He stepped outside, leaving the door open. Now it was only a matter of minutes to get to the foot of the electric railway. More lights seemed to be up near the bungalows, and he saw the shadows of people passing the windows. Russ was up there. How he would like to get the man's neck in his hands.

Anson reached the foot of the railway. The carriages

were housed in open sheds, to keep them dry. He had been here, remember, had been shown proudly around the great plant, and he knew how to operate the switches, and where to find them. Almost breathlessly, he got into the open carriage and put the basket down, then pressed the lever.

The carriage began to move.

Now the spray from the falls was falling upon him. He saw the sheds, the mine shaft, then the dumps of TNT and the figure of one of the guards, still faithfully on duty.

He picked up one of the bottles, and hurled it towards the middle stack of TNT. It fell plumb on top of it, burst with a loud report, and almost immediately the stench of petrol reeked in the air.

"Run," he bellowed. He flung another bottle, and it smashed against the side of the dump of TNT. The nearest guard was already rushing toward him, others were coming from their corners, and a man came rushing out of the entrance to the shaft.

"Run for your lives!" shouted Anson, and he crouched down, struck a match, and thrust it into one of the cans with the mop in it. There was a roar and a blast of flame; he felt it searing the hairs of his face, his hands and arms.

He stood up to his full height, the flaming torch curving a small arc, and tossed it. He knew that he must show clearly against the light, and dared not stay a moment longer. With one bottle of petrol and the two unlit flares, he sprang out of the carriage and started to scramble up the hillside.

Just ahead was the cutting in the rock, lit up by the great blaze. Anson flung himself towards it, hitting the ground bodily, jolting and winding himself. Then came the great explosion. There was no other sound left, even the roar of the falls was stifled. After an awful moment, another vivid flash lit up the sky as a second explosion came. Dirt and rocks began to smash about Anson, thudding into the earth and against the rocks, as smaller pieces struck his back.

Anson pulled himself to his feet, through a mass of dirt. He felt bruised and shaken, but could move. He turned around and looked down at the fire. It spread from the

white-hot centre where the TNT had been, spread for 100 yards around, where the first explosion had sent burning fragments, setting light to the wood of the entrance to the shaft; setting fire to the shed, the carriage, to everything within range that would burn.

Now there was only Russ to kill.

The burning carriage began to move downwards, so the one at the bottom was coming up. Would Russ be in that? Anson stayed where he was, to watch, to make sure he did not lose a moment. It was almost frightening to see the burning carriage going down the hillside. Soon it would pass the ascending carriage, and in its light he would be able to see who was in it. There was a risk that it would be set on fire. He saw the carriage coming up, with three or four men in it. He shifted his position, so as to get a better view, and the light shone fully upon the men.

He recognized Russ.

He could see the glitter in Russ' eyes, only partly due to the fire. The way the man moved, the way he clenched his fists, told their own story. Here was the end of a fanatic's dream which had been conceived over the years. In front of his eyes everything he had set his heart on lay in ruins, and the water fell over the same rocks while spray hissed and spat as it fell upon the fires. The other men grouped around Russ, but stood some distance away, two of them shielding their eyes from the heat of the blaze. He began to move slowly down the track, but none of the others glanced toward him. There were two sounds now; the falls and the fire, fighting each other. Yet Anson could hear only the voice within him.

"You've got him now," the voice said.

He was only 20 yards away. Russ stood as if he wanted the flames to roast him, but the others were backing toward the head of the railway, taking what shelter they could. They would want to go down to the plant, not up. So Russ was almost by himself.

"Russ!" Anson called, and when no one looked toward him, he raised his voice: "Russ!"

The other men were too far away, but the strong man of Affra turned around and saw him. Russ' hands moved upwards in an automatic gesture, and he backed away.

"Remember me?" called Anson. "Still want to buy my mine?"

He saw Russ' lips move, and saw the other men starting toward him now. They were 50 yards away, but there were three of them, and he would have no chance if they reached Russ.

"Get back!" Anson roared. He raised the bottle and tossed it to a spot between them and the solitary Russ. It struck the rocky ground, burst near a tiny fire, and became a great sheet of flame, cutting Russ' three companions off.

So there was only Russ and Anson now, they could settle this between themselves.

Anson said: "I've come to kill you."

Russ' lips moved. He went back a step, with fire between him and the men who might help him, and more between him and the falls. The spray was hissing and boiling, and vaguely Anson realized that the actual flow of water was closer to this side of the gorge than it had been. More water was tumbling over, closer to the smashed entrance to the shaft. Spray was falling thick and torrential on the burning wreckage, and added to the roar and the crackle of burning there was the hiss of steam as the spray began to put the fire out.

A great spout of water rose up.

Anson cried: "Behind you!"

The words were forced out by sheer horror at what was happening, for a great hole was torn in the side of the

A major novelty was in the application of photography. Transparencies were made and enlarged to life-size, being taken from photographs of Mrs. Ruxton and Mary Rogerson. These were placed over transparencies of the two skulls. The corroboration achieved was, in court, confirmation of considerable value.

No cause of death was possible as to Body No. 1, but in the matter of Body No. 2, Professor Glaister was able to testify, from supporting details, as to asphyxia and he believed that Mrs. Ruxton had been strangled; the amounts of blood found in parts of Ruxton's house suggested Mary Rogerson had been wounded.

Famous Murder Cases (2) *cont'd.*

gorge, behind Russ. But Russ ignored the cry, and quite coolly took a gun from his pocket. But he fired too soon, and missed.

"Look out!" Anson cried. "Run forward!"

Russ' men came running, but stopped, appalled at what they saw, while at last Russ turned his head. As he did so there came a great crack of noise, the earth shook, and part of the gorge gave way. A great torrent of water rushed in and carried Russ down in its awful spate. One moment the Affra boss was there, the next he had vanished.

Anson felt men dragging him back; Russ' men. He did not care what they did to him, but soon realized that they were trying to help, that the horror of what they had seen had emptied thought of vengeance out of them.

They half carried him up the track and away from the spot where more earth and rock might fall. Then clearly, although it sounded a long way off, he heard Maxwell's voice, and as suddenly, Sarah's. Sarah, here so soon? Sarah! He swung around to face the track, and he saw Maxwell running and Sarah flying by his side, saw a dozen black faces surrounding them, and saw old McGuffy striding out behind them. He saw the great light shining upon Sarah, and the light that it put in her eyes; and quite suddenly they were in each other's arms, and he could feel the passion and the longing that she felt for him.

Anson was lying on a soft bed in one of the bungalows, hearing faint sounds about him, glad of the blinds that were drawn, shutting out the sun which he could see at either side of the blinds at the long window. He had been awake for half an hour, lying very still. He knew that he was heavily bandaged about one leg and his left arm, and that there was a stiffness in his head, but he was not in great pain. He must have been given a shot of morphine to keep him quiet. He felt calm, too, even when he thought of Sarah. It was no use fooling himself any more, sight or no sight, he and Sarah were going to get married. You couldn't fight against fate.

"How do you feel?" she asked.

"Wonderful!"

"Does your head ache too badly?"

"Nothing aches," Anson said. "Sit down, Sarah." She sat on the side of the bed, still holding his hands, hers were very cool. "How's everyone?" he asked. "And everything?"

"Alex slept for 12 hours, and now he's eating a fantastic breakfast," she answered. "Dr. Namu is on his way back to Tamtata, and the radio is working again. A clinic is being assembled to come here at once," Sarah went on. "McGuffy is still here."

"What brought McGuffy?" demanded Anson.

"He wasn't happy at having let you go across the mountain by yourself, and he followed with some of his boys, on a so-called hunting expedition, to make sure that you were all right. Ptsamo and Tseramo told him about the swamp water, and he went into the mine to investigate—and started after you right away. It took him longer than us to make a makeshift bridge, and he met Namu on the other side."

"Just right," Anson said, and shifted his position. "What do Russ' staff have to say about it?"

"They'll all swear that they didn't know about the cause of bi-bi blindness here," answered Sarah. "They must have known, of course, but they blame it all on to Russ. They say that everyone knew about cutting Seba off, but Russ convinced them that it was to make sure that no rumour of what they were planning to do could escape. He persuaded them that the authorities would want to stop it, but that if it could be carried through, then UNO would be faced with a fait accompli. All the staff were to get a big financial bonus, the natives, too. The few whites who suspected that bi-bi was the reason for the secrecy—"

"Took the cold-blooded view—there are millions of blind Africans anyhow, what difference would a few more make?" observed Maxwell from the door. He came in, clean-shaven, as sleek as ever in borrowed clothes which fitted him sur-

prisingly well. "I gave you 10 minutes on your own," he remarked.

