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The Man I Pity Most

POOR OLD JONES. No one had any use for him. No one respected him. Across his face I read one harsh word—FAILURE. He just lived on. A poor worn-out imitation of a man, doing his sorry best to get on in the world. If he had realized just one thing he could have made good. He might have been a brilliant success.

There are thousands and thousands of men like Jones. They, too, could be happy, successful, respected and loved. But they can't seem to realize the one big fact—that practically everything worth while living for depends upon STRENGTH—upon live, red blooded, he-man muscle.

Everything you do depends upon strength. No matter what your occupation, you need the health, vitality and clear thinking only big, strong, virile muscles can give you. When you are ill the strength in those big muscles pulls you through. At the office, in the farm fields, or on the tennis courts, you'll find your success generally depends upon your muscular development.

Here's a Short Cut to Strength and Success

"But," you say, "it takes years to build my body up to the point where it will equal those of athletic champions." It does if you go about it without any system, but there is a scientific short cut. And that's where I come in.

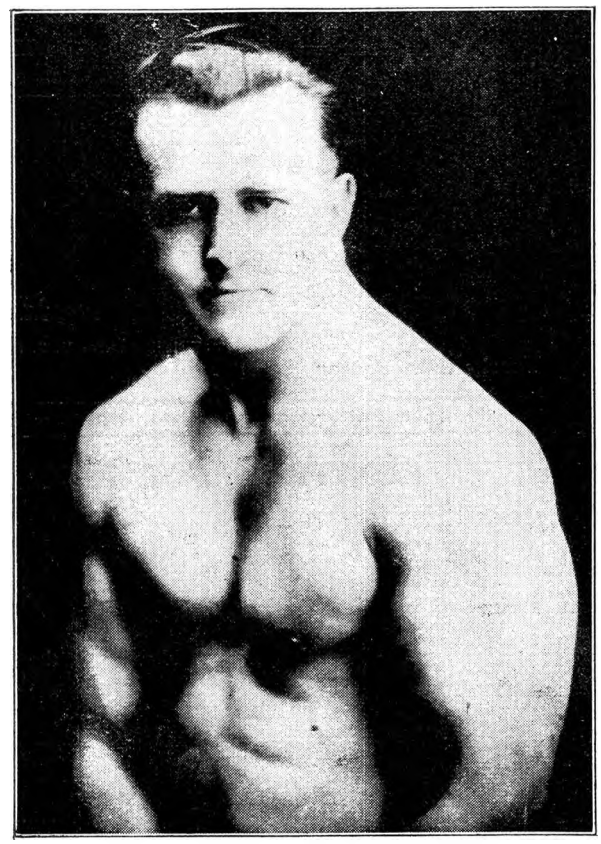
30 Days is All I Need

In just 30 days I can do things with your body you never thought possible. With just a few minutes' work every morning, I will add one full inch of real, live muscle to each of your arms, and two whole inches across your chest. Many of my pupils have gained more than that, but I GUARANTEE to do at least that much for you in one short month. Your neck will grow shapely, your shoulders begin to broaden. Before you know it, you'll find people turning around when you pass. Women will want to know you. Your boss will treat you with a new respect. You'll look ten years younger, and you'll feel like it, too. Work will be easy. As for play, why, you realize then that you don't know what play really means.

I Strengthen Those Inner Organs, Too

But I'm not through with you. I want ninety days in all to do the job right, and then all I ask is that you stand in front of your mirror and look yourself over.

What a marvelous change! Those great square shoulders! That pair of huge, lithe arms! Those firm, shapely legs! Yes, sir. They are yours, and they are there to stay. You'll be just as fit inside as you are out, too, because I work on your heart, your liver—all of your inner organs, strengthening and exercising them. Yes, indeed, life can give you a greater thrill than you ever dreamed. But, remember, the only sure road to health, strength and happiness always demands action.



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CONTENTS FOR FIRST APRIL NUMBER

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STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC., 79 7th AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y.

GOOD READING

BY

CHARLES HOUSTON

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown field or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or gray grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Our grandparents wooed to such lilting music. To-day the tempo may be quicker, the words less elegant. Yet the eternal yearning that is the price of love is found as surely in the nervous plaintive notes of jazz as in the more dulcet tones of violins beneath Victorian moons.

There is evidence aplenty of the fact that while love has found a new way in these latter days, there is no fundamental change in the true character of true love. Such evidence is contained in the love stories published by Chelsea House, one of the oldest and best-established publishing concerns in the United States. The thousands of loyal followers of Chelsea House offerings, who come from every walk of American life, have learned to demand the highest standards from their favorite authors. And that this demand is met is proved by the continuous devotion which the readers of Chelsea House love stories so evidently feel toward those masters of fiction who take them on winged words into magic worlds.

Here follow brief reviews of some of the more recent Chelsea House books, any one of which may be had at your nearest dealer's.

HEARTBREAK HARBOR, by Eleanor Elliott Carroll. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

The transport was steaming slowly into a harbor of breath-taking beauty. Entranced, a girl, herself "a thing of beauty," leaned against the rail, while at her side stood a man smiling condescendingly at her young enthusiasm. He was Philip Curtis, and the six-foot shadow that he was to cast upon the crowded life which awaited her was an ominous one.

The scene of this exceptionally stirring love story is laid beneath the blazing sun which shines down upon Manila. Philip and the naïve, dreaming girl, stepped ashore into a situation sinister and foreboding. Around the girl cunning conspirators wove their intricate schemes. Because of her, an upstanding young American was driven to the verge of distraction. Here is a story which marches in quick-step time. It is shot through with fire. It thrills. Take "Heartbreak Harbor" home to-night, and embark upon a voyage filled with the authentic spirit of romance.

SWAMP FLOWER, by Vivian Grey. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

To what desperate ends will the bitter grind of poverty drive a sensitive spirit! Velma, in New York, bending over her typewriter, could still see the heart-rending squalor of that little Illinois town from which she had escaped. Now that she was in the great city, she had made up her mind that of all things on earth money and the things which money could buy were the most important.

Deliberately, she made up her mind to ensnare the one man of her acquaintance who

(Continued on 2nd page following)

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

GOOD READING—*Continued*

was the possessor of the object of her quest. This was her employer, James Derring. On an eventful day, Derring invited Velma for a trip into the country and on the return drive the girl paid to have the automobile in which they were traveling disabled. The two were forced to spend the night in a country house, and Velma insisted that to avoid gossip, even though that gossip were not founded on fact, Derring should marry her. "The Big Boy" agreed, and promised Velma to send her a check for her wedding shopping the next day.

But when the next day dawned above the little furnished room in Greenwich Village, where Velma lived, there was no check—and no Derring. Foiled, Velma went out into the great city in desperate search for a position. All her elaborate planning had failed. She must take the most menial of jobs. And then, unexpectedly, there came a turn in her fortune.

Vivian Grey has developed in magnificent fashion the character of a woman at first repellent, and as the story progresses, wistful, and finally close to heroic. "Swamp Flower" is a love story well out of the ordinary, combining the realities of life with its high romance. It belongs in your library of books to be read and read again.

THE GINGHAM BRIDE, by Beulah Poynter. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

Forces with which she was ill equipped to grapple flung pretty little sixteen-year-old Sally Dixon into a brutal world. Had she been six months older she could have married the man she loved. But the stern laws of the Southern community in which she lived gave her over to the none-too-tender care of her father—an unscrupulous old renegade who ran a roving medicine show.

Two men of the road promptly fell in love with this beauty who had come so unexpectedly into their dark lives. But Sally was steadfastly true to her first love. Of a sudden came tragedy. The girl found herself thrashing in a tangled net of intrigue. How her sheer downright grit and tenacity of purpose finally brought her out to happiness is narrated with gripping style by Beulah Poynter, one of the outstanding fiction writers of our time. I wager that once you have opened the pages of this intriguing book you will not be satisfied until you have read to the very end.

THE AWAKENING OF ROMOLA, by Anne O'Hagan. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

Sometimes when you go into a small suburban town you are depressed by a certain air of standardized sameness. Sameness in the general looks and habits of life of its people. Sameness even in the prettiness of its houses. And you conclude that while life there may be comfortable and secure, such a town would be the last place in the world in which to look for any adventure.

But Anne O'Hagan knows differently. She has taken off the roof of one of these suburban homes and looked down on its people. And from what she has seen she has made a story all absorbing. It is the story of the reawakening of romance in the heart of Romola Ventnor. Comfortably married, approaching middle age, she never dreamed that right around the corner, in the attractive person of Wade Robinson, there was coming a man who would upset her entire scheme of things. A love affair between the two, with all its dangerous implications, soon developed. And before the reader there is posed a problem more common than the hasty critic of Suburbia might suspect. Read what Romola did in this crisis. It makes a story which holds you in its grip from the first chapter to the last.

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The six o'clock mystery . . .

Herlock Sholmes and his good friend Batson had noticed the man when he came in at precisely 6:03½ P. M.

"A dangerous looking fellow," murmured Sholmes. "Notice the twitching nerves around his eyes, and the smoldering impatience in every gesture. He'll bear watching . . ."

At 6:27 the man reappeared . . . a beam of loving kindness in his eye, a low jolly whistle on his lips.

"I say, Batson!" said Herlock, "the man must be a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I never saw such an astounding change in a personality! We must find the cause."

Picture Herlock and his faithful Batson in the man's apartment . . . measuring, digging through drawers, peering into corners. But pill or powder found they none!

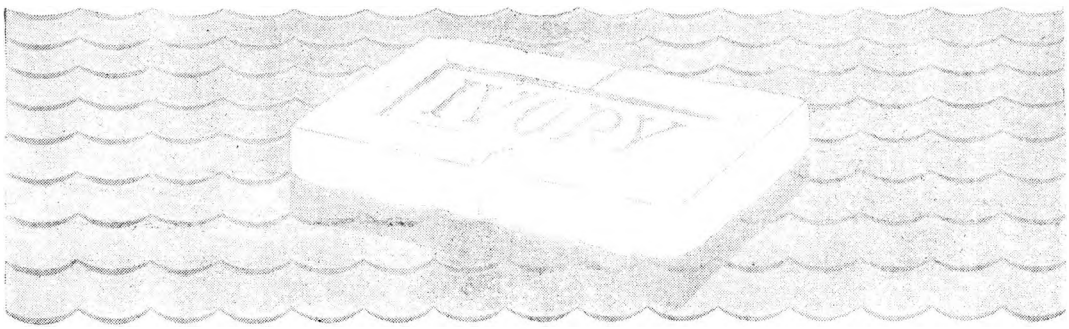
Then Herlock threw open the bathroom door. A tropical warmth still lingered in the air, and the mirror was misted with steam. A splash of water on the floor . . . a heap of damp towel . . . and in the soap dish, a smooth, alabaster-white rectangle.

"Eureka!" he cried, "I have it!"

"Have what?" asked Batson, who never was very bright.

Herlock scorned to answer. He drew a tub . . . he threw off his clothes . . . he tossed the rectangle upon the water . . . and as he slid luxuriously into the steaming bath, he uttered these cryptic words—"It floats."

. . . kind to everything it touches · 99 44/100 % Pure · "It floats"



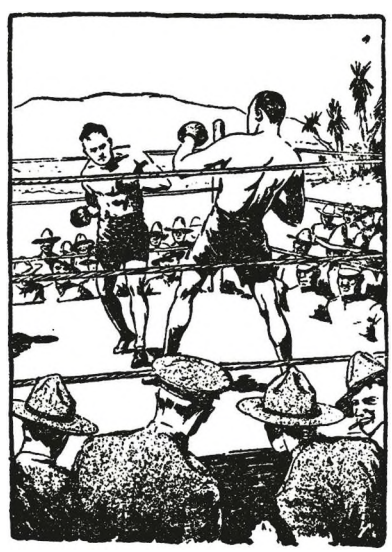
A Minute With—W. R. Hoefer

Blood and Brocade

PRESIDENT HOOVER has said that in his travels to remote places of the world he saw none of the romance one reads about such places. Yet O. Henry, though a fugitive at the time, saw romance all over the shop in the same South America traveled by Herbert Hoover. But one was an engineer, the other an artist.