"Hi!" Anson greeted.

"Hi," Maxwell responded, and as Sarah started to get up, he went on hastily: "No, hold his hand, he deserves that much at least. Take it from me, Bob, there is going to be the biggest shake-up ever known in Seba. There isn't one of the resident engineers who will hold his job. I've talked to London and New York by radio telephone, now that the radio is working again. Affra's directors all deny having any knowledge of the blindness, but they admit they knew of the plan to change the course of the river. The signs are that they'll all sell out under persuasion, and that there will be a lot of opportunity for the right men in Seba. One thing is certain, for instance—they'll need a new resident manager."

"They won't want a blind one, so get that out of your head."

"I don't know," said Maxwell in his lazy way. "You can borrow someone else's eyes while you need to, and it's got to be someone not worried by the blindness. A stranger could be inoculated against it, but they need someone who knows the area. I had a long talk with Namu before he flew off this morning. He thinks that after six months you will be able to see quite well—not enough to read, perhaps, but enough for all the other purposes. Nothing to make you get up on your hind legs about. You'll get gradually worse until you are completely blind, then you'll have the very delicate operation. He says it succeeds in nine cases out of 10. So don't start being sorry for yourself."

"Who said—" Anson began.

"You want to know something," said Maxwell, mildly. "I've got to go and talk to New York." He raised a hand, grinned one-sidedly, and went out, closing the door gently behind him. Sarah sat looking down at Anson as if she would never tire of doing so, and there was a long silence between them before he said:

"Did you find out anything about Hugh?"

"Yes, Bob."

"Mind telling me what it was?"

She said: "He came here and found out about blindness,

and Russ kept him here. He tried to escape on his own, and did get across the river but he died on the mountainside. Russ' chief assistant told me this, and—I've seen some of Hugh's things. A watch I'd given him, his cigarette case, a photograph of his mother, a photograph of me." She stopped, and Anson felt the tightening pressure of her fingers. "Bob," she said. "I love you."

"No ghosts?"

"No ghosts."

"And you know what you'll have on your hands if Namu is wrong?"

"I know."

"Sarah," said Anson, and his voice broke; then he strengthened it, and drew her down toward him. "Sarah, will you marry me?"

"Yes, my darling, I will," Sarah said.

THE END

Rufus Isaacs

MARCONI SCANDAL TO VICE-REGAL PALACE

by Lewis Broad

IN the year 1911, when Fortune seemed to be indulging him with her brightest smiles, Sir Rufus Isaacs was involved in the Marconi case and its attendant scandals. The great advocate who had appeared for so many clients changed his role. Now he stood himself on trial. At stake were his honour, his reputation as Minister of the Crown, and his future in public life.

It was a searing experience. He emerged with his honour intact, held responsible for nothing more serious than an indiscretion. But the suspense of those anxious weeks, during which his future was in the balance, was the heaviest ordeal of his career. Nor was it his future alone that was at stake. Two fellow-Ministers were involved, one of them Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right-hand man of the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith. An adverse decision affecting these Ministers must necessarily have imperilled the Liberal Government.

The Marconi affair arose from dealings in shares by Rufus Isaacs and his two ministerial colleagues. It was seized upon by their political opponents as a means by which to discredit the Government to which they belonged.

The battle of politics forty years or so ago reached a pitch of animosity we are spared today. There were storms on every hand—the Budget, the House of Lords, and Ireland —above all Ireland. The political leaders pressed their differences over Irish Home Rule to the point where the

From "Advocates of the Golden Age" (published by John Long).

country was on the verge of civil war. When party passions were inflamed to their highest the Marconi incident added new bitterness to the strife. For a year and more it poisoned the air of Westminster.

It arose from the new invention of wireless telegraphy that Marconi had placed at mankind's disposal. The Government decided to give a contract to the Marconi Company for the setting up of a chain of wireless stations. The negotiations were conducted by Herbert Samuel (later Lord Samuel), the Postmaster-General. He negotiated with the managing director of the Marconi Company, Mr. Godfrey Isaacs, brother of Rufus Isaacs.

Inspired by their political opponents, rumours began to circulate that the granting of the contract was a piece of jobbery. Members of the Government were accused of using to their personal advantage information they had gained in their official capacity. The relationship between the Attorney-General and the managing director of Marconi's seemed to give colour to the rumours. The fact that the two brothers and the Postmaster-General were Jews was a further point for attack.

Ministers, it was freely hinted, had bought Marconi shares in the expectation that they would jump in value when the contract was announced. There were attacks in anti-Liberal papers on 'the three Jews'. Tory members took up the cry in the House of Commons.

Rufus Isaacs made a personal statement in the House in reply to the accusations. He stated categorically that he had taken no part in the negotiations over the Government contract, nor had he had dealings in the shares of the Marconi Company. The denial extended to his fellow-Ministers.

It seemed that the charges had been disposed of. But, unfortunately, the statement, accurate as far as it went, did not disclose all the facts. In addition to the English company, there was a second, an American Marconi Company, although not concerned with the English contract. Rufus Isaacs had had dealings in these American shares.

It is surprising that a man who was so wise in advising others should have been less clear-sighted in the management of his own affairs. Immediately after he had made

his disclaimer in the House, he told the Solicitor-General, Sir John Simon, of his dealings in the American stock. Simon advised him to make a second statement to the House, acknowledging these transactions.

Isaacs replied that he did not feel called upon to do so, on the ground that this was irrelevant. The American company was an independent concern, having nothing to do with the English contract.

'Besides,' he said, 'there are others in it.'

The others were Lloyd George and the Chief Whip of the Liberal party, the Master of Elibank. Between them, Rufus Isaacs, Lloyd George and Elibank had taken up 10,000 shares, offered through the two brothers, Godfrey and Harry Isaacs. They had bought at £2 apiece. The shares rose to £4, at which price some were sold. The shares fell later to below £2, so that there was a loss on the investments.

The Ministers had made their purchases without concealment, in the ordinary way of Stock Exchange business. They had bought on the explicit assurance that the American Marconi had no interest in the English company and could derive no benefit from the British Government contract. A full account of their dealings had already been given to the Prime Minister, who received the information calmly and indifferently, seeing no harm in what had been done.

For the moment, knowledge of these share dealings went no further. But, a few weeks later, they were publicly disclosed, during a libel action in the English courts.

Rufus Isaacs had remained uneasy about his position. He was anxious to clear his name from the slanderous imputations that still continued. The chance came when they were given the publicity of print. The French newspaper *Le Matin* appeared one day with a garbled and malicious account of share dealings in a report headed 'Un Scandale Financier en Angleterre'. It was the opportunity Sir Rufus had awaited. He and Herbert Samuel issued a writ for libel.

The advocate whose career had been passed in representing others now appeared as plaintiff in the King's Bench. He entrusted his case to his old rival and friend, Sir Edward

Carson, with whom appeared the brilliant F. E. Smith.

The libel action was not defended. *Le Matin* offered a full apology, which was accepted. The Ministers cleared themselves of the imputation that they had been party to any impropriety over the Marconi contract.

But the disclosure, made on Rufus Isaacs' instructions, about the dealings in the American company's shares gave rise to a new outcry. Here, declared the critics, was evidence that Ministers had improperly gambled in shares.

Ministers were now called upon to render an account of themselves. This they were eager to do. For five months a House of Commons Committee had been inquiring into the Marconi contract. Before this tribunal, Lloyd George, Rufus Isaacs, and Herbert Samuel now appeared. There were long queues outside the committee room, so great was the public interest.

Sir Rufus took his place at the horseshoe table, and submitted for two days to a searching cross-examination.

For hours he sat under the probing questions, answering frankly and fully, with the calm and poise that were his characteristic as an advocate. But, when the questions touched his personal honour, there was a sudden change. His eyes blazing, his fist beating upon the table, he burst out in angered protest at the newspapers and their charges.

'Is there any man,' he declared with passion, 'who reads those articles who would not think we had all been guilty of corruption, the basest charge that could be made?'

A committee member suggested 'impropriety'. Sir Rufus brushed it aside. There could be no confusion between corruption and impropriety.

'One,' he said, 'concerns the honour, the other the judge-

ment, of a man.'

At this another member broke in to say they were not trying the journalists—that was not the point.

'No,' protested Sir Rufus, 'but you are trying me.'

He was indeed on trial, fighting for his political life. His words drew a roar of cheering from members of the public present.