We look with the eyes but we see with the mind.

For example, there was the bloodthirsty young man down in Laredo, who first took me to the army boxing bouts at Fort McIntosh, and myself. Always, on concert nights over in the Spanish plaza, in the ugly, intriguing little drinking shops across the border in Mexico, everywhere, we were looking at the same things and seeing different pictures.



We strolled, in the hot, sweet dusk, from the American plaza past the few squares of homes with their periwinkle embroidered yards, to the little homemade boxing bowl at the army post outside of town. This bowl is steep and narrow and amazingly small.

It was quite early but the crowd, the most colorful part, the poorest of the Mexicans, was already painting the upper rim with all the hues of a painter's palette. The less one paid the higher one ascended. And the upper rim, under the silver spatter of Texas starlight, was simply dripping color.

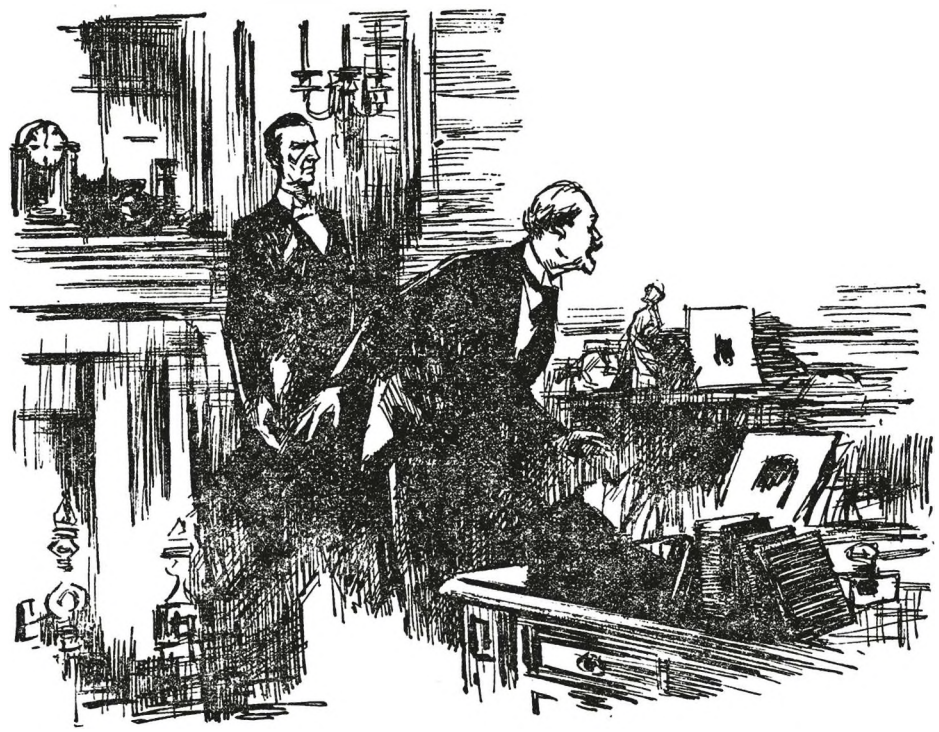
The army band filed in and played very martial and then most jazzy and lilting music. It was the meat and drink this motley throng had arrived so early for. Serried rows of tattered straw sombreros, brilliant shawls, mahogany faces, bare feet, glowing eyes and sketchy raiment of many hues, swayed in song and lilted in perfect unison and delight to the music under the stars.

Other ingredients were slowly added to the human mixing bowl. Hard-boiled-looking cavalrymen trickled in. Well-dressed civilians, American and Mexican, thickened the mixture. Then came the cream as the grotesque mixing bowl filled. Mexican army officers, spruce and cocky in white duck, trim and tanned American officers, wives and daughters in creamy silk and linen, all slowly poured into the same living stream. The rich, human concoction jelled at last. The band stopped playing. The fight announcer crawled through the ropes.

Later, as we sat over our coffee back in the square, my companion commented on the wind-up bout between an American army post champ and a Mexican boy. "Some scrap, at that," he observed. "Both those lads were covered with blood. It was great, what?"

"I didn't notice," I had to reply. "I was seeing the crowd. I thought *that* was gorgeous."

A Rapid-fire Mystery Novel That Starts in Paris, Where
York, Where Three Men



THREE MEN

By SEAN

CHAPTER I.

PARIS—1919.

THE curtains on the window, blotting out the dark Rue d'Assas, moved slightly—ever so slightly.

Andre Lefebre caught the arms of his chair and stared, his knuckles whitening in the fierce grip. His haggard eyes never left the deep-red drapes.

"Who's there?" Lefebre called in a husky voice.

He strained his eyes to see. The room was dim, only lighted by a small table lamp which threw its rays directly on the desk at which the frightened man was sitting.

Then he saw it—or thought he did. It was Ratine—Claude Ratine's thick, cruel face with life only in its burning eyes. And there was some one behind him—parting the curtains with a bony hand. D'Arnet—Michael d'Arnet, his handsome features distorted by pain and blackened by a merciless sun. The two of them never moved, just stared.

Ah! There was the third! Yes, there had been three of them. Lefebre remembered only too well.

It was Jacques Voiseau, his gaunt face peering between the other two. Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau! That was the way they stared at him when the judge pronounced sentence.

Three Men Are Sentenced to Prison, and Ends in New Are Sent to Their Deaths.

from CAYENNE

O'LARKIN

Now they had returned for him. They swore they would—and that they would tear him limb from limb. Their oath still rang in his ears.

"Maurice! Maurice!" the terrified man screamed, rising from his chair and backing away from his desk—backing toward the door which was the room's only exit.

The doorknob turned and the walnut portal swung open, admitting a liveried butler.

"You called, monsieur?"

"Yes, Maurice." Lefebre was trembling now, his eyes riveted on the deep-red curtains of the window. Again they stirred. "The window! Somebody's behind the curtains!"

Maurice quickly crossed the thickly carpeted room and flung the drapes aside. No one was behind them. But the windows that opened in like doors were ajar. A breeze had stirred the curtains.

"I'm sorry, monsieur. I left these open to air the room and forgot to close them."

"Be careful in the future, Maurice. You know I've given orders that all the windows on this floor and the street floor must be locked—locked, I said."

"I understand, monsieur."

"Very well, you may go. Tell Nanette to put Mademoiselle Yvonne to bed. It's nearly eight o'clock."

Maurice turned and locked the troublesome window; then he left the library.

Alone, Lefebre mopped his moist brow with a colored handkerchief and sighed. A glance took in the room. It was handsome; one of the most beautiful in all Paris. The decorators had said that. Of course he had not read all the books, but—but Yvonne would some day. She loved books and fine things. Yes, he had the library—and the home, too—of a very rich man. He had struggled, and now all that money could buy was his—and Yvonne's. The little girl was all that he had now. Ah, if Lisette, her mother, with her dark, comforting Spanish eyes, were only here to solace him, to reassure him that he had done right.

He sat down at his desk again and smiled at the deep-red curtains. They would not fool him again. But he must not lose control of himself so easily. Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau were four thousand miles away. He was as safe in Paris as anywhere, four thousand miles from that cutthroat trio. No, he would not let himself be frightened again.

The door burst open and a little girl with golden hair and in a long white nightgown ran into the room. She made for him, and, while he still frowned at this interruption, jumped up into his lap like a playful kitten.

"Papa, I just had to see you to say good night. I don't like to say good night through Nanette."

"But it's time that little ten-year-old girls were in bed and fast asleep, Yvonne." Lefebre's frown softened to a tender smile. He could not be angry with this little girl, his daughter.

"Kiss me good night, papa, and I'll go right upstairs then and go right to sleep."

Lefebre pressed a kiss on the little one's forehead, but held her as she struggled to free herself from his embrace so that she might keep her promise.

"Tell me, Yvonne, how are your studies? Papa has been so busy he hasn't had much time to talk with you about them."

"Oh, I'm getting along very well."

"And your English?"

"Teacher says I speak like a little English girl. But since we lived in London three years, that's not so wonderful."

For a moment Lefebre glanced over her golden head and stared at the drapes that had frightened him. He knew English, too; could speak the language like a native, with all its idiom and with little of his French accent. It was a good precautionary measure that they both spoke that foreign tongue.

"I'm glad you're progressing in English, *petite,*" he said. "We'll dine together to-morrow night and talk English all through the meal. If you can speak it as well as you say, I'll give you a present."

"I don't want a present. I just want to stay up later—till nine or half past eight, papa."

"No, no; little girls must be in bed at eight."

"Must I always go to bed at eight—even when I'm grown up?"

"Well," he smiled, "you may stay up till ten when you're twenty and until you're married, Yvonne."

"Can't I get married before I'm twenty?" Yvonne asked quickly, her mind concerned only with her bedtime hour.

Nanette, the big, buxom nurse from Brittany, appeared in the doorway, and Lefebre did not answer that last question. He lifted the child up to the nurse, who gathered her in her strong arms.

"Now go to bed. And remember, English at dinner to-morrow night!" Lefebre called after her.

"I'll practice all day—with the slang,

too, papa. Good night." She blew him a kiss and disappeared into the outer hall with Nanette.

The huge, dark library seemed to take on a new life after Yvonne had been in it. He got up from his desk and walked about the room, admiring its richness. For a moment the thought of how he had acquired his wealth crossed his mind, but he speedily buried that deep in his forgetfulness.

Yvonne would have everything when he passed on. She would be one of France's richest heiresses. Princes would seek her hand, for she would be beautiful, too.

Ratine, D'Arnet, Voiseau! The names echoed in his consciousness.

He had only them to fear—but they were safely tucked away.

But they worried him, just the same. They might harm Yvonne, if he was not alive to protect her. And no harm must come to her.

A shout in the Rue d'Assas aroused him from his reveries. Bravely, he went to the window, and, without unlocking it, peered out. There was a young moon over the Luxembourg Gardens. And a newsboy was shouting an extra.

Presently Maurice knocked at the door and entered. He held the extra in his hand; he always got one for his master. One could never tell. A cabinet might be falling; Lefebre's own destiny might be sounded by an extra. He might be called into a new cabinet, since he aspired to such political heights; he might be called to effect some new international financial merger. He believed in extras.

Maurice laid the newspaper on the desk and withdrew. Lefebre crossed the room and picked up the paper, unfolding it eagerly.

But as he read, his face grew deathly white.

The extra did concern his own destiny.

Emblazoned across the top of the paper, in bold headlines, were these words:

SENSATIONAL DEVIL'S ISLAND ESCAPE

Four Men Break For Freedom, One Is Shot Dead.

Lefebre wet his lips with his parched tongue and read on:

The Minister of Colonies was informed late to-day that four men have escaped from the Penal Colony at Cayenne in French Guiana. Their names are Claude Ratine, Martin d'Arnet, Jacques Voiseau, and Pierre Dunois. They made their way to sea in a high-powered launch stolen from the prison quay.

Dunois was shot through the head as the boat left the quay. The other convicts threw the body overboard and it was recovered. The escaped men are believed to be heading for Demarara. But their petrol will not hold out for such a long trip. It is expected that they will perish at sea.

Ratine, D'Arnet, and Voiseau were the men convicted of the robbery on the Lefebre Frères Bank. The ten million francs in notes and gold which were stolen were never recovered. The three men denied all knowledge of the robbery, but were convicted on circumstantial evidence. The Lefebre Bank collected a large insurance.

The names—Ratine, D'Arnet, Voiseau—grew larger, and larger and seemed to spring from the sheet at the banker's head.

They were free—the three men he feared most in the entire world.

They were free to make good their threat to tear him limb from limb. They were free to harm the one he loved above life itself—Yvonne.

"Maurice! Maurice!" he shrieked.