His examination ended, he handed in for scrutiny by the committee his bank books, including those for his household accounts. He was followed as witness by Lloyd George, who also vigorously repudiated the accusations. Winston Churchill, who sat near the Chancellor, leaned across to give him the encouragement of a friendly pat on the back.

Herbert Samuel was also heard, but interest in his part in the affair had faded. As he said, he needed no exoneration, for there was nothing to exonerate.

When it came to drafting the report the committee, drawn from both sides of the House of Commons, was divided on party lines. By a majority of eight votes to six, a report was adopted that the charges against the Ministers were absolutely untrue and that 'the persons responsible for their publication had no reason to believe them true'.

For Sir Rufus it had been a time of agonizing suspense and ceaseless tension. He had been supported by the continued confidence of the Prime Minister and of members of his own profession. This found expression in the words of Sir Edward Clarke, his old friend and frequent opponent in the courts, a Conservative who had himself held office as Law Officer. Addressing a meeting of members of the bar, Sir Edward said:

'This is a matter on which we are all concerned. We share with the Attorney-General the duty of maintaining the honour of the profession, although it is upon him, as leader of the bar, that the responsibility rests. I have read with care all that has been proved in the matter. I am satisfied, and I believe that my brethren of the bar agree, that the charge of corruption or unfaithfulness to duty, has wholly failed. If I were not satisfied about this, I should not be here today.'

Fortified by this support, Sir Rufus awaited the final verdict of his fellow-Members of the House of Commons. The Tories moved a vote of censure on the Ministers. Sir Rufus, in a personal statement, made a frank acknowledgment.

'I say solemnly and sincerely that it was a mistake to have purchased those shares. If I had known then all that I know now, if I had realized that men could be so suspicious of any action of mine, if I had thought such misrepresentation could possibly exist, I would not have entered on those transactions.'

Lloyd George, too, conceded that it had been a mistake—'I acted carelessly, I acted mistakenly, but I acted openly, and I acted honestly.'

The debate wrangled on for two days. In the end, the censure was defeated. Instead, a motion was carried accepting that the Ministers had acted in good faith and reprobating the charges made against them. So ended the Marconi scandal. It was an experience from which Rufus Isaacs did not easily recover. In after years he was never known to refer to the incident. It was, says his son, as if he had determined to blot from his memory so harrowing and embittering an ordeal.

Not many months afterwards, Lord Alverstone died, and the office of Lord Chief Justice of England became vacant. By long-established custom, the Attorney-General of the day may expect the reversion of any high judicial office that becomes vacant. Tory newspapers now campaigned against the selection of Rufus Isaacs. This raking in the ashes of the Marconi incident had the contrary effect of making the appointment of Sir Rufus inevitable. If he were passed over, the conclusion would be drawn that he was considered to be unfit for the job. If he were unfit to be a judge how could he be Attorney-General? And, by a parity of reasoning, how was Lloyd George fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer?

The offer made, Sir Rufus felt constrained by force of the same circumstances to accept it. Otherwise, his doubts might have prevailed, for he felt a strong disinclination to remove himself from political affairs to the isolation that is required of a judge on the bench.

For seven years Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, held office as Lord Chief Justice of England. He was admirably equipped for the duties of his ancient office, on which he looked with a pride amounting almost to veneration, but he does not rank among the great Chief Justices. His work as judge was too short; too frequently he was an absentee from the bench, engaged on war service.

In ancient times the Chief Justiciar had been not merely the head of the judges, but one of the chief Ministers of the Crown. The necessities of war required Lord Reading to undertake extra-judicial duties in the manner of his predecessors of old.

When war began in August 1914 there were urgent financial problems to solve. He seconded himself as unofficial assistant to his old friend, Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was given his own room at the Treasury and took a hand in devising the measures to meet the emergency of war. He showed himself to have an intuitive understanding of the mysteries of high finance, one whose mastery of figures and sure judgement Lloyd George found to be of invaluable aid.

He was marked out for further employment. Twice he was called on to lead Allied Missions to the United States. His personal qualities played a large part in the floating of the first five-hundred-million-dollar loan to the Allies.

Lord Reading was recommended to President Wilson as 'one of the ablest living Englishmen'. He proved himself to be no less during his two years in Washington. He gained a prestige and influence few ambassadors have commanded, and he was able to play a leading part in co-ordinating the war effort of the United States and the Allies. On his return, Lloyd George paid tribute to the tact, energy and counsel that had been of inestimable value to the Allied cause. Not for centuries had a Lord Chief Justice taken such a part in state affairs.

In 1919 Reading returned to his seat on the bench. It was with a sense of regret. He chafed at his inactivity, and suffered exasperation at the spectacle of indifferent barristers fumbling their way through their cross-examinations, throwing away their cases. Was he to be stuck for the rest of his life safe in a stagnant back-water off the Strand, a

slave to the bondage of the bench?

Release came unexpectedly. The post of Viceroy of India became vacant, the greatest position that could be held by a subject of the King. Various names were canvassed—Austen Chamberlain, Lord Willingdon, even, curiously enough, Winston Churchill, were among the possibles mentioned. The appointment rested with the Prime Minister. To the general surprise, Lloyd George nominated Rufus Isaacs.

No one was more surprised than the Lord Chief Justice. To hold the East in fee—it was a glittering opportunity. For a moment he hesitated. He was sixty, and had had no experience of tropical heat. There was his wife, a semi-invalid. Lady Reading brushed doubts aside.

'It will be a marvellous experience,' she said, 'and if it does take a few years off my life, it will have been well worth while.'

So he accepted. One April morning in the year 1921 he arrived for the second time at the gateway of India. The ship's boy had returned in all the panoply of state—Baron, Viscount, Earl, the exalted Viceroy.

How Lord Reading adjusted himself to the pomp and circumstance of his office, how he extended his outlook to encompass the complexities of affairs in the great sub-continent, and the success that attended his administration, these are matters that belong to the history of India. He acquitted himself so that those who had supported his selection for the post found their faith in him justified. On his return to England in 1926 he was received in audience by King George V, to be accorded the honour of a marquisate, the first subject since the Duke of Wellington to be advanced by successive steps from commoner to Marquis.

Standing down from vice-regal dignity with the ease with which he had stepped up, he found in business a new field for his still abounding energies. He died on December 30th, 1935, being seventy-five years of age. By a few months he had survived his old friend and rival, Edward Carson.

No Diamonds at Massawa

by William John Waltman

There is no hatred so bitter as that of a man determined to avenge his murdered friend. Fate played into Greg Scanlan's hands—or was it his bitter hatred which controlled events?

THERE were several tough fellows in the Luremo Company's local security team who might have dealt with the Russian diamond smuggling chain, but when it became evident Riensen was in it at the Baghdad end, Greg Scanlan, using the simple name of Brown, had taken on the job himself. At Windhoek, two years earlier, Heinrich Riensen had killed Van Dalen and got away. Carefully his name had been chalked up and added to the list of those who had to die. Now his turn had come.

Through the porthole of what some advertising liars in the cheap prospectus had termed a bar, Greg saw the motley bunch of deck passengers rolling up their prayer rugs and roping their painted travel boxes as a precaution against the pilferers from the town. Watched by a crowd of loafers, some half naked dock workers were struggling with the mooring ropes, yelling their lungs and sweating their guts out. It was eleven in the morning and a hundred and ten humid degrees in the shade. The little Red Sea coaster, which Greg had dubbed the Mecca Express, was nearly alongside and the stench coming in from the shore and enveloping the ship meant they were at last in Massawa.

Of the six first class passengers, the three Indian merchants, the sheik from the Aden protectorate and the Roman Catholic priest of indeterminate nationality had been total abstainers and Greg had had the little drinking

room to himself, had even become pally with the character who kidded himself he was a barman. The fellow had at least produced undoctored alcohol and, through his knowledge of every little port, provided useful information.

Greg turned away from the porthole and wiped his fore head with the back of his hand. So far no sign of Rubikov, but there was time. He said: "Pour it out, Fido."

"Geen toneec, plis?"

"Gin and tonic it is. No lemon, no nothing. Just plain."

"Yes, Mister Brown, Sir. You go stay Massawa? You come for long?"

"Just in and out again," grinned Greg. "I've come to kill a man, which shouldn't take more than a day, then I go to Asmara and fly off somewhere."

Fido regarded the tall, broad shouldered, muscular man with the red hair, the freckles, the china blue eyes and, grinning back, shook his head. "Me no think. Mister Brown no kill. It is the black Ethiopia girls, perhaps, best of Red Sea? You go stay at Palazia?"