The house seemed very still. A house full of specters! Ratine—D'Arnet—Voiseau! They were free, the three of them! And they had threatened to efface him and his from the face of the earth.

Yvonne! She, too, was in danger.

There was a noise. Something crack-

led—a paper, underfoot. The corner of the library was heavy with shadows. But Lefebre could see them—the three men from Cayenne—back from the hell to which he had consigned them.

With a half strangled cry, the banker tore the newspaper apart. Of course he was alone in his own library. It was his nerves that played him tricks. His eyes, however, still searched the shadows.

There was some one in the room! He was convinced of that.

A scream came from his lips and his hands pressed against his pounding heart. He fell to the floor, unconscious, his eyes staring dully at the thick, rich carpet. His flesh was ashen—like that of a corpse.

It was Maurice who found the banker in this condition. He summoned two footmen and the concierge and they carried the prostrate body upstairs to the regal bedroom. Lefebre was laid upon a bed in which one time the Kings of France slept—an antique for which he had paid five hundred thousand francs.

For three days Andre Lefebre lay beneath the royal counterpane, hovering between life and death. Four doctors, the foremost specialists in Paris, were in attendance day and night. None, however, could determine the cause of the banker's mysterious coma. Maurice said nothing and had carefully destroyed the newspaper which had concerned his master's destiny.

On the fourth day, Lefebre regained consciousness and, apparently, his composure. He insisted on leaving his bed and forthwith dismissed the doctors.

He telephoned excitedly to half a dozen people and dressed for the street. But before he left the house, a real-estate agent came to see him. Maurice heard them mumbling in the library. Andre Lefebre put his home and its furnishings up for sale.

Later in the afternoon it became common knowledge on the Bourse that Lefebre had sold out his entire interest in his banking house. He was the last of Lefebre Frères. It was known, too, that he made a handsome profit of several million francs on the deal.

Paris was agog with the news. One of its richest men had dissolved all of his holdings. Was he out of his mind or was there new trouble impending in the stock market? The franc fell to new lows, and stocks tumbled, too.

What surprised those in the know most was Andre Lefebre's new will. He left everything to his daughter, Yvonne, specifying that in the event of her death, the money was to pass on to one Andrew Lamore, an American, and his daughter, Eve Lamore. Walter Grainger, proprietor of a prominent New York banking house, was made sole executor.

Three weeks passed. Power of attorney for the Lefebre estate was dispatched to New York and a receipt duly returned. Paris was about to forget Lefebre when the newspapers learned that he and his daughter had set out for a tour of the world. The banker's ill health was given as an excuse for the trip.

Friends received post cards from Marseilles, where the father and daughter embarked for the Far East. Other souvenirs were received from Port Said, Aden, Bombay and Calcutta. Newspaper correspondents in foreign parts were unable to secure an interview with Lefebre, but they reported that he traveled without ostentation—almost like a poor man who only had his steamer passage.

Five months later Paris was shocked anew by the Lefebres. When they opened their morning papers, Parisians read:

ANDRE LEFEBRE AND DAUGHTER DIE IN CAMBODIA.

Andre Lefebre, the retired banker, and his daughter, Yvonne, were killed yesterday in an automobile accident near the ruins of Angkor.

Before he died, M. Lefebre sent word to the French Consul that he wished his child and himself to be buried in Cambodia. This wish was carried out after cable consultation with Walter Grainger, the New York banker and executor of the Lefebre estate.

A fortnight later Paris beheld photographs of the last resting place of the Lefebres. This was marked by an exotic tombstone, beyond which loomed the Cambodian jungle.

Presently the newspapers ceased their speculations about the mysterious banker. And when the newspapers forgot, all Paris forgot.

CHAPTER II.

NEW YORK—1930

ANDREW LAMORE paced across the drawing-room in his East Sixty-sixth Street home. His manner was anxious. Recrossing the room, he paused to glance at the little ormolu clock on the mantel. Its hands indicated the hour of two thirty.

Looking up, he caught sight of himself in the tall mirror. He smiled at himself, proud and pleased. He hardly looked fifty-two. But he was all of that. Perhaps Andre Lefebre was responsible for his fine state of physical preservation. It was the Lefebre fortune that had given him a life of ease.

He meditated: Lefebre and Yvonne died in an auto crash in the Cambodian jungles eleven years ago. Now their wealth was his, and his daughter's. The house he lived in, his country estate on Long Island, his villa at Palm Beach —all were bought with the Lefebre inheritance. He had no more cares in life—but Eve.

He went over to the window and glanced into the deserted street, dark save for the electric arc lamps at either corner. The hum of traffic on Park Avenue was discernible; a policeman strolled by, giving a sense of security and safety to him.

But Eve had never stayed out so late before. Two thirty was no hour for a twenty-one-year-old girl to be gallivanting about New York! Why, she was always in bed by eleven at the latest!

He went to the door and pressed a secreted button in the wall. Presently a liveried butler entered the drawing-room.

"You rang, sir?"

"Yes, Calder. Are you sure Miss Eve hasn't come in?"

"Very sure, sir. I sent the maid to her room and she said Miss Eve hasn't been in all evening. She dressed to go to the opera, I believe."

"The opera! But the opera is over at eleven—eleven thirty at the latest. Whom did she go with? Did you see?"

Lamore was growing irate. He had gone to a public dinner given for the mayor, and the minute his back was turned Eve flew out of the house. He rarely went out at night, preferring to stay at home with her, listening to her play the piano or read to him. Perhaps he was wrong in keeping her in. But whom could she have gone with?

"It was a Mr. Masterman, I think," Calder said. "That's the name he gave me when he called."

"Masterman? Masterman? I know of no such person. Where on earth could Eve have met him?" He was frankly puzzled. He thought he knew all of Eve's friends and acquaintances.

"Perhaps she met him at a party—or a tea, sir."

"Perhaps. Masterman? You may go, Calder. Thank you."

Lamore crossed the front hall, and, opening a heavy walnut door, went into a small chamber fitted up as an office. There was a typical business-man's roll-top desk of mahogany, steel filing cases, a few chairs, and some fine etchings on the wall. He sat down at his opened desk and sorted some papers. But his mind was on Eve. Where in hell was she? If she was staying late

at a party, she might at least have telephoned the house.

There was the click of a key in the front door. A moment later it opened and there were hushed voices and subdued laughter. Lamore's door was ajar, and, as he started to get up, he hesitated to listen to the man's voice that mingled with Eve's.

"You must get away more often, Eve. We can have more parties like this one."

"Martin, it was heavenly—simply divine. That music! I could dance to it all night!"

"So could I—with you, Eve. You dance like a feather."

"I've had so very little practice. Dad is very strict with me. Eleven o'clock bedtime. I only dance at teas."

"We must try it again soon, Eve."

"And thank you for bringing me home, Martin. It was sweet of you."

"It was an honor. Good night."

"Good night, Martin."

There was a silence. Lamore was bewildered. What on earth could they be doing? He leaped to his feet and threw open his door.

Eve was holding the hand of a huge six-footer, a rather handsome devil. For an instant, so intent were they in staring into each other's eyes, they did not hear Lamore. But when they did they quickly withdrew their hands and faced him. Eve was resplendent in a gorgeous black evening gown with a train of billowy tulle. Her white skin ran upward into a mass of curly gold. The young man was in tails. He was dark and serious looking and very handsome. Lamore wondered how old he was. He looked thirty, but you can never tell about youngsters these days.

"Dad!" Eve cried. "Have you been waiting up for me? Let me present Mr. Masterman. He took me to the opera. It was 'Traviata,' and dull as usual. We left early to see the end of a musical comedy and then we went to the Rabbit Club."

"The Rabbit Club?" Lamore echoed.

"Yes, a perfectly marvelous night club, and we danced for hours. Martin—Mr. Masterman—is a lovely dancer. And——"

"You might have left word where you were going, Eve," Lamore said peevishly. "I didn't know what had happened to you."

"I'm sorry you didn't know, Mr. Lamore," Masterman spoke up.

"Oh, I know, dad. This is the first time I've been away from home after eleven. No wonder you're sore. But get used to it. New York only wakes up after midnight. I learned that much to-night."

"Well, good night, Mr. Lamore. So long, Eve." Masterman decided a retreat was in order and he backed away from the father and daughter toward the door.

But a crash arrested his progress. He had overturned a tall, bronze umbrella stand, filled with canes and umbrellas.

"I'm sorry," he said, and started to pick things up. "I'm very sorry."

"Good night, Eve," Lamore said, and, drawing her to him, kissed her on the brow. "Mr. Masterman, I'd like to have a talk with you." His eyes were fixed on the young man's.

"Why, of course, Mr. Lamore."

"But, dad, what for?" Eve cried from the stairs. She started to descend. "Are you going to question Mr. Masterman to see if he is a fit person to take me out?"

"I don't know Mr. Masterman, Eve. I should like to. Good night."

"Oh, well." Eve turned to the stairs and called over her shoulder: "Don't let him scare you, Martin. His bark is worse than his bite."

Laughing gayly, she ran up the carpeted marble stairs and disappeared around a bend. Lamore glanced at Masterman again and beckoned him to follow into the drawing-room.

Masterman hesitated at the door to

stare into the palatial room. It was one of the most beautiful he had ever seen. The style was Empire, and it was obvious that most of the furnishings were antiquities.

"It *is* a rather good-looking room," Lamore said, as though reading the other's thoughts. "Come in and make yourself comfortable."

Masterman threw his coat on a chair and sat down on the opposite side of the Carrara marble mantel. He was at his ease and casually accepted the cigarette proffered by Lamore. He noticed, too, that it was a Regie—an Austrian cigarette that he abhorred. But he lighted up on the same match with Eve's father.

"I suppose you want to know who I am?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. Masterman. I think it is a matter of form. My daughter obviously likes you. And you've taken her out. In these days, one can't be too careful with whom one's daughter associates."

"Well, I'm in a brokerage house on Wall Street—Clare & Co. Do you know them?"

"No, I deal with Grainger."

Masterman looked surprised for a moment and then went on: "I'm a junior partner. I've been with them for six years. Before that I was in college—Princeton. My people are in the West. Father's a real-estate broker out there."

"Where did you meet Eve?"

"At the Fisks.' One meets every one there."

"Oh. Eve went to school with the Fisk girls. And have you been seeing much of her, Mr. Masterman? Please forgive me, but you see. I am very jealous of my daughter. I love her above all things."

"Don't blame you a bit," Masterman said with a smile. An amused light came into Lamore's eyes. He was getting to like the fellow. "Well, we've been to luncheon twice—at the Plaza—and we've been to tea dances. I've known her about a week."

"You've done a lot in so short a time. May I ask how old you are?"

"I'm thirty-one."

Lamore was aware now that the young man's hands were trembling. Could it be nervousness? It was more like ague. Masterman noticed the course of the other man's eyes.

"I'm shaking again," he laughed. "Malaria, you know. Ought to dash home for more quinine. Got it in the tropics."

"You've been in the tropics, then?"

"Yes, Cuba and the West Indies. I went down during my college vacations. I thought I'd go in for foreign banking and that sort of thing. Malaria cured me of that, but I'm not over it yet. It returns every spring and I've got to dose up on quinine."

"You're very unfortunate." Lamore got up, indicating that the interview was at an end. "I like you, Mr. Masterman, and I have no objections to your seeing Eve. I suppose I have been rather strict with her. But she'll be safe with you."

"Thank you, sir."

Lamore saw his guest to the door, helped him with his topcoat, and closed the door after him.

When he returned to the drawing-room to put out the lights, he saw Eve standing in the door. She was still in her black evening dress.

"What a dodo you are, dad!" she laughed. "You put him through a regular third degree. Will you do that to all my boy friends?"

"He's a nice chap, Eve. I only wanted to be sure of him." His eyes avoided hers, and she noticed it.

"Dad, what's biting you? Aren't I old enough to know?" There was a plea in her voice. "What are you afraid of? What are you running away from?"

Lamore tried to smile, and, taking her hands in his, he patted them gently, reassuringly.

"Don't try to kid me, dad," Eve said. "I know there is something. But what, I can't for the life of me figure out." She knitted her brows and continued to search his eyes. There was a haunted look in her father's eyes; she knew it of old.

"Tell me, dad, why are we calling ourselves 'Lamore'? Now don't shush me! You always do when I ask that. I'm Yvonne Lefebre. But why Eve Lamore?"

"My dear—please don't ask."

"It all seems so strange. I remember our house in Paris—and funny-looking Maurice. Then we took a trip to Cambodia. After that, when we got to China, we called ourselves 'Lamore' and you made me talk English all the time and forbade me to utter a word of French until I learned it all over again in school. Why, you even had passports for us under the name of Lamore. Now what's it all about?"

"You mustn't ask me, Eve."

"Are you running away from a woman?" she asked with a twinkle in her eye.

"If it were only that!" he sighed. "If it were only a woman!"

She sensed now by the tone of his voice, his eyes with haunting in them, that his trouble and fear were deep and great.

"Oughtn't I to know, dad?"

"No," he said. "It isn't necessary."

"Well, good night," she said, and, taking him in her arms, kissed him on the lips. Then she went upstairs.

Wearily he followed her, after calling Calder and telling him to lock up. Her words had disturbed thoughts he tried to keep buried in his mind.

Ratine—D'Arnet—Voiseau.

He wished she hadn't mentioned their changed names, Lefebre—Lamore. He didn't want her to be curious about it.

CHAPTER III.

OUT OF THE YEARS.

A FEW days later Andrew Lamore found a long brown envelope on his desk. It bore the address of a private detective agency—one which he had called upon to investigate Martin Masterman. He could not be too careful or credulous, he told himself.

Opening the hastily typed report, he read precisely what Masterman had told him about himself and his antecedents. In conclusion, he read aloud:

"We have every reason to believe Mr. Masterman to be the man he represents himself to be. He was known at Princeton and has been with Clare & Co. for six years. He holds a position of high trust as a junior partner. While we could not locate his parents, it is highly possible that they are away on a vacation or have moved to another address. Of course, we could not approach Mr. Masterman to check up on this point, our work being strictly confidential."

"H'm," Lamore murmured to himself, "I've learned nothing new, but my mind is more at rest. He looks all right, though I don't like his taking Eve out without my knowing it."

Another letter was from a man who signed himself Basil Walloon. The stationery was good and bore an address on Gramercy Park.

But Mr. Walloon's letter caused the blood to flow from Lamore's face. His hands shook as he read the letter a second time.

DEAR MR. LAMORE: I plan to telephone to you this morning and ask for an appointment with you at your home for later in the afternoon. I have news of great value to you and I do not think you can afford to disregard my request.

The signature of Basil Walloon was one of flourishes.

Who could it be? Lamore pondered and fretted.

Was it one of them—the three men from Cayenne?

Or was it about them? He decided the safest measure was to call in a private detective and have him posted at the door while the interview took place. Forthwith, he phoned to the private investigation bureau and ordered that a man be sent to his house after one o'clock to remain on duty till seven—or until after Mr. Basil Walloon had departed.

Eve interrupted his worries by coming into the office. She wore a chic tailored suit and a small hat which wreathed her face in a brown felt oval. She was drawing her gloves on when her father looked up at her. They kissed.

"I'm out to do some shopping, dad," she beamed cheerily. "How about some cash?"

"How much?" He was wary.

"Fifty?"

"I'll give you twenty-five, darling."

"Sold at half the price." She held out her hand, and, digging deep in his pocket, he produced the bank notes.

"I suppose you'll be seeing Masterman for lunch or tea?" he said.

"Lunch—at Pierre's. Come and join us."

"No, thanks. You're not falling in love with him, Eve?" The sudden thought put alarm into his voice. His eyes searched hers.

But she filled those blue eyes of hers with laughter. "No, I'm not falling in love with Martin."

When she had gone and he had watched her get into the gray town car and drive off, he wondered, suddenly, if that remark of hers really meant that she was already in love with Martin Masterman.

He went about his business. There were orders for Grainger to fill in his capacity of banker and broker to Lamore. There were letters to be written. And irritably he wished his secretary had not taken the day off to be ill.

The doorbell rang. Lamore sat up and wondered who it could be. There were so few callers that he could possibly expect. He heard Calder go to the door, and then came a low, murmured exchange of voices.

Calder opened the office door. "There is a Mr. Walloon to see you, sir."

Lamore caught the arms of his chair and choked the gasp of surprise that might betray his agitation to the butler.

"Show him in."

As the butler turned to address Mr. Walloon, Lamore quickly drew out a revolver from the top drawer of his desk and jammed it into his left coat pocket, holding his hand on it.

"Mr. Walloon," Calder announced.

A tall, spare individual, smartly if a trifle loudly dressed, strode into the room, a cane caught in one hand, the other outstretched for Lamore's. They shook hands and Lamore studied the masklike face, cold and enigmatical. It was, moreover, a familiar face.

"You don't remember me?" the newcomer said with a smile.

"I'm sure I don't—— Maurice!"

"Maurice, the butler—now Basil Walloon, gentleman of leisure."

"But you were to phone?" Lamore sat down weakly, stricken. Here before him was the first man to penetrate his secret—his new life. Only Grainger had known, and Grainger could be trusted.

"I thought you might recognize my voice and refuse to see me." Walloon spoke suavely, as though sure of himself and confident of the success of his mission.

"How—how did you find me out, Maurice?"

"I didn't, Mr. Lefebre. I wasn't interested in finding out. But I saw you the other day on the street, and recognizing you—oh, how could I forget M'sieu' Lefebre?—I decided to call on

you, to plead with you to help me out of a difficulty."

"But what are you doing in America, Maurice?"

"Seeking my fortune, m'sieu'. I had a little trouble in France and decided conditions were better here in New York."

Lamore guessed what that trouble was. The prison pallor on Walloon's cheeks was obvious.

"How can I help you, Maurice? I shall be glad to do anything for old times' sake. And I must ask you to keep in confidence my true identity."

Walloon sat down and stretched his legs. Lamore sensed an intention to be discourteous on the part of this former servant.

"What can you do for me, M'sieu' Lefebre?"

"Please—not that name, here."

"Ah, yes—Mr. Lamore. Well, you can help me a great deal. I'm broke and I need some money. That's coming to the point, M'sieu'—Mr. Lamore."

"Why, of course, I'll help you out." Lamore reached into a desk drawer and drew out a check book.

"How much shall it be, Maurice?"

"Fifty thousand dollars."

The two men sought each other's eyes. Walloon's were arrogant; Lamore's cowering. The latter felt sick at heart. He understood the purpose of the visit now.

Blackmail!

To be blackmailed by a servant—one's former butler! Lamore cursed himself for not rising up and throwing the insolent swine out of his house. But he dare not do that.

"That's a lot of money, Maurice!" His voice wavered.

"You can afford it."

"And if I refuse?" Lamore was curious. He wanted to be fully aware of the full extent of the man's threat.

"I shall make your true identity known. The tabloids, m'sieu', will be interested—and perhaps curious. The whole world will know who Andrew Lamore really is—Andre Lefebre, the Parisian banker who is supposedly buried in Cambodia. *Tiens!* It is very funny, this situation."

"The whole world——" Lamore echoed.

"Yes, the whole world, m'sieu'. It will even penetrate Cayenne and the hiding places of those who have escaped from Cayenne, the Devil's Island colony."

Lamore clapped a hand over his mouth to kill a scream.

"Yes, if the world knows who you really are, then they must know, too—Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau. And, m'sieu', you do not wish that, I think?"

"No—no!"

"It was very clever of you, m'sieu'—liquidating your interests and making a false will with Walter Grainger as an accomplice. You bequeath your money to Andrew Lamore and you *are* Andrew Lamore. Only two people know—you and Grainger, *n'est-ce pas?* And, perhaps, Mademoiselle Yvonne? Ah, you are frightened!"

"For God's sake, Maurice, you must keep silent!" Lamore mopped his moist brow with the back of his hand. His heart was racing at an incredible speed.

"Of course, I'll keep quiet—providing——" He nodded to the check book.

"I can't give you a check for fifty thousand dollars. The bank might become suspicious."

"True. And I should prefer the sum in cash, m'sieu', if it would not be too much trouble?"

"Very well. Give me time, Maurice. It takes time to raise that amount of money in cash."

"Vrainent, I can wait—till to-morrow morning, m'sieu'."

"Merci bien!" And Lamore started at those words coming from his own lips—the first French words to come from them in years.

"In the meantime, I should like two hundred, m'sieu'." Walloon spoke indifferently but nevertheless firmly.

"I haven't that much with me, Maurice. But you'll take a check?"

"Why not?"

As a matter of habit, Lamore began writing his check by making the notation: "No. 567. January 10, 1930. Basil Walloon, two hundred dollars." And then he made out the check.

Walloon took the strip of paper and, folding it thoughtfully, tucked it away in his pocket. "And now, m'sieu', no tricks. You have my address and telephone number on the note I sent to you. Phone me if you feel defiant—and I'll refresh your memory about what you did to Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau."

"Good-by," Lamore said, ignoring the blackmailer's outstretched hand. "Call me in the morning."

He rang for Calder, and the butler showed the blackmailing butler out to the door.

"Calder!" Lamore called. "Calder, come in here, please."

"Yes, sir?"

"Never let that man in this house again without direct permission from me. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Thank you."

So his secret was known! He leaned forward and held his head in his hands. Tears welled up in his eyes. There seemed to be no escaping those three—the three from Cayenne. Was it retribution?

He had betrayed them—caused them to be transported overseas—and they were innocent. Their alibis had been poor, and the insurance company needed to be convinced by a conviction. With the new money from the insurance Lamore had gotten his start in the banking world—and at the cost of those three men, his luck had changed for the better. He became a money king in Paris!

But that was eleven-twelve years ago. There was nothing he could do for those men when he became rich. They would spurn any offer he made—and wreak their vengeance on him. He had sent them to the only hell on earth—and they had escaped from it—looking for him who sent them to Cayenne—Devil's Island.

He lifted the telephone receiver and gave Grainger's number. The mention of his, Lamore's, name put him through to the banker himself.

"Hello, Walter?"

"Yes, Andrew?"

"I need some money."

The voice at the other end grew silent.

"How much?" it asked at length.

"Not much—only fifty thousand!" Lamore laughed to make light of his request. He knew Grainger would have to hustle to raise that much in ready cash by to-morrow morning.

Again Grainger's voice was silent. Then he coughed. "Andrew, I'm afraid it can't be done. Things are in a tangle down here—your affairs and mine—on account of what the market did in October. How soon do you want the money, anyway?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Impossible! Couldn't give it to you in less than a week."

"But Walter—it's most important!"

"It can wait a week."

"But it can't! I'll come down and explain to you, Walter!"

"Come down to-morrow," Grainger said. "I'm leaving the office now to be gone for the rest of the day. In the morning, then. So long."

Well, Lamore consoled himself, there were other sources from which he could get fifty thousand dollars. He prided himself on the precautions he had taken for a second get-away—if those three from Cayenne ever turned up. There was a chair in the drawing-room—the one Masterman had sat in only last

night—that held one hundred thousand dollars in thousand-dollar bills. That was his nest egg—and Eve's—for a get-away. He could borrow fifty thousand from that and replace it next week when Grainger raised the cash. He had sewn the money into the chair, and he could take it out at a moment's notice.

His hand fell into his left coat pocket and touched something cold—the revolver. He took it out. He had taken it up as a means of defense against an enemy—against Ratine, D'Arnet or Voiseau—if either had been Mr. Basil Walloon.

His eyes narrowed.

Walloon! Maurice! A blackmailing butler!