"Yes." Greg threw back his drink. "What's it like these days?"

Fido said: "Palazia now good for big town. A Russian man come take him and has beautiful wife." He cupped his hands and from under his armpits moved them circularly over his chest. "Him old, she young and like gentlemans."

"Does she, the bitch! That isn't very fair to the old boy, is it?"

"Him go mad, but she no care. One time peoples say she love with Dr. Scorpi, but she love with all mens plenty. Me think Mister Brown come go like her."

"I'll do my damndest," Greg assured him, as he heard and felt the ship rubbing against the dock. "I'll have another, Fido. Outside." He got up, stepped on to the railed walk and began to look around. The ragged idlers were shouting at each other and at a few members of the crew hanging out of the portholes below. A mangy dog was cocking its leg against a stack of small wooden crates which threw out the pungent smell of tangerines.

The Roman Catholic priest, first to step ashore, was solemnly shaking hands with a bearded Franciscan monk

in an impossibly thick brown habit. They were the only white men to be seen. In the background, against a dilapidated shed, two angry Somalis were letting go at each other with unloading hooks.

Fido came out with the gin and Greg drank thoughtfully. He hoped that nothing had gone wrong. Was it possible that his message from Hodeida had gone astray? As his sharp eyes, scanning the crowd and travelling beyond it, touched the entrance gate, a car drew up. A heavy man in his late forties, dressed in white tropicals, a topee on a large, round head, and with a flushed, puffy face, got out. Greg turned to Fido, asked quickly: "Know that big guy?"

"Him Russian who own Palazia," said Fido, surprised. "Him never come, always send other man."

The Russian was pushing his way towards the ship and Greg said factually: "He's coming aboard this time and no mistake. Go find a bottle of Vodka. If you can't, Dutch Schiedam'll do."

"Yes, Mister Brown, Sir."

As Fido disappeared into the bar-room, Greg felt the little deerskin satchel attached to his belt, watched the heavy man's approach. Things were going according to plan. So it was true Rubikov had an unfaithful wife! For a brief moment a hard smile played around Greg's lips. What harm was there in a little wife trouble when, by all human calculations and within a very short time, Rubikov of the Palazia would be dead?

To Fido's disappointment they had only stayed on board long enough for one geneva. Rubikov, sweating disgustingly, was curt, nervous, impatient to get moving and Greg had played along with him.

They were in Rubikov's office now which, as Greg could see through a half open inner door, was adjoined by a room with one bed. Obviously Rubikov lived a monastic life within his own compound! The lock on the outer door was an imitation Yale and Greg noted with satisfaction that later on there'd be no trouble. The atmosphere was tense. They were probing each other, anxious to get down to brass tacks. The Russian opened warily, in good English:

"When you left Mogadishu, how was Berkov?"

The last time Greg saw Berkov, off Brava, he'd been as dead as mutton, with a stone tied round his neck so he'd sink quicker and stay down. He replied coolly: "Berkov was fine."

"How long ago was that?"

"About nine days, I think. We called at Djibouti, Aden, Mocha and Hodeida, from where I sent you my message."

"It is the first time our special agent is English," remarked Rubikov, measuring Greg suspiciously with eyes that were strangely far apart and seemed permanently bloodshot.

"Just British, Australian," corrected Greg, easily. "Money is money."

"Yes," said Rubikov slowly, "money is money. Did you follow the usual route?"

"That's right. Kicked off at the mine in Angola; from Luremo to Albertville, then Mombasa and Mogadishu. As usual, you pick it up from here." He looked straight into the Russian's bloody eyes. "Unfortunately this time . . ."

To his surprise Rubikov didn't let him finish, shrugged his shoulders, said: "I know, it's different. Everything's arranged. My 'plane leaves at seven."

Greg looked at his wristwatch, thinking hard, wondering what had happened. "That gives you very little time."

"Three hours to Asmara airport," nodded Rubikov; he drilled his eyes into Greg's. "Have you got the diamonds?"

"Yes." Greg quietly slid the deerskin bag off his belt. "You know this consignment is away from the ordinary run?"

"So I understand."

"These," said Greg softly, putting his hand inside the satchel, "have been handpicked for a special job in Sverdlovsk. There aren't many, but they're priceless. In more ways than one!" He rolled some glittering stones, the size of small peas, on to Rubikov's desk. "Pretty!"

Slowly the Russian lifted his weight out of his chair, walked over to Greg; he took the satchel, put the stones on the desk back into it, slipped it into his pocket. As he slapped Greg on the shoulder, his face was almost friendly. "I didn't trust you, Brown, but the diamonds are proof.

I'll give you the usual discharge."

Greg said calmly: "You take that clumsy gun out of your pocket now, Rubikov, and I'll put mine away." He pulled out an automatic, threw it on an antiquated sofa. "You have the stones and that's all you need, isn't it? No shooting necessary. What's been eating you?"

The Russian hesitated, looked sheepish, finally parked his gun next to Greg's. He moved over to a cupboard, began to pour out vodka. "A man's got to take precautions, I can tell you now. The Luremo people are hitting back."

Greg sat up, showed surprise, asked: "What've they been up to?"

Rubikov handed him a drink, downed his own quickly, said solemnly: "Behind you, Korter, Brock, Berkov have disappeared. A man whose description tallies with Brock's has been found dead near Malindi. Just after you left the mine they must have got wise, Brown. They've been trying to catch up with you."

"They have? The bastards!" Greg got up, shamming agitation, then calmed down and laughed. "But they never got me." He pointed at the Russian's pocket. "They failed. To hell with them!"

Rubikov nodded: "You did very well. Tomorrow morning I'll be in Tiflis, with the stones. All the same . . ."

Greg said thoughtfully, sipping his drink: "If you leave this afternoon all the Luremo crowd are getting is the raspberry, but Korter, Brock and Berkov were nice fellows." He paused. "How are you taking the stuff?"

"Ah!" Rubikov grinned, produced the satchel, took out a couple of stones and swallowed them. "I have a big stomach." He smacked his lips as though he'd just had a good meal. "The oldest way and still the safest. I'll deal with the rest just before I leave. As to yourself? They can be here any moment, Brown. They're after you. What are your plans?"

Greg said: "I'm going to hang around a little. If they got nice fellows like Brock and Berkov that demands blood, doesn't it? Tell Tiflis Brown's staying at Massawa to deal with the emergency."

"You've got guts," said Rubikov, admiringly. "Your room is comfortable?"

"My room's fine. Who's in charge here while you're away?"

There was a moment's hesitation; a bitter expression darkened the Russian's face as he replied curtly: "I'm the boss; it's a good cover, but my wife runs the joint. I'll tell her to take good care of you." He added with false jocularity: "She likes good looking fellows like you."

"I don't want another man's wife," said Greg firmly. "With a belly full of stones will you be all right from here to Asmara? You know the layout?"

"I can look after myself."

Greg said casually: "I've done my job, so it has nothing to do with me, but tell me, Rubikov, why are you flying to Tiflis direct instead of handing over to Baghdad as usual?"

The Russian was refilling the glasses and looked at Greg over his shoulder. "You've been travelling too long, Brown. You're out of touch. At the moment we have no agent in Baghdad. The skunk we had there has let the side down."

Greg felt as though someone had dealt him a straight left and knocked all his front teeth out. "Riensen! Does anyone know in which direction he's gone?"

"He was last seen in Port Sudan." The big man swung round, his face red. "He came down here once or twice. He . . ." His voice rose angrily. "I hate that bastard. If you ever come across him, Brown, for Christ's sake shoot to kill."

All the oaths and swearwords Greg knew were ready to come out but he controlled himself, said grimly: "Don't worry, Rubikov, there'll be no mercy from me."

The room was nothing to write home about, but for a little African hicktown comfortable enough. Greg saw a bell, rang it and told a mug with a face like Fido's he wanted a bottle of gin, a glass and a dozen tonics. No lemon.

Rubikov going to Tiflis direct without having to be forced into it was a bit of luck. That meant a quick, happy ending to the diamond smuggling affair. All that remained was the checking of Rubikov's rooms and the picking up of possible bits of information for the record. The other thing was different. If Riensen had done a bunk from

Baghdad and had last been heard of at Port Sudan, he was probably on his way down into Africa for fresh plunder and as difficult to find as a tree at Beardmore.

There was a knock at the door and Greg shouted 'Come in,' expecting to see Fido's counterpart, but a young woman entered. His blue eyes contracted a little as he weighed her up, saw the voluptuous body, the provocative smile on a face that was coarsely pretty. She was dressed in a short, tightfitting silk frock, looked like a French tart. He said "Hello!"