Could Walloon be trusted to keep the secret of Andre Lefebre, who fled from his own name that his life might be spared—that his daughter's might be spared, too? He doubted it. Blackmailers always come back for more. It might be a question of another fifty thousand later. Walloon knew he feared death and would pay—because he could pay.

But inadvertently—in his cups, perhaps—Walloon might betray him. Walloon was not a safe person. He must be silenced. And there was only one way. He looked again at the gun in his hand.

It would be easy to fool the police. He was a man of wealth. He would be believed. Walloon entered his house and threatened his life. Walloon demanded money at the point of this revolver—a gun that had been brought from France. Sort of a daylight hold-up in a rich man's mansion. He could see the headlines. There would be a struggle in his story for the police—and Walloon fell with a few bullets in him.

Walloon, dead, would never betray Andre Lefebre.

Slowly Lamore sat down and took up the telephone receiver. He gave the number on Walloon's notepaper, and while he waited, he put the note in an ashtray and set a match to it. It was flaming when Walloon answered.

"Walloon? Lamore speaking!"

"*Oui,* monsieur?"

"Come up to-night around ten. I'll let you in. I have what you asked for."

"*Je vous remercie.* M'sieu' is very discreet."

Lamore hung up, and for a considerable time continued to stare at the revolver in his hand.

CHAPTER IV.

CAYENNE!

WHY, Martin! What are you doing on my doorstep?" Eve's voice was full of luscious laughter—and a sudden happiness. She had just gotten out of a taxicab and was standing at the foot of the steps leading up to the front door of the Lamore residence.

"I—I've just come to see if you were in?" Masterman stammered. He was uneasy, restless.

"At eleven o'clock at night?"

"I thought you might be up."

"Well, didn't Calder let you in to wait for me?"

"There doesn't seem to be anybody in the house."

"Why, dad must be in somewhere. Perhaps he didn't hear the bell. But some of the servants are in, I'm sure. Come along. I'll give you some of dad's port." She began to unlock the door. "I've been to a movie—Greta Garbo—with Eleanor Fisk. It was quite good."

She was not aware as she threw the door open that Masterman squared his shoulders as though bracing himself. The hallway was in darkness but her accustomed finger found the switch and flooded it with light.

"I suppose you're going to invite me to the Farnsworth dance to-morrow night, Martin?"

"You—you bet—I am."

"What on earth is wrong with you? You're stammering."

"Malaria," he smiled. "It gets my voice like that."

They entered the drawing-room, which Eve lighted. Then she rang for Calder.

"It's great to have dad giving me free rein. I can go and come as I please—and as late as I want. He likes you, too, Martin."

"I'm glad—of that."

"Your malaria is funny. Where on earth can Calder be? He's usually like a jack-in-the-box when you ring. You just press the button and there he is."

"Perhaps he's out."

"But this isn't his night. Come along into the dining room and we'll hunt that port ourselves."

Eve took his hand and led him down the hall, parallel to the stairs, to the dining room, which was in back of the drawing-room. This chamber was done in walnut, and fine carved Veronese chairs stood around a long refectory table.

"It's funny there's no one about," Eve said with surprise. "Why, I don't know what I'd do without servants. I'm so used to them, just as so many people are not used to them. Here's the port."

She was at a huge serving table with cupboards beneath. From one of them she had taken a bottle.

"Now, I've no idea where the glasses are kept."

"They ought to be in the pantry," Masterman said. He started for what was obviously the pantry door. Darkness was beyond.

"That's funny," Eve mused. "There's always a light in the pantry. And look, the kitchen's dark. The servants always sit down here and gossip. They must all be out."

Glasses were found, and while Eve poured herself a sip of the rare port, Masterman got a glassful. They took the glasses back to the dining room and sat down at the table. Eve toyed with her glass and looked at Masterman.

"I'm awfully glad you looked me up to-night," she said. Her eyes said more.

"I wanted to be sure you could go to-morrow night. The Farnsworth dances are a lot of fun."

"You don't know what it means to me to be able to go out now—like any other girl in New York."

"I'll bet it was tough being cooped up in this big house."

"It was worse than at the convent. There, at least, I had lots of friends."

Some one was at the front door. It opened and closed. They both went out into the hall and saw Calder come in. He was not in livery.

"Calder! Where have you been?" Eve cried to him. "Seeing your best girl?"

"No, Miss Eve. Mr. Lamore told all of us to take the night off. He said he was going out himself and there was no need for us to be back before eleven, when you were expected. I'm sorry I'm a bit late."

"That's all right, Calder. We found the port and glasses all by ourselves. Where did dad go, do you know?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. He went out about eight thirty, Miss Eve, and we all left at nine." Calder seemed self-conscious in mufti and hankering to get upstairs and put on clothes becoming a butler.

When he went to the back of the house, Eve took Masterman into the drawing-room. She sat down at the piano and began to play—bits of Chopin, Debussy, Bach. He lighted cigarette after cigarette nervously and watched her with a pained expression.

"Oh, you don't like my playing," she said, and stopped with a bang.

"But I do!" he protested. "It was beautiful—you play awfully well."

"I could tell by the expression on

your face that you were bored." She laughed then and took his hand. "You business men are all alike. You're only interested in business—and things. Come along and I'll interest you."

She started out of the drawing-room for the closed door on the other side of the hall.

"Where are you going?" he cried, blanching.

"I'm going to show you father's office. It's as good as they have down on Wall Street!"

"Wait!"

But she had thrown open the door and turned on the light.

Masterman heard her shriek. He ran forward to her and caught her as she fell in a dead faint.

There on the floor, beside an overturned desk chair, was the body of Andrew Lamore.

A trickle of blood, now coagulated, ran from a round hole in the center of his forehead. His eyes were half open and only the whites of them visible.

Masterman gathered the girl up in his arms and carried her out into the hall. Calder, who had heard her cry, was coming down the front stairs, buttoning up his livery coat and vest. Two women, maids, appeared in the back of the hall, startled expressions on their faces. They had just come in.

"Something has happened to Mr. Lamore," Masterman snapped. "Show me up to Miss Eve's room. Calder, phone for the nearest physician and the police. You women come up with me. Get the smelling salts, too."

Masterman climbed the stairs slowly, though he carried Eve's weight easily. The two maids, mumbling excitedly, followed. They showed him Eve's room, a very simple boudoir as unpretentious as the girl herself. He laid her on her bed and turned to the maids.

"Revive her and keep her up here," he ordered. "I'll send the doctor up when he gets here."

"Glory be! The poor lamb!"

"Heaven be praised! What happened, mister?"

"Mr. Lamore is dead. That's all now. Look to Miss Lamore."

He left the room and ran down the stairs. Calder was standing at the front door waiting for the police. His face was white and he trembled perceptibly.

Masterman made his way to the millionaire's office, and, standing over the body, studied it closely. Why, the man had a topcoat on! He hadn't noticed that before. He must have come in from the street to his death. An intruder caught on the premises!

"What's this I hear?" a voice boomed at the door. "I'm Inspector Cadigan. This here is Sergeant Kildane. Where's the body of Mr. Lamore?"

"In there, sir—in the office."

Two huge men entered the room and stared dumbly at Masterman for a moment. One was bald-headed and one had a thick black mustache.

"Who're you?" The bald-headed one asked. He was Cadigan.

"I'm Martin Masterman. I came in with Miss Eve Lamore and she found the body. I've sent for a doctor, too, and taken her up to her room."

"Yeah?" Kildane said.

"I'll phone the medical examiner, Killie," Cadigan said. "Look him over and see what's what."

While the bald-headed inspector phoned the medical examiner, who is the coroner in New York, Kildane bent over the body and ran his hands expertly through all the pockets. The result of his search was a revolver.

"Give a look, inspector." He held up the weapon—by the muzzle, so as not to mar any finger prints on the butt or barrel.

"I suppose he committed suicide and stuck the gun back in his pocket," Cadigan sneered. "Count the bullets."

Kildane did so. "All here—every chamber loaded."

"That's a hot one! What do you make of it, Masterman?"

"I think Mr. Lamore must have come home and found somebody—a burglar, perhaps—lurking in the house. The intruder shot him."

"Yeah?" Kildane growled. "What time did you two get in?"

"About eleven, I think. I wasn't with Miss Lamore. She was at the movies and I met her on the steps after I'd been ringing the doorbell for some time. We learned later all the servants had been given a few hours off by Mr. Lamore."

"Oh, so you met her on the doorstep, eh?" Kildane said, suspiciously. "That's interesting—very, very interesting."

"Shut up, Killie, and smell around the room," Cadigan barked. "Look for marks. God, this'll be the biggest case in years—if we don't make a pinch. A murder mystery always ruins a cop—if there's no pinch!"

"That may not be hard," Kildane grunted, looking at Masterman. "You say this door was closed?"

"Yes, Miss Lamore opened it to show me the office. She thought it would interest me—a business man's workshop in a millionaire's mansion." Masterman spoke easily, readily.

"I bet it was a surprise," Kildane said.

"H'm, windows closed and locked on the inside. Whoever did it used the front door, I bet," Cadigan said. "Sort of a walk-in-walk-out killer. D'ye know if the old man kept any coin in the house?"

"I don't know anything about his affairs," Masterman said. "I met him for the first time three nights ago. And I haven't seen him since."

Cadigan began going over the papers on Lamore's desk. He came upon the private detective agency's report on Masterman. He read it thoroughly and then tossed it over to the young man.

Masterman glanced at it and reddened.

"Guess the old boy is particular who he knows—and lets go around with his daughter," the inspector grinned. But his eyes were boring Masterman's.

"I guess so," the young man said. "He was rather odd."

"Here's something," Kildane said eagerly. From beneath the dead man's head he pulled a long piece of paper. He and the inspector read it together, aloud:

We find you out, Andre Lefebre. We make good our promise. Maybe to-morrow, maybe next week. THREE MEN FROM CAYENNE.

"Where's Cayenne, Killie?"

"H'm, I think it's in Oklahoma. It sounds Western. No, it's in Montana. That's where they hold the real rodeos and round-ups."

"You're full of soup. That's Cheyenne. Do you know where it is, Masterman?"

Masterman moistened his lips and spoke up: "There's a Cayenne in French Guiana—that's on the north coast of South America. It's a prison colony where the French send murderers, thieves and the like."

Inspector Cadigan stared at him and his mouth fell open. Kildane uttered a low whistle.

"Dirty work!" he said. "I read about them French jailbirds. If one of them turned this, we've about as much chance of a pinch as I have of being commissioner."

"You said it!" was Cadigan's only comment.

"And whoever these three guys are," Kildane growled, "they sure kept their promise—and ahead of time, too."

"It's rather odd that they should leave that note, isn't it?" Masterman suggested.

"You never can tell," Cadigan remarked, "what these French crooks will do!"

CHAPTER V.

RATINE!

CADIGAN continued to busy himself with rummaging through the desk. At last he came upon the check book. He opened it and noted the last entries on the stubs.

"Say, Killie, this is news!" he cried. "The old man used to send checks to pay the household expenses. All the stubs have tradesmen's names on them except the last, and it's the biggest. It was made out to-day to Basil Walloon and it was for two yards!"

"A guy with a name like that is harmless," Kildane chuckled. "Basil Walloon—Walloon—— Say!" His eyes opened wide. "Say! He's done time, that guy has. I remember the name because it's a funny one. Basil Walloon, see? He went up about five or six years ago for extortion—blackmail. Say!"

He looked down at the body of Andrew Lamore.

"So it was blackmail!" Cadigan muttered, looking at the body, too. "The old guy refused to come across and probably threatened to squeal. So the Basil boy bumped him on the spot."

"In a nutshell, inspector. You've got it. All we got to do is get a line on this Basil."

Cadigan continued his search of the desk. It revealed nothing else. Then he looked at the phone and saw that it was not a dial telephone.

"I've an idea," he said. He took up the receiver, called the operator, told her who he was, and said: "Can you check up on the calls made from this number to-day? You can! Go ahead and ring me back!" Hanging up and turning to the sergeant, he said: "That might help a bit."

He then telephoned to the station house.

"McGinty, send out an alarm to the boys on beat, specially near the Lamore house on Sixty-sixth Street. Suspicious characters and the like. The old guy's been murdered and there'll be hell to pay when the newspapers get it."

That meant that the telephonist in the station house would ring every police telephone in the precinct. The little green box would buzz in the night, and when the patrolman on beat heard it he would call the station and get his instructions.

Kildane was toying with the revolver when his nose twitched. He peered into the muzzle and then smelled it.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he cried. "It's been shot—and recently, too. I didn't look into the explosion chamber on account of being afraid to put my prints on the barrel."

"Break the gun and make sure, Killie."

The sergeant did so and found that one shell had been exploded.

"It's a .38, inspector. That hole in Lamore's head looks bigger."

"The m. e. will give us that dope when he comes."

"Do I have to wait for him, inspector?" Masterman asked.

"Naw. Give Killie the dope on what you did and saw and your name and address. Then you can beat it."

Masterman and Kildane went into the drawing-room, made themselves comfortable, and the former began his account of the night's events so far as he was concerned. He wound up by giving his address as the Fitchton Hotel on Lexington Avenue.

But before leaving the house, he went upstairs and knocked on the door of Eve's room. A maid admitted him.

Eve was sitting up in bed, wearing a soft and lovely negligee. Her eyes were red from weeping and she seemed dazed. Masterman moved close to the bed.

"Eve."

"Martin! Oh, isn't it too horrible for words! Poor dad!" She began to cry again, covering her face with a dainty handkerchief.

"The police are downstairs now."

"But who—who could have done such a horrible thing?"

"A burglar, perhaps—surprised by your father coming home."

"He was such a good man! What a terrible death for poor dad!"

"Is there anything I can do for you, Eve?"

"No, Martin. But phone me in the morning—early. I don't want to be alone. And I'll need some one to see me through all this."

"I'll phone early. Don't worry. Try to get some sleep. Take a sedative, if necessary. The doctor will give you one when he comes."

"You're a dear boy, to be so kind to me."

"It's all right. Good night, Eve."

She waved to him as he went to the door. The doctor came in as he went out of the room.

Masterman started for the head of the stairs. So Eve had no idea of what was in her father's life—the blackmailer, the Three Men from Cayenne. It was silly not to straighten such things out. She might hold a lead to some valuable clew. He would discuss it in the morning with her.

There was a commotion in the hall below. A policeman was dragging a recalcitrant individual into the house. Cadigan and Kildane were in the hall now, bellowing and helping the cop. The bend in the stairs hid Masterman from them.

"I caught him sneaking out of the basement of the next house," the cop gasped proudly. "You said to bring in all suspicious characters. Well, here's a beaut!"

"What's your name?" Cadigan demanded of the prisoner.

"None of your business!" the man cried in a high-pitched voice. Masterman frowned as he listened to it.

There was the sound of a blow. The man whined.

"Take him in the parlor!" the inspector snapped.

The group of men left the hall. But from where he was, Masterman could hear their voices plainly.

"Now. Your name?"

"Pete Cordan. I live at the Mills Hotel."

"Frisk him, Killie. Now, what were you doing in that basement?"

"I went to look in the garbage cans. I was hungry."

"There are no garbage cans in that basement, inspector," the cop explained. "I think he came through the house. It's an empty house. He could have gotten from this house through the skylights."

"It's a lie—a bloody lie!" the prisoner shouted. "You can't frame me!"

Again there was the sound of a blow. "Keep a civil tongue in you or I'll break your face!" That was Cadigan. "Find anything, Killie?"

"Nope, just the usual junk and ten cents. But wait a minute, there's something in the lining of his coat."

"Leave me alone!" the man screamed.

"Got a knife, inspector?"

"Sure, here it is."

There was a silence. Then came that same low whistle of surprise from Kildane.

"What is it, Kildane?"

"One of those identity cards that the Paris police give out. It's dated 1917 and it's made out to Claude Ratine. So your name's Ratine and not Pete Cordan!"

"It's a lie!" But the man's voice was weakening.

"Funny how these French never give up their papers. They hold on to 'em till they die," Cadigan laughed. "Well, Monsewer Ratine, have you ever heard of Cayenne?"

There was a pause. Masterman wondered what expression was on the prisoner's face.

"Well, back you go, Ratine! Back to

Cayenne for yours!" Cadigan was sneering. But he was also trying to move the man to some outburst. His ruse worked.

"Please, if I tell——"

"No promises! Who are you?"

"I—I am Claude Ratine. I was pardoned and I came to United States to work in hotels as a waiter. I learn English very well and make a good living until I lose the job. Now I look for another, but I'm hungry so I look in basement next door."

"So you were in Cayenne! Who are the Three Men from Cayenne? What's that mean?"

Again that ominous pause.

"I do not know, mister. I was in Cayenne for a year, but I never heard of those three men."

"Well, we've got a surprise for you, Claude. Pick your feet up and step this way." Cadigan was merry now. His voice approached the drawing-room door. He seemed to think he had the solution of the murder bottled up in the Frenchman.

"I can go now?" Ratine asked eagerly. "You are satisfied?"

Masterman heard the group come into the lower hall. The office door was opened. There was a scuffle as though Ratine had to be pushed ahead.

There was a moment of silence.

Then came a scream—the cry of a trapped beast, shrill and pitiful.

"Nom de Dieu!" Ratine yelled. *"C'est Lefebre!"*

There was a thump on the floor as if some one had fallen. Excited voices followed.

"Hell!" Cadigan growled, "the fool's fainted. Get some water!"

Some one went to the back of the house in search of water.

"He recognized that bird as Lefebre," Kildane pointed out. "Hear him use that name?"

"Yes. And the sight scared daylights out of him!"

The water bearer returned. The door was kicked shut and only muffled voices could be heard by Masterman on the stairs. He quickly descended, opened the front door noiselessly, and gained the sidewalk, breathing heavily. He filled his lungs with the sweet spring air and walked toward Lexington Avenue, where he hailed a cruising taxi.

"The Fitchton," he instructed the driver and got in.

And when he settled back in the cushions, he reflected on how kind or unkind Lady Luck is to some people.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST CLEW.

IT was nearing ten o'clock the next morning when Masterman alighted from a taxi in front of the Lamore house. The street was filled with reporters, policemen trying to keep order, and the morbidly curious. These latter —men, women, nursemaids and children—stared interestedly at the house where Death had visited, and chatted in small groups.

"I'm here to see Miss Lamore," Masterman told the policeman at the door. "Inspector Cadigan knows me."

"All right. Go in and see the inspector first."

Masterman found Cadigan seated in the dining room making away with the remnants of what was a hearty breakfast. Three other men were at the table, their derbies on their heads indicating their association with him. The inspector looked tired and weary and his eyes were bloodshot.

"Hello, Masterman," he greeted. "I heard the girl wants to see you. I've been up all night and now there's happy hell to pay."

"What happened, inspector?"

"I put that Ratine—— Oh, you didn't know. We got a suspect last night coming out of the basement next door. He was from Devil's Island

where the French have a penal colony. Was sent there twelve years ago for robbery and he said he was pardoned. He collapsed after seeing the body and yelling the name 'Lefebre.' But we couldn't get anything out of him after that, so I sent him over to the house with Kildane.

"This morning he blows, with the aid of an accomplice. I was going to check up with the French consulate this morning. I did, and shortly after nine a man goes to the house and satisfies all concerned that he's the consul general. He spoke French, and when I got there he sold me, too. He assured us that Ratine was all right, had been pardoned and was a little batty, liked to hide in garbage cans and all like that.

"So we had nothing on Ratine and we let him go. Then the real consul general calls up. You can imagine what a sucker it made out of me. It seems that some bird was hanging out in the consulate, waiting for the boss, and he hears the telephone operator say the police wanted the boss about a Frenchman picked up by them near the Lamore house. So he impersonates the consul and pulls the wool over me."

"That was a tough break, inspector." Masterman was sympathetic.

"And worse yet, we find a chair in the parlor here with its back ripped out. Evidently the dead man kept ready money hidden in it, for there was still a thousand-dollar bill tucked away in the stuffings. How the murderer knew where to go is more than I can fathom."

"It must have been some one who had an idea what was in the house," Masterman commented aimlessly. "But thieves rip up furniture, don't they? I've read about it."

"Oh, yes, but not one chair."

"The thief might have made a lucky guess."

"I doubt it, Masterman. You can go up and see Miss Lamore. My men and the fingerprint crowd have been over the houses. By the way, when you come down let us have your prints. We want to identify all the prints we find."

"Surely. I'll see you when I come down."

Masterman left the room, conscious that the eyes of the four at the table were on him, studying him, analyzing him. He went up the stairs and found a maid sitting on a chair outside Eve's room.

"Oh, Mr. Masterman, I'm glad you've come," she said. "The poor lamb hasn't slept a wink all night. What with the police snooping around and taking finger prints and asking questions, she's scared out of her wits. The undertakers have her father. Mr. Grainger came up when he read about it in the morning papers and is making arrangements for the funeral. Try to cheer her up, Mr. Masterman."

He thanked the woman, and, after knocking on the door, was invited to come in. Eve was up, dressed in a black street dress. She was sitting by the window, her eyes red and tired, when he went toward her.

"Oh, Martin, I'm so glad to see you. I've been frightened."

"About what, Eve?" He sat down in a chair opposite her.

"About what happened. It's all so mysterious. Why, I'm even afraid to go out of my room."

"But why? It was probably a burglar —and he's gone."

"No, I'm afraid it wasn't a burglar. Dad was afraid of something—some one, perhaps—but I don't know what. He would never tell me."

"Eve, what do you suspect? You trust me? You'll tell me?"

"Of course I trust you, Martin. And I'll tell you all I know. But don't—please don't tell the police yet."

And she told Masterman of her true identity—that she was Yvonne Lefebre, how she had lived in Paris as a little girl, her father's sudden and strange

malady and their flight to Cambodia, how her father bribed a man there to say that he and she had been killed in an automobile accident, how they went to China and subsequently to America on a passport bearing the name of Lamore, how she was forbidden to speak a word of her native tongue and how she had to live as an American girl—Eve Lamore. That was all she knew save that her father was always in fear of something. He never went out, always had the house bolted at night, and watched over her like a guard—fearing for her, too.

"That helps a lot," Masterman said. "It clears up a point or two. There was a note found in the office by the police. It was a threat against Andre Lefebre and was signed 'Three Men from Cayenne.' Cayenne is in French Guiana where the French keep convicts until they rot to death under the tropical sun."

"'Three Men from Cayenne'? It means nothing to me, Martin."

"It was rather odd that, if the threateners killed your father, they should leave their warning beneath the body."

"Martin, I want you to help me. Help me find the murderer, without—without letting any disgrace fall upon dad—if there was anything in his life that he had cause to be ashamed of. You know I dearly loved him. Help me to get at the truth—and keep it from the world, if it is an ugly truth."

"I will, gladly. " He took her hand and pressed it. "I'll hunt up the French papers of eleven and twelve years ago and see what I can find about your father. By the way, do you know anybody by the name of Ratine—Claude Ratine?"

"No, I don't."

"Or Basil Walloon?"

She shook her head in negation.

"Martin, do you believe in instinct—hunches?"

He nodded.

"Well," she said, I believe—I feel—that some one was in my room last night—before I came in. I don't know why I say that—but I sort of felt a presence when I first came in—when you carried me in."

"Perhaps a servant was turning down the bed."

"No, it was a strange presence."

"H'm. Have you missed anything or noticed anything unusual, Eve?"

"No—I looked over my things this morning. Nothing is missing."

"Let me look about? I may see something."

"Go ahead. Look anywhere you like."

Together, they walked around the room, noticing the books and toilet articles on tables and dressing mirrors. They looked into closets and counted dresses and wraps and hats. Nothing was missing or out of place. Then they got down on their hands and knees and looked under chairs, and finally under the bed, which was a low one, its counterpane coming to the floor on either side and at the foot.