"Hello," she replied. "You wanted gin?" She put down the tray with the things he'd asked for, but he noticed there were two glasses.

He said smiling: "Paris come to darkest Africa. What made you do it? Can't have been the climate!"

She took no offence. "Matrimony!" she retorted. "I'm Hilda Rubikov."

" If you ever come across him, shoot to kill! "

He got up to show he could produce manners if he wanted to. "I beg your pardon. Your husband had no time to introduce us. I'm Brown."

"I know." She sat down uninvited, showing a lot of nyloned leg and he walked over to the tray, began to take the cap off the bottle.

"I see you brought two glasses. Easy or double?"

"Double, please," she said, carefully taking him in. "Ivan has asked me to look after you."

"Almost as good as the Eskimos," he joked, for the first time aware she had a German accent. "Did he get off all right?"

"He left about an hour ago."

"Then he should make it easily, without breaking his neck. You'll be kind of lonesome without him."

"Lonesome! Sometimes even a woman likes to feel grownup. I don't know his business but it calls him away

a lot and am I glad!"

He smiled. "I once knew a woman who felt that way and she ended up with six lovers. What do you know about that?"

She returned his smile. "Six are too many. How long are you staying?"

"A day, two days maybe. Depends on how quickly I sort myself out."

"You must stay a long time," she urged. "I'm going to get a kick out of looking after you." She got up, walked over to him, sat loosely on the arm of his chair. "What would you like to do this evening?"

"Hadn't thought about it. Guess I was going to do the round of your honky tonks, or something."

"Honky tonks nothing." She smoothed the hair on the back of his head as though they were old friends. "No black females when I'm around, handsome. When we go out, I'm your girl."

"Suits me. Where're we going?"

"The Paloma, on the lake. I'll call for you at eight."

His blue eyes were narrowing again. He chuckled: "I'm going to sit here and wait and dream of you."

"You're nice," she said, and rose abruptly. "I've got a lot of things to see to but I'll be on time. Eight o'clock." As she got to the door, she turned and blew him a kiss.

He walked over to the window, threw open one of the slatted shutters. Down below half a dozen donkeys stood mute and immobile, in striking contrast to a swarthy European who came hurrying across the hard mud courtyard. At the ramshackle hotel entrance, an Arab type, dressed in what looked like a dirty long nightshirt, salaamed deeply and said, loud enough for Greg to hear: "Bon giorno, Dottore Scorpi!"

Greg grinned, vaguely remembering that Fido had mentioned the man. So that affair was still going strong! And she didn't know anything about Rubikov's business. He turned from the window, made for the bottle of gin. Then he got out his revolver and began to clean it; afterwards he loaded it carefully and slipped it into his pocket.

It was the kind of thing Greg Scanlan would do for most girls. Slipping out of the hotel into the messy street,

he found a bazaar of sorts and bought the best thing he could lay his hands on, a sizeable bottle of unfamiliar Chanel. Then, with the lazy gait that marked him and belied the speed with which he moved, he returned to his room. He said to the Fido-faced individual: "I'd like this to go to Mrs. Rubikov's room. Can you tell me where it is?"

"Mrs. Rubikov have room at back of house, away near garden."

"Exactly where?"

The man went into details, ended up: "I show you?"

He shook his head, gave the fellow a Tiger Tim dollar and said: "I've changed my mind about going myself. You'd better take this little parcel to Mrs. Rubikov for me. She'll know who it's from."

Now that he was satisfied about where she bivouacked he began to think of other things and reflected he was no nearer to a solution about Riensen. The thing to do was to tackle Port Sudan then, if necessary, go to Baghdad and start from scratch. That meant continuing on the same old coaster, leaving in the morning for Aqiq. It also meant cleaning up in Massawa as fast as he could.

He searched around in his luggage, found what he

Famous Murder Cases (2) *cont'd.*

Reference to the trial transcript is an added source of guidance to the character of Ruxton and his motives for committing the crime for which he was tried and convicted.

The jury, at the end of the hearing, was absent for sixty-four minutes before returning to bring in its verdict.

Buck Ruxton (Bakhtyar Rustonji Rantanji, thirty-seven), tried for the murder of Isabella Ruxton (thirty-five), his wife, at Manchester Winter Assizes, March 2nd, 1936. Before Mr. Justice Singleton. Prosecution: Mr. J. C. Jackson, K.C., Mr. Maxwell Fyfe, K.C., and Mr. Hartley Shawcross. Defence: Mr. Norman Birkett, K.C., Mr. Philip Kershaw, K.C. Verdict: Guilty. Ruxton was hanged (after an unsuccessful appeal) at Strangeways Prison, Manchester.

From "Science in Crime Detection" by Nigel Morland (Robert Hale)

wanted and stepped into the passage, followed it until he came to the main corridor. There was no-one about. At the far end, in a quiet wing of the building, was Rubikov's office. He moved fast and noiselessly. The door was locked; he dealt with it quickly, slipped inside, locked up again behind him.

The room was in perfect order, all papers and files put away as a fellow going abroad for a time would do, but on a low table there were two used glasses. The one had lipstick on it. Hatred or not, before he left Rubikov had had a snifter with Hilda.

The first thing was to get cracking on the filing cabinet and Greg was moving towards it when he heard voices in the bedroom. One of them was Hilda's. He tiptoed to the door, gently tried the handle, found it rigid. A man was talking excitedly, almost hysterically, in Italian, then came Hilda: "Did you really think I'd run away with a dago like you?"

The man cried: "We planned this for us. Who is he?"

Hilda's voice was cutting. "We have what we want. This is where you get off."

He exclaimed: "You won't get away with it, Hilda. I'd rather . . ." Another man laughed hoarsely and there was the sound of a scuffle. After a short silence Hilda's voice came, this time in German: "Better get out of here quick, Putzi. You know the secret way." The fellow said: "Ja, natürlich," then Hilda again: "Wait for me at the Paloma and be ready for Brown. He's not going to be as easy as this one. We were nuts to . . ." The voice trailed away. Greg heard a door open and close, followed by footsteps in the corridor, only Hilda's.

Greg stood still, his eyes puckered. He thought 'If she'd come through here it would have been awkward. What's happened to those guys?' He waited a few minutes, put his ear against the door; there was no sound. Semi-tropically, evening had fallen rapidly; it must be nearly seven. He waited no longer, dealt with the simple lock, peered into the bedroom. Opening the door wide, he stepped inside.

It was light enough to see Rubikov's naked body. They had undressed him, carted him to the bed, put him flat on

his back to get at him easily and slice open his stomach. In the centre of the floor, in a careless heap, was the swarthy fellow Greg had seen in the courtyard, Scorpi. He was in a pool of blood, his glazed eyes mixed up with eternity. A knife was sticking out of his chest.

Cool as a north-easter, Greg moved forward, taking in the details. It was immaterial what had happened to Rubikov before they opened him up. He was dead and Hilda and her pal had the stones. A smile played around Greg's lips. He muttered 'Nice going, kid—so far!'

Calmly he moved back into the office, did his job on the filing cabinet and the desk, collected a few bits and pieces then, for good measure, returned to the bedroom for a final look.

There was nothing to stay for. In half an hour Hilda would pick him up. They were going to have an interesting evening together and he was beginning to look forward to it. It struck him that if one fellow couldn't have made his footsteps heard because he was dead, there was still the other. The secret way? Not the window and it hadn't been the outer door . . .

But it was simple. All the rooms communicated, so they could be formed into suites. In the opposite wall, covered by a curtain, was a door he hadn't previously noticed. It was easy to open and he stepped into a small compartment from which, along the far wall, a straight railless run of stairs led to a ceiling hatch. This was the last room in the wing. There was a single bed, a wardrobe, an old fashioned wash stand. Some clothes had been flung on to a dilapidated armchair and three stacked suitcases showed someone was using the place. On one of the pieces of luggage were the initials 'H.R.' 'Hell's Retribution'! Greg grinned, formulating words as they came, and walking over to the bamboo table under the window. 'Who is Hilda's murderous lover?' There were some knickknacks on the table, amongst them a battered silver cigarette case which he picked up and, without thinking, opened. He stood playing with it, pondering, when he saw the engraving. He looked more closely and felt the blood in his veins accelerating. It said 'Heinrich Riensen.' Just 'Heinrich Riensen' and nothing else.

Returned to his room, he called Fido's replica, and went into a huddle with him in his cool, competent way, and with the kind of hard cash persuasion which never failed.

That done, he sat and drank a little more gin until Hilda came. She threw her arms around him, kissed him and cried: "Darling, that Chanel!"

Disengaging himself quickly, he said: "The wrong number, I'll bet, but all the same, just a little token of how I feel."

She had changed into a simple, tawny white linen costume and looked pretty good. If she were a little common and brassy, Greg guessed that was just the way Riensen would prefer it dished up.

"Are you ready?" she asked. "I have the Packard outside. It takes exactly twenty minutes. You're going to like it."

"Am I?" He was making for the tray. "I've sent that black guy of yours to the Western Union with a cable. Was glad to discover they have a perch here. Double?"

She was surprised at his dallying. "We mustn't be late."

He continued with the drinks and smiled. "What's the hurry, Hilda? Ivan's away and the night is young." He came with the glasses, put them on a low table and flopped carelessly on to the settee. "You know, I've fallen for you in a big way."

"You wouldn't be kidding, would you?" she retorted, sitting down stiffly and regarding him with worried impatience. "Don't you want to go out any more?"

He said casually: "Of course I do, but a little later, Hilda, and then not to the Paloma, if you don't mind."

"There isn't another decent place to go to. What's come over you all of a sudden?" she asked, barely able to hide her anxiety.

"Caution," he replied. "I have to be awfully careful. You don't know what I do for a living. If you weren't a soft hearted woman, I'd tell you."

"I can take most things in my stride." She was trying the nonchalant approach, rose, shrugged her shoulders. "If you've changed your mind and don't want to be entertained, I suppose I'd better go."

"To 'phone Riesen?" He had risen too, all his casualness

gone. "Tell him I'm not going to walk into the trap he has laid and ask him to come and kill me here."

All at once she knew where she stood. She reached for her handbag, but he beat her to it. He removed the little mother o'pearl inlaid automatic, slipped it into his pocket, handed her the bag. "Well?"

She hissed: "What's the next move?"

"As I have to report on this I'm going to ask you to confirm one or two things that are in my mind," he said easily, placing himself between her and the door. "Sit down and take the weight off your feet."

She spat: "I'll confirm nothing."

"We'll see," he grinned. "I'll make it short. You got fed up with Ivan and began to take lovers. The harbour doctor became your slave. You knew all about Ivan's business and gradually developed what you thought was a brilliant idea. You were going to knock back a consignment of smuggled diamonds with the help of Scorpi, then disappear. That's how it began, isn't it?"

He used the kind of hard cash persuasion which never failed

She said sarcastically: "Your vernacular's good."

"I know it is," he agreed. "The idea was hardly ripe when, for some reason, Riensen came on a visit from Baghdad and, first because you'd grab any pair of pants, then because he was engaged in the same diamond racket, you fell for him. Between the two of you, you cooked up a plan to sneak the next important collection of stones that came along. How's that?"

"Not bad," she snarled. "If your Russian masters allow you to live long enough, you should go in for story writing."

"Maybe I shall. Today's lot of pebbles had been notified as the real McCoy, which meant killing Ivan immediately after their arrival. Originally Scorpi had been the loved one to share in the run-away and the spoils, because he'd be able to supply Ivan's death-from-natural-causes certificate, with a nice quick burial to follow and no questions

asked. You kept it that way even when you knew that, on account of Riesen, you'd have to leave at once and covering up didn't mean all that much any more, because . . ."

"You're a liar," she interrupted.

"Am I? You guessed Ivan was going to have the stones for his tea, which meant the need of a guy with scalpels. It didn't matter that you had to kill him afterwards because of his knowledge. Right?"

She got up, her face white and said through clenched teeth: "I hate you. Let me go."

He held her back. "You're not going any place until I've finished. With Scorpi out of the way, there was only me, and you must have realised I was a little different from the normal run of agents. With Ivan's discharge in his pocket, any other guy might have travelled on, but I decided to stay. You knew I'd want the chips back and be on your tail, so I had to be done away with. Now you see why I'm not going to the Paloma. Instead of going to Riensen, I'm letting him come to me."

"He'll get you," she said savagely. "He knows what to do with Russians and their hangers-on."

"So do I," he retorted. "You see, I'm neither a Russian agent, nor Brown. My name's Gregory Scanlan and . . ."

"Of the A.C.B.I.?" she exclaimed.

"You've got it. Of the African Central Bureau of Investigation. Funny, isn't it?"

He thought she would faint. She was holding on to the back of a chair, gasped: "Gregory . . . Scanlan!"

"In person," he said tersely. "Who has the stones?"

"He has . . . I . . ." Suddenly her blood seemed to be circulating again. She threw herself at him, trying to push him over and get away, but he stopped her.

"Tonight I call the tune," he said icily, holding her firmly. "You and Riensen are going to be kept apart and dealt with separately."

She cried: "Take your hands off me."

"Don't shout," he warned, swinging her round and starting for the door. "If you try and draw attention I'll hand you over and as sure as my name's Greg, you'll swing, my sweet."

She stopped struggling, asked: "Where are you taking

me?"

"For the time being I'm going to lock you in with the corpses," he replied coolly, "so you can think a little of what a lovely piece of womanhood you are. If I were you I wouldn't make a noise. It wouldn't be so healthy if you were found up there."

Her eyes were filled with horror. She whispered: "Not with them!" but he paid no attention, pushed her along.

On the way back to his room he looked from the large centre window down into the courtyard and saw a car draw up. He consulted his watch, nodded to himself. His timing could not have been better. For a second or two he watched the car. A man, whose stocky figure and square head looked familiar, was alighting hurriedly.

"How do, Riensen! Glad you got the message." He had waited behind the door, now closed and locked it quickly.

"Scanlan!" The stocky man's right hand flashed to his pocket, but Greg was used to this kind of thing, removed the revolver, threw it on to a chest of drawers out of reach. He said easily, playing with his own gun: "Sorry I couldn't meet you at the Paloma. Sit down."

Riensen obeyed, his face ashen. "So *you* are Brown?" He swore. "Where's Hilda?"

"With Ivan and Scorpi, to keep them from running away. I'd like those stones, Riensen."

The man's pig eyes were darting around the room, looking for a way out. "I have no stones."

Greg had remained standing. His hand shot out, the back of it whipping the side of the German's face. "I said I want those stones."

There was murder in Riensen's eyes, but he produced the satchel, flung it on the floor. "Is that all you want?"

"Oh no!" Greg kicked the bag into a safe corner, leaned, half sat on a table, his right leg swinging. "From now on diamonds are more or less a sideline."

A sudden thought seemed to strike Riensen. He looked confused, said: "They never are. As Brown you've come all the way from Luremo with this bagful of stuff. I don't get it."

"Don't you? The smuggling gang had to be smashed up, hadn't it?"

"I still don't get it. Why the diamonds?"

Greg said: "These marbles made the agents give me their confidence, Riensen." He grinned. "For as long as I needed it."

Riensen said, shaking his head: "You gave the stones to Rubikov. None of it makes sense."

"It's immaterial to me whether it does. All I'm interested in is settling our score."

"Our score?" Riensen got half up from the settee, sat back again at a wave of Greg's gun. "What are you talking about? I don't work for the Russians any more and you have the stones. What do you care about Rubikov or Scorpi?"

Greg said softly, but with intense bitterness: "You seem to have forgotten something. I may have broken up a smugglers' gang, but I made this trip mainly for you, Riensen. I've come to make you pay for Bob Van Dalen."

Sweat began to pour down Riensen's face. He cried: "You can't kill me in cold blood."

"I won't," said Greg. "Not in cold blood. For the moment I'm just going to give you the thrashing of a lifetime." He put his gun in his pocket, got off the table, gave the German another cracking backhander full in the face. "Get up, you son of filth. Defend yourself."

Riensen, his face red, jumped up, hit back, missed. For a long time they fought silently and savagely, the German like a mad bull, Greg with the well-timed, controlled power of the trained boxer. There was a lot of blood but not Greg Scanlan's. Riensen tried to grab the gun from the tallboy; Greg sent him crashing to the floor, pulled him up, ripped the ugly face with a searing uppercut and again made him stand up to take more until he was a helpless half unconscious mass, gasping for breath. Calmly, Greg picked him up, threw him on to the settee like an armful of old rags, walked to the washbasin and rinsed Riensen's blood off his hands. Going to his luggage, he fished out of a suitcase a pair of handcuffs, slipped them on to the helpless Hun. He said, his breathing even and regular:

"Not a bad start, is it, Riensen, though you must admit that for a murderer this is peanuts. Like to know a little more?"