"I see something white under there, Eve."

"So do I."

They pushed the bed aside and Masterman picked up a piece of paper. It read:

Lefebre, I want the money by noon to-morrow. You can send it to Basil Walloon, 103 Gramercy Park North.

"Why," Eve exclaimed, "that's written on dad's notepaper."

"That's odd—a threat on such paper. I'll show this to Cadigan. No use keeping it from him. He's looking for Walloon. Your father paid him two hundred dollars yesterday."

"But why?"

"The police—we'd all like to know. It might clear matters up."

"Then I was right, Martin. There *was* some one in my room last night—

before we entered the house. Oh, it's terrible!"

"Funny this paper should be under the bed. Probably it fell from a pocket and was inadvertently kicked under the bed. Or—or it might have been planted there."

Eve was baffled. "But why? For what purpose?"

"Possibly to throw suspicion on Walloon. Or Walloon might have been here to see your father or leave a note to scare him."

"Dad seemed to feel that the danger that threatened him threatened me, too. He never said so, but I knew it—felt it."

"Now stop worrying. What are you doing to-day?"

"The dressmaker is coming with mourning wear. Mr. Grainger is coming back to tell me what arrangements he made for the—the funeral!" Here Eve broke down and wept. "Poor dad. He was so kind—so good to me!"

Masterman wanted to take her in his arms and comfort her, but he thought better of so bold a move.

"I'm sorry, too, for what has happened. I must see Cadigan now. Can I see you again this afternoon?"

"Yes—please."

Masterman left the room, went downstairs and found Cadigan pacing the floor of the office. The other three detectives watched him doubtfully, helplessly. His head was bowed.

"Oh, Masterman," the inspector said, looking up at him. "Grogan, take his prints now."

Grogan stepped forward and produced an inking pad. From his pocket, he took the police department's finger-print form, patterned after those originated by the famous Bertillon, the father of that method of identification. Masterman submitted to have both hands inked and the finger tips pressed on the form.

"By the way, inspector," he said during the process, "what did you find in the way of telephone numbers?"

Cadigan looked at him sharply. "You're a memory, Masterman. They produced nothing. Tradesmen and one silent number. I called them myself. The silent number is in the name of John Barns on Gramercy Park."

"At No. 103 Gramercy Park North?"

The inspector's mouth opened. "How did you know?"

Masterman reached into his pocket and drew out the note he found in Eve's bedroom. Cadigan read it again and again. Then he glared at Masterman.

"Where did you find this?"

He was told the circumstances under which it was found.

Cadigan sat down at the telephone and called headquarters.

"I want McGuire. McGuire? Send out a general alarm for Basil Walloon of No. 103 Gramercy Park North. Have the house covered. Keep it from the newspapers, too. I'm on my way down there." When he hung up, he added: "Grogan, you come with me. You two stay here."

He got up, rummaged around for his hat and coat and found them.

"May I come along?" Masterman asked. "I'm interested."

For a moment Cadigan's eyes searched the other's. "Sure, come along. You've got sharp eyes." Contemptuously he sneered at the other detectives, who, in their search of the house, had overlooked the paper containing the address of a man the police desired for an interview.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HANDKERCHIEF.

MASTERMAN, Cadigan and Grogan left the house, ignoring the inquisitive eyes of the crowd outside, walked to the corner of Lexington Avenue, and hailed a taxi. As they were climbing into it, the inspector having already given the Gramercy Park ad-

dress to the driver, three reporters caught him by the coattails.

"Inspector, what have you got for us?"

"Where are you going now?"

"Is that man with you under arrest?"

The last question referred to Masterman.

"Nothing for you now, boys," Cadigan growled over his shoulder. "May have something later in the afternoon. We're expecting to make an arrest within the next twenty-four hours."

"The same old hooey!" one of the reporters laughed. "Best o' luck, inspector!"

The taxi started down Lexington Avenue, which spills into Gramercy Park some two miles away. Cadigan bit off the end of a cigar and lighted up. Masterman offered Grogan a cigarette and took one himself. The smoking seemed to calm the nerves of the two policemen.

"It's hell—just plain hell," Cadigan said disgustedly. "We've got so damned little to go on. Oh, I know about the Walloon address, but I don't expect to find that baby in. But what else have we? Walloon's name on a check stub for two hundred dollars. And the suspicion that he was in the house—in the girl's bedroom—early last night. But why?

"On the other hand, he might not have been there. The note might have been planted. Then there is the other threat signed by 'Three Men from Cayenne.' That was found under the body. But if one of those three turned the trick, why leave that threat—which might turn into a clew proving a motive?

"And there was the .38 found in Lamore's pocket with one shell exploded. I forget to tell you, Masterman, that the m. e. found a .38 piece of lead in the old man's head. We don't know if it's from the same gun or not—but I've a hunch that it is. Pretty smart of the killer, to stick the gun in Lamore's pocket."

Masterman spoke up. "It looks as if the killer wants to give the police a few red herrings for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

"Why, though? Why?"

"Perhaps the killing has more behind it—more than an intruder cornered, a man who came to steal and stayed to wrest the gun from Lamore and kill him. Perhaps the murderer knew all about Lamore having that gun."

"You think that the killer knew Lamore pretty well?"

"Fairly well. I shouldn't be surprised to learn that."

Cadigan cogitated over this a while and then went on. "And there's the funny business of Ratine. He was in Devil's Island by his own admission—and his French identity papers proved it. He did a swoon when he lamped Lamore's face and yelled, 'Lefebre!' But we got nothing else out of him, and this morning he vamosed. But there's a general alarm out for him. He won't get far. And we have a description of the other faker, too."

"What did he look like, inspector?"

"He was tall and gaunt. French looking and bald-headed. I'd say he was about forty or forty-five. And smart, too. But I didn't like his snake's eyes."

"Speak with an accent?"

"A little one—but he had a fine command of the king's English, too." Cadigan winced as he thought of the thing he had done—letting Ratine off scot-free. "And there's the chair in the parlor with its back ripped out. It had money in it because we found a grand note still sticking in the stuffings. The killer knew where to go for that ready cash. And I can't make out why Lamore sent the servants out. He never did that before. Nor do we know where he went when he went out."

"Perhaps he was meeting some one at the house," Masterman ventured, "and didn't want the servants to see him —or her."

"Not a bad hunch, Masterman. Not a bad one! Do you know of any women in the old boy's life?"

"No. I knew him so slightly. Only met him once, as I told you."

Cadigan turned and looked at Masterman. "That was odd, too, his checking up on you through a private detective agency."

"It *was* odd—but perhaps he was cautious." Masterman avoided the inspector's glance and flicked his cigarette ashes on the floor.

The taxi stopped. They were in Gramercy Park in front of a remodeled private house. There was a sign, "Apartments To Let," over the door.

They got out, paid the driver—Cadigan did that—and entered the house. There was no name of Walloon on the doorbells, and there was no hall service, so they rang for the superintendent. A Mr. Rauss appeared from the basement door.

"We're looking for a Mr. Walloon," Cadigan said after he introduced himself. "I don't see his name on the bells."

"Oh, he was staying in Mr. Barns' apartment," the superintendent explained. "Mr. Barns is in Europe and I sublet the place for him. But Mr. Walloon has gone away, too—for a few days, he said. He had his bags with him, but he left his trunk."

"Take us up to his place," Cadigan ordered. "We'll look around."

For a moment Rauss hesitated, and then, remembering he was dealing with the police, he opened the front door and led them up two flights of stairs, stopping before the door of a rear apartment. With a pass key, he admitted them, standing in the door, suspiciously watching every move they made.

The apartment was a tastefully furnished one, but was now in a state of great disorder. There were whisky bottles and glasses on the tables, clothes strewn about, books on the floor and a stuffiness induced by closed windows.

"Looks like a get-away," Cadigan remarked. "And the trunk isn't even locked." He set Grogan to work going over the contents of the trunk. "And when you're through, get a few prints, Grogan. We have eight different sets of finger prints, Masterman. Four of them haven't been identified yet. I think one might be Ratine's, but we didn't print his tips in time."

Masterman strolled about, noting the disorder with a wary eye. Cadigan busied himself at a desk, turning over papers, bills and letters.

"These letters are to Walloon, all right," he said, "but they don't give a lead. They're from lady friends and tradespeople. It seems he was slow paying his bills. And here's a sharp note from a bootlegger requesting payment."

"Nothing in the trunk, inspector," Grogan said. "The name labels have been ripped from every suit of clothes."

"Here's a point, inspector," Masterman said. "I've been looking through the books. Those in English have Barns' name in them, and those in French, which seem newer, have no name in them. But there are marginal notes in a few. They're cheap French novels."

Cadigan looked at the French books and studied the writing. Then he returned to the desk. He resumed his rummaging in the lower drawers and finally drew out an addressed letter. It bore Walloon's signature.

"Here's a letter to a creditor, but it was never sent," Cadigan said, holding the letter out to Masterman. "He didn't seem to know the address—probably mislaid the bill. He says he'll pay up when he gets a check he expects. The fellow was dunning him."

Masterman read the letter, scrutinized the handwriting, and then the writing in the marginal notes. The notes were in French. And the letter and the notes were in the same handwriting. He called this to the inspector's attention.

"Right you are," Cadigan said gladly.

"Probably Walloon is French—thinks better in French than in English."

"Maybe he's Dutch—or Flemish, from Belgium. The name is Dutch-like."

"And I think, inspector," Masterman said, pausing before adding, "that you will find these specimens of Walloon's handwriting different from that on the threatening letter we found in Miss Lamore's bedroom."

Cadigan stared hard at him and then whipped out from an inner pocket the note referred to. He compared the three specimens of handwriting.

"By God, you're right again!" he cried. "This threat must have been planted in the house by some one—to draw suspicion to Walloon."

"But I think we ought to talk to him, just the same," Masterman said. "He might have an explanation for that two-hundred-dollar check from Lamore."

"Oh, we'll get him yet," the inspector assured him. "But I'm more puzzled than before. If Walloon wasn't in the house, the murderer wanted to make it seem as if he had been."

"Yes, that's——"

Masterman was interrupted by a cry from Grogan. He was standing at the table laden with bottles and glasses. He was pointing to something beneath a paper that he had lifted.

"Look at that handkerchief, inspector," Grogan said.

"Yes," Cadigan said, gazing at the bit of embroidered cambric. "It's a woman's handkerchief."

"But the name on it—'Eve'!"

Masterman felt a catch at his heart. Eve Lamore's handkerchief in Walloon's apartment. Did she know him? What was her connection with him? Had she withheld something from him?

"Why it must be Eve Lamore's—unless there's another Eve." Cadigan was confident. He picked the handkerchief up and showed it to Masterman. The latter's heart sank when he saw the embroidered name. It was similar—a mate to the one he saw Eve using less than an hour ago.

So she had been to Walloon's. It was not likely now, according to the handwriting evidence, that Walloon had been in Lamore's house—in Eve's bedroom. It seemed likely that some one was framing Walloon.

"He might have picked it up somewhere," Masterman said lamely. The mystery now drew Eve into its far-reaching net.

"Oh, don't go in for the long arm of coincidence, Masterman!" Cadigan said with a cruel laugh. "She was here some time. She put the handkerchief down and forgot it. Women are always forgetting handkerchiefs. Why, she might have been here with Walloon last night!"

"Impossible!" Masterman retorted angrily. "She was to the movies—to see a Garbo picture—with Eleanor Fisk."

"That's what she told you. Do you know the Fisk girl?"

"Yes."

"Well, call her up and find out if she was with Eve Lamore last night. But wait! Grogan, get the prints on that phone."

While he waited, Masterman wondered. Had Eve deceived him? Was she, too, mixed up in this murder—or, with Walloon, a likely suspect. The police knew Walloon as a man who had done time as a blackmailer.