Riensen's eyes in their swollen lids were hardly visible. Blood was running from his nose and from a deep gash on his temple. He was spitting out teeth through cut lips, presenting a sorry sight but Greg only saw the dead face of Van Dalen and said sharply: "Answer me, bastard, before I give you another helping."

The head raised itself. The bloody lumps that hid the pig eyes turned to Greg and the guttural voice groaned: "What are you going to do, Scanlan?"

Greg said: "I have an idea we shan't be troubled by your girl-friend any more, Riensen, so I'm going to chain you up in her room, just for the night."

Riensen asked: "And then?"

Gregg sent him crashing to
the floor, then made him
stand up to take more

"A nice holiday abroad. I've telegraphed Tiflis in the name of Rubikov that you're here. Tomorrow afternoon two of those well-meaning Ogpu chaps with a holster under each armpit will come to take you to face the masters you deserted."

"They'll kill me," cried Riensen hoarsely.

Greg said: "That's my bet, but to make sure they do, you're taking the stones."

"The diamonds," muttered the German, incredulously.

Greg laughed. "You didn't think I was hauling the real thing right across Africa, did you? There are no diamonds at Massawa, Riensen. These stones look the part and only an expert could tell, but they're just lumps of fine rock crystal, bait for the scum I exterminated en route. Reserving you for myself, Ruby was going to be the last of the gang to get his, by the hands of his own people, for bringing home the wrong bacon. It's worked out a little differently, but does it matter?"

He looked at the mashed up man who was struggling to get his mind in focus, groaned, did not reply. Greg continued sharply:

"They'd have shot Ruby for producing gravel. What do you think they're going to do to you, Riensen, a lousy traitor as well?"

The large, shapeless body wriggled up in the settee. The hoarse voice repeated in a scream: "They'll kill me!"

"Yeah!" said Greg calmly. "They'll kill you. Let's get moving."

The Chief of Police was very polite and helpful. "What A.C.B.L. say it is always good. The man in Palazia he be given to two gentlemen that call tomorrow?"

"That's it," confirmed Greg. "I've instructed the chap you sent over to stand guard tonight, and moreover I'll be plenty awake myself to keep an eye. It's a civil offence, nothing to do with this country, but serious enough where I'm concerned. Having him collected in this way will save a lot of bother. I won't be here myself, I'm off to Bulawayo in the morning, but perhaps you'll give the two gentlemen this little parcel. I know they'll like to have it. There's a note inside."

"It is as Mr. Scanlan say. And further?"

Greg said: "That's a different matter and not connected. I discovered it by chance. The two bodies are in Mr. Rubikov's bedroom and as it's hot around here they're already getting a little high. If I were you, I'd send a few fellows over as soon as possible."

"We fetch to morgue and make the post mortem," nodded the policeman cheerfully. "I always say 'Mrs. Rubikov she come to trouble one time!' You think she kill?"

"Looks that way," Greg replied. "She's gone and I wouldn't be surprised if she's out of the country by now with whatever valuables she had. She just didn't like her husband, I guess, and made a bit of a mess of him. As to Scorpi, who knows? Perhaps she went berserk and did him, too."

"It is the love," said the Chief of Police, solemnly. "The —what you say—triangle. I will look and inform headquarters. It is a pity. Mr. Rubikov was very nice man."

"An excellent chap," agreed Greg. He smiled, thinking of Hilda and the way she had taken her chance. He said, getting up: "Come to think of it, with one or two reservations, his wife wasn't a bad bundle of fluff. As you say, a great pity."

Outside he got into the ramshackle hire car Fido the Second had found him. A coal black Somali stuck his head through the driver's window, enquired in Italian: "Dove?"

Greg thought 'Where to?' It was time to get himself a quiet drink. What about the Paloma? But immediately he changed his mind. "Take me to the coaster that came into port this morning. I can't pronounce its name."

Though it was fairly late, there were still a dozen or so loafers on the dockside. The crates of tangerines were still there, smelling to high heaven. He didn't see the dog. He kicked an unloading hook out of his way, climbed aboard, walked into the empty little drinking room. The real Fido was sleeping with his clothes on behind the bar, the top of his head just showing. Greg grabbed the frizzy hair, pulled hard. There was a scream, a getting together of limbs, then Fido's frightened face, followed by a smile the size of a saucepan: "Mister Brown!"

"Gregory Brown Scanlan," he grinned. "That guy I came for got his, Fido. I'll have a nice double gin and tonic. No lemon."

IDENTIFICATIONS IN BRITAIN BY THE FINGERPRINT METHOD
(*Police cases*)

Year	*Searches*	*Identifications*
1902	6,826	1,722
1903	11,919	3,642
1904	14,851	5,155
1905	17,490	6,186
1910	24,602	10,848
1915	22,123	7,764
1920	37,109	13,194
1925	34,920	15,867
1932	49,170	20,682
1956	145,927	47,854

From "Science In Crime Detection" by Nigel Morland (Robert Hale)

Trouble in Tangier

by Donald MacKenzie

On the run from the British Police, the author—who has since abandoned the life of crime—escapes from England with his girl-friend to try to lose himself in the cosmopolitan underworld.

WE hove-to in the bay while a police launch came out to collect the passports of those who were disembarking. It was twenty minutes before the *Koutoubia* was nudged against the quay.

Thirty feet below us, a bunch of porters was milling around, yelling at one another in Arabic, smiting their chests and foreheads with gusto. Watching them with indifference were the International Police who seemed to be rigged out in cast-off G.I. uniforms. The stink that came up from the quayside was compounded of rotten fruit, Spanish olive oil and the living filth of the city.

About twenty passengers were getting off at Tangier. Sue and I were among the first. We stood to one side while our baggage was unloaded. A police officer with tinted lenses was checking the passports at a desk. Next to him stood a coffee-coloured version of Sydney Greenstreet. He looked as wide as he was tall and wore a Palm Beach suit that had somehow resisted the heat and the dust. Catching sight of us, he bent over the pile and selected our passports.

"Welcome, Captain Rogers," he said with a bow like an operatic tenor. "Madame!" He included Sue.

This man looked improbably like a cop, but in Tangier,

how could you tell? Yet there was authority in the way he snapped Arabic at a dignified old goat who led one of the gangs of porters. We watched, fascinated, as our baggage was loaded into a Packard limousine.

The large man stepped between us, grabbing an elbow in each hand. "I am Fawzik." He made it sound as if this should clarify matters. In point of fact, neither of us knew him from a hole in the ground.

With another courtly bow, he handed us into the Packard and sat facing us. I didn't dare look at Sue who was obviously impressed by our fat friend. I wanted to laugh—this was a sure case of mistaken identity.

Fawzik was making conversation in a lordly sort of way. He wafted clouds of some loud perfume so that the car stank like a whorehouse. The room, said Fawzik, had been difficult to get. For anyone else it would have been impossible. Still, he'd realized that the Minzah Hotel was the only place for his friend the Captain. This "Captain" business had a touch of solvency that I liked. I thought that I'd keep the title at least temporarily.

We turned into a narrow street of Moorish and European shops, then stopped at the Minzah. Fawzik moved in front of us, treading on the balls of his feet. We followed as arrogantly as possible. The lobby was Moorish with a mosaic floor. Water spouted in an inner patio and it was cool after the hot street. A row of befezzed and bareshanked Arabs wheeled in our baggage.

Fawzik rapped on the desk a couple of times. "You have the Captain's room?" He made a sort of humming noise, belched, then smiled largely at Sue.

The desk clerk strained like a dog on a leash. "Captain —ah——" He smiled apology.

"Monsieur le Capitaine Rogers," said Fawzik severely.

The clerk's face cleared. "Naturally. Booked by . . ."

"The Captain is tired," interrupted Fawzik. "He has had a long journey. A friend of Lord Winston Churchill," he added simply.

He bent over Sue's hand. *"A demain, chère Madame."* He turned to me. "Till tomorrow then, my Captain." I gave him his hand back, hoping that by the morning I'd have this one figured out.

Our room had an expensive cool hush. There were white silk curtains at the windows, a white telephone and mosquito nets round the beds. I showered, slipped on slacks and a thin shirt. In the mirror was the dashing cosmopolitan about to take the air.

"Going out, Captain?" asked Sue.

"Just to get the feel of the place."

She nodded. Her smile irritated me.

Across the street was Thomas Cook's, with the inevitable harassed Englishwoman in a tweed skirt. Further on was Dean's Bar. Everyone in Tangier found Dean's sooner or later and the guy made a very fair living. I bought a rum-coke.

In every bar along the Mediterranean I've met the same little sad man with the thin nose. He perks up at the sight of a stranger and for the price of a drink will give you a slant on whatever part of the world you happen to be—*his slant*. The drink is not essential.

This one was cultural attaché at one of the consulates, whatever the hell that might be. His information came in whinnies. He twisted round on his seat, hands clasped.

I should remember, he told me, that Tangier was more than a Mediterranean city. It was oriental. The streets were thronged—he talked like that—with folk from every country from Spain to the Levant. You'd see Moors of the older generation gossiping with their younger compatriots. The red fez worn with European clothes was the badge of the young, progressive Moor. Ah yes, the sad little man told me, I'd see them all. T-shirted Americans, French pimps, the refuse of Europe's cities. And the refugees — it seemed that my friend felt strongly about refugees.

After half an hour of it, I took a rain check on the drink he offered me and crossed the market square.

The first thing I had to do was change the pounds that Sue had brought from England. In Tangier, this at least was easy.

I found one of the moneychangers with a price for pounds on his easel that was better than the others. We had a hundred pounds left and I offered them to him. He was a small and humble man, the Moor said, and a hundred

pounds was too much for him to take at the price. He wanted to give me fifty francs less per pound. As I moved off, he called me back. It was my first lesson in African bargaining. Arabs, like other Orientals, get no pleasure from an immediate sale, in fact they resent it. I took my money in pesetas. There's no Tangerine currency. All money is good, with the Moroccan franc and Spanish peseta most commonly used. Maybe we *were* only twenty odd miles across the straits from Europe, but the difference wasn't computed in miles or in years. This was Africa.

I bought myself a beer at a bar on the Place de France. I felt safe in this theatrical city. After dinner, we strolled down to one of the open-air cafés on the Zocco Chico—a small square at the bottom of 'es Siaghine. Behind us, the entrances to the squalid alleys leading to the Medina made black holes in the lighted square. Bands blared from the flamenco joints—we could hear the clicking heels and castanets.

For me the feel of the place was right. In a city of the hunted and dispossessed, mine was just another face. In a jungle like this I was safe.

Being safe was only one of my worries. I had to make a living somehow. Normally, the dishonest person has an advantage over his fellows. The initiative is his because he's prepared to break the law. In a place like Tangier, there are so many dishonest operators that the initiative is lost. The Tangerines expect flimflam and skullduggery. The Anglo-Saxon regard for the law is non-existent there. This was probably ideal for any sort of organized iniquity but a free-lance needed contacts to turn a trick—and time. I had neither. A legitimate job was the only thing that would straighten me out. I determined to find one.

The night was a horror. Mosquitoes whined round the nets. For an hour, Sue kept up a long monologue about security and roots till I grew sick enough to argue. Frustrated resignation sent us both to sleep.

About ten in the morning the 'phone rang. It was the desk.

"Mr. Fawzik to see the Captain." I'd forgotten entirely about Fawzik. Going down to the lobby, I tried over a few easy phrases, trying to find something that would save

my face and his peace of mind. There was no doubt that Fawzik had mistaken me for somebody else. God knows who, but I'd profited. If you've never met anyone like Fawzik off the screen, it's difficult to know how to place him. And nothing about this city was normal.

He was sitting in a chair in the lobby, cracking his knuckles. He wore a pale green suit and dark tan shoes. We said, "Good morning," and mentioned the state of our healths. Then he handed me a pink envelope.

"For you, Captain." His smile could be dazzling at times.

I excused myself and broke open the envelope. It made interesting reading.

C. FAWZIK. *Guide* 475. *c/o British Post Office*

Captain Rogers,
Minzah Hotel, Tangier.

To professional services	2000 fr.
Disbursements (porters, hire of limousine, tips)	3000 fr.
Tax	50 fr.
TOTAL	5050 fr.

ACCOUNTS SETTLED DAILY : : WEEKLY BY ARRANGEMENT : : FAWZIK PLEASES THE NOBILITY AND EXECUTIVES : : PLEASE TO RECOMMEND FAWZIK!

Fawzik went on cracking his knuckles. Suddenly he showed his good teeth. "I like you, Captain. It is always a pleasure to do business with a gentleman."

Aha! It was almost worth the money to have him in the proper perspective.

Now it was easy to see how things were done. Fawzik met every ship and plane professionally. Obviously he had some sort of pull with the dock police that would allow him to prospect the disembarking passengers. Then he'd select what he felt to be the likeliest customers and grab their passports. From then on it was no contest. In fact, they were now all playing a game where Fawzik made the rules as he went along.

Nevertheless, without him, we might well have been roomless in Tangier. Maybe the answer to Fawzik was the answer to the city. Don't take a single thing seriously.

I gave him his five bills and took him next door to Porte's for a coffee. He said it was a good place to be seen. He had a bent for the more snobbish cliché. Everyone who mattered, he said, dropped in at Porte's during the course of the day. It was a fair enough start.

We sat at a table at the back. Fawzik was still cracking his knuckles. He hadn't taken my news about not wanting him too well. Disbelief was the dominant expression in his face. After a half-hour's light chit-chat he was back again to the attack.

I might not need him as a guide, he said, but he could still be useful to me. To have any sort of success in Tangier, it was essential to have the right introductions. He could supply them. Obviously he had made up his mind that I was there to stay.

I nodded. I had nothing to lose.

I sat there between the Tout and the Baron—my introduction to Tangier

At noon, the door clattered as someone pushed his way in. He was about sixty with thin white hair and a red, glazed face. His slacks were Savile Row and a faded club scarf hid most of the sagging neck muscles. He sat down near us and rapped smartly on the table with an outsize signet ring.

"The Baron," said Fawzik with reverence. "May I introduce you?"

The Baron was serene at this sudden intrusion on his splendour. He had the right English accent with an occasional straining for word and effect. He appeared to relish the sound of his own voice.

Fawzik backed off, bowed and said that he would get in touch with me. When he was gone, the Baron continued and I listened.

His name was Velderot, he said. The title was Belgian by way of an ancient marriage to a Baroness of that name. He didn't blink at the wild improbability of this informa-

tion. I didn't blink either. Already, I had put him down as some sort of operator and he talked too much. We had a brief outline of the life of Baron Velderot.

Caught in the south of France in the peace-in-our-time era, the Baron was sharp off the mark on his way to Tangier. As he said, he—ah—saw the possibilities. He sat the war out in Tangier, a complete enigma to the occupying Spaniards. With a humourless smile, he told me that he lived by his wits. Nowhere else in the world could you make such a statement and cause no surprise. Still, the confidence disturbed me. I could only hope that he told everyone the same thing. On the off chance, I shot a couple of names at him. Both were Americans who lived in Paris, old-school con men who had suffered with a bad stomach or conscience or something—in any case they had turned slightly legitimate. They now earned a living by taking money for squaring cases that couldn't be squared. A man who knew Doc or Big Arthur was money from home in a place like Tangier. He knew them all right.

He still talked too much for my liking. I'd no intention of telling him a thing about myself. It's certain that he didn't expect me to. Over the lunch that he insisted on buying, I gave him an expurgated version of my troubles with the facts that I wanted to convey worked into it.

I wanted to stay in Tangier and I needed a job, not a proposition but a job.

"It's possible," he said, "that I might be able to fix you up with something, on a percentage basis, naturally. If you'd been English I wouldn't have troubled."

A certain bitterness crept into his voice whenever he spoke of England or the English. Usually, your expatriate tends to get sloppily sentimental over his Motherland. Not so the Baron.

Finally, he wrapped his arm round my neck and told me that we were going up to his place to talk it over, his home, his *house,* he said loudly, where he lived with an *Arab* girl!

I said, "Fine!" and he looked slightly disappointed.

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In Flight Again

AUGUST COMPETITION

TWELVE NEW CRIME BOOKS will be awarded to the best entrants in this month's Competition. Write a limerick, introducing the titles of one or more items in this issue—below, for your guidance, we reproduce one of the entries in a recent Limerick Contest:

A fellow who tried to be brave
In solving The Riddle of the Grave
In just half a minute
He put his foot in it—
Now he's got one foot in the grave.

ENTRY FORM

To: The Editor, Creasey Mystery Magazine,
Granville House, Arundel Street, London, W.C.2.

Name .....
(Block letters)

Address .....
(Block letters)

I agree to accept as binding the Editor's decision on all matters relating to this competition.

Signed .....

The result of the August competition will be announced in the November issue of the magazine.

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