Grogan worked expertly. He dusted a magnesium powder on the telephone and a series of finger prints appeared under his little brush. Then, taking a small camera from a hip pocket, he pho-

tographed the prints from several angles. When he was through, he nodded to the inspector and went about spreading powder on the glasses.

"All right, Masterman, call the Fisk girl."

There was nothing else he could do. He got Eleanor Fisk on the wire. Cadigan held his ear close to the receiver, so that he, too, could hear every word the girl uttered.

"Did you see Eve last night?" Masterman asked after the exchange of a few pleasantries. "She's quite shocked over her father's death and the police don't want to disturb her. They asked me to phone you."

"No, I didn't see her last night," Miss Fisk said. "We were to have gone to the new Greta Garbo picture but she never called for me. I guess she received news of her father's death and was too upset to phone me."

"Thank you," Masterman said coldly, and hung up abruptly.

Cadigan's eyes met his with a happy gleam in them. "This is getting thicker —and with a woman angle, now."

"But Eve might have gone somewhere else!"

"Here—Walloon's flat—probably." Cadigan began to think out loud. "She might have been in love with Walloon. He might have broken off—might have wanted money, too, for her letters. Oh, it's happened before. She led a dog's life under the old man's eye all the time —never going out at night with friends of her own age. She could have been seeing Walloon in the daytime."

"But what has this to do with Lamore's death?" Masterman blazed angrily. "You're jumping at conclusions—making up hypotheses!"

"Maybe. But I'll bet there's a Lamore will, leaving every cent to her. And he was richer than Crœsus. With that money, she could buy Walloon and his love——"

"You're disgusting!"

"And she'd be the only one to know about the money in the back of the chair. She's innocent enough looking, but they're the kind with smart heads—murderous ideas. Pent-up passion—love—wealth. She had a reason to kill the old man."

"But you're assuming that she's in love with Walloon—that she even knew the man!"

"Why not? Here's her handkerchief in his apartment. She's been here. And I mean to find out for what purpose!" The inspector's jaw was set. Masterman feared for Eve under this man's tricky third degree.

CHAPTER VIII.

TERROR!

YOU see," Cadigan went on, "Eve Lamore had access to the house at any time. She had her own key. She knew the old man sent the servants out. She knew he had a gun——"

"How do you know she knew all this?"

"Well, she was his daughter, and they were as thick as thieves. Isn't it reasonable to assume that she knew all about his affairs? Who else had he to talk to? She got him in his office when they were alone and blazed away. Then she stuck the revolver in his pocket to make things mysterious."

"But that note signed by Walloon—the threat?"

"Perhaps I may be wrong. Walloon might have jilted her and she wanted to throw suspicion on him for revenge! A woman scorned has a fury—— You know the line!"

"It's all pure supposition! You haven't an iota of proof!"

Cadigan studied Masterman with shrewd eyes. "I see you're a staunch defender of the little lady! Rather soft on her, I suppose. Guess the old man knew that and had you looked up by the detective agency. Sort of expected

you as a possible son-in-law!" He smiled broadly, insinuatingly.

"You're crazy, inspector. There's nothing between Eve Lamore and me!" Masterman's eyes were afire with rage. But he knew he must not antagonize this rash-thinking policeman.

"But there might be, eh? You might have got her on the rebound from Walloon! It's happened before."

Masterman went blind with fierce anger. He drew back his arm preparatory to smashing his clenched fist into the inspector's face.

The telephone bell jingled softly.

The two men looked at each other curiously and then at the instrument. The bell sounded again.

Cadigan took up the phone. Masterman stood close by.

"Hello," the inspector said.

"Walloon?" The voice was gruff, commanding.

"He isn't here now," Cadigan said. "I'm a friend of his. Can I take a message?"

"Tell him Cayenne called!"

Masterman started. The inspector winked at him.

"Oh, Cayenne. He said for me to tell you to come down here and wait for him."

"He said that?" There was a whistle of amazement from the invisible speaker. "You're cops, then. And you know where you can go! Walloon isn't that anxious to see us that he would invite us, m'sieu'. Adieu!" The speaker hung up.

Cadigan knitted his brow. "That fellow spoke like a Frenchman. And he called himself Cayenne. Can he be one of——"

"The Three Men from Cayenne? He must be. And he was none too friendly toward Walloon. Perhaps he, and not Lamore's death, is the cause of Walloon's flight from here." Masterman spoke quickly, thinking fast.

"Possibly. I should very much like a chat with that Walloon bird. All through, Grogan? All right, we'll toddle uptown again."

Little was said in the cab that took the three up to the Lamore Mansion. Cadigan and Grogan discussed the coming ball games; Masterman sat silently between them, wondering if he could get word to Eve of their discovery about her discrepant story of the night before. He wanted to help her.

When they entered the Lamore house, fighting their way through a crowd that had grown bigger with the noon hour, the inspector went directly to the dining room. Masterman observed that it served him as a sort of headquarters on the premises. The other detectives and Kildane were waiting there, the bottle of rare port half empty on the table before them.

"Costello, go upstairs and tell the little lady that I want to see her—down here," Cadigan said. "Murphy, you go to her room when she's here and go through everything she owns and see what you can find." Costello departed, nodding.

"You can't search her room like that, inspector!" Masterman said heatedly. "You've no right to!"

"The hell I haven't! She's lied and I'm out to see what she knows—what she might be hiding in her room. Do you think I have time to go to court for a search warrant? This is police business and anything goes. I'll listen to the squawks later."

Kildane came forward and threw a soiled letter on the table in front of the inspector. "Came by a little boy to the station house. He was given a quarter to bring it to us. He doesn't know the sender and can't even describe him."

Cadigan opened the letter. He read it aloud:

"To the Detectives: It may interest you to know that I saw Walter Grainger, the banker and friend of the dead Mr. Lamore,

walking past the Lamore house last night around ten o'clock—the hour the newspapers say he was killed. JUSTICE."

"H'm," Cadigan laughed, "our friend gives himself away with the 'Justice' signature. He's a crank and probably feeding a grudge against Grainger—trying to link him up as a suspect. Well, we'll put Grainger through his paces, banker or no banker."

He turned suddenly. Eve Lamore was standing in the doorway. She was radiant, lovely, more beautiful than ever in her mourning garb, Masterman thought. He winced when Murphy sidled out in back of her—to go upstairs to search her room.

"You sent for me," Eve said in an even voice. She entered the room and dropped into a chair at which Cadigan had nodded.

"I'm sorry to bother you in your hour of grief," the inspector began—"believe me I am. But I've got my duty to do. I must ask you a few questions."

"Certainly, Mr.—er——"

"Cadigan is the name Do you know a man named Basil Walloon?" He leaned forward to watch her the better.

Eve hesitated for a moment as though searching her memory. "No, Mr. Cadigan, I know no one by that name."

"You said you went to the movies last night with Eleanor Fisk. I'm quoting Mr. Masterman on that. Is it true?"

Eve's eyes flashed for a moment and her face grew white. "No, it isn't quite true."

"You lied about your whereabouts on the night of your father's death?" Cadigan got up, pointing a threatening finger at her. She cowered back in her chair.

"I lied because I didn't know he was dead—because I was forced to lie," she retorted in a low voice.

"Who forced you to lie? Basil Walloon, your lover?"

It was Cadigan's trump card, that question. He expected Eve to wilt under it, to break down, to betray herself. But it had the opposite effect on her. She rose from her chair.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Cadigan, but I did not come down here to be insulted. I told you I never heard of Mr. Walloon. And I have no lover!" Her voice rang with truth and Masterman was happy to see that the inspector was somewhat convinced. But he also saw that Cadigan was not through with his bulldog tactics.

The inspector produced the handkerchief found in Walloon's apartment. "Is this yours, Miss Lamore?"

Eve took the bit of embroidered cambric, looked at the name on it. "Yes, this is mine. Where did you find it, Mr. Cadigan?"

"In Basil Walloon's apartment."

The girl started. "But I don't understand. I remember distinctly leaving this handkerchief on my dressing table last night before I went out."

"That means, inspector, that Walloon was really in the house, after all," Masterman said quickly. "How else could he have gotten it?"

"I'm not so sure about that." Cadigan stared at the girl with incredulity. "Well, Miss Lamore, are you ready now to tell us where you were last night?"

"Certainly." Eve's voice grew strong, firm. "I was to go to the pictures with my friend, Miss Fisk. She expected me at her house about eight thirty. I left here at eight, planning to walk down to her place. By the time I reached Park Avenue, a man I had noticed leaning against our basement railing, approached me. 'You are Miss Lamore, the daughter of Andrew Lamore?' he said in an accent that I think was French. I said that I was, and, not knowing why, I became frightened and stopped to listen to this man.

" 'I must talk with you,' he said to me. 'There is a restaurant on Madison Avenue where we can be comfortable.' I

followed him to the restaurant and we took a table. I did this only because there was some secret fear in my father's life and I wanted to learn what it was. Dad would never tell me. I thought I could help him, if I knew all about it.

"'Your father's life is in danger, Miss Lamore,' this man said. 'He has three enemies who have sworn to take his life.' You can imagine how I felt. 'And,' he said, 'to destroy all those who are dear to him.' I was petrified with terror. 'But,' he added, 'we have relented. He destroyed our lives, but we will now let him buy his own. You shall tell him who I am, that I talk with you, that I know you, and that I know where he is—that his disguise no longer hides him from us. We hunted for him for ten years and now we are ready to even the score—or accept a fair sum as pay for what he did to us.'"

"Did he say what your father did to him?" Cadigan asked.

"No, he didn't. He went on to say that father must give me three hundred thousand dollars—a hundred thousand dollars for each of them—in cash, and that I must bring it to him."

"More blackmail!" Cadigan said to Kildane. "I think this Walloon hooks up with those three. They phoned him this morning when we were in his flat. Go on, Miss Lamore."

"This man ordered coffee and made me drink it. He told me that if I told any one else but my father, we would both be killed within twenty-four hours—that the three knew every move we made. He then told me to go home and say to dad: 'I have met Voiseau and he offers you your life for three hundred thousand dollars. You understand why. Give me your answer and Voiseau will get it from me. If you warn the police, both of us will be destroyed in a death as horrible as the one to which you consigned Voiseau, Ratine and D'Arnet.' That was all."

"Ratine! He mentioned Ratine's name?" Cadigan cried.

"Yes, I remember the name distinctly. When I met Mr. Masterman on the steps of this house last night, I thought of that man's warning, so I told him I'd been to the movies. Later, he told you that—after—after we found dad!" Her lips quivered, but she fought back the tears.

"That's the truth, Miss Lamore?" Cadigan grinned.

"It is, Mr. Cadigan."

"Yeah!" Kildane sniffed.

"You expect us to believe that cock-and-bull yarn about the mysterious stranger!" Cadigan got on his feet and spoke harshly, sneeringly. "Well, you've got another guess coming. I suppose you've even got a description of the mystery man ready for us?"

"I can tell you what he looked like," Eve said, undaunted by the inspector's manner. "He was a tall man and thin—gaunt, I'd say. He was bald-headed and elderly, but rather distinctive in bearing. The thing that repelled me most was his eyes—they were slimy—snakelike—small, like buttons."

Cadigan's jaw fell. He looked at Masterman, a man bewildered. It was the description he had given of the man who effected Ratine's release, posing as the French consul general.

"Say!" Kildane cried, "that's the plan of the Frenchman who——"

"Yes, yes, I know. One thing more, Miss Lamore: A man we arrested last night—Ratine, to be precise—saw your father's body and called out the name 'Lefebre.' Do you know any one by that name?"

Eve's eyes met Masterman's. "No, I do not."

Masterman wondered what prompted her to lie again, considering the circumstances. Then he remembered their talk of that morning.

"That will be all, Miss Lamore. You may go back to your room."

"You—you mean I'm under arrest here?" She was frightened.

"No—but I suggest you remain in the house."

Eve left the room, followed by Masterman. She went into the drawing-room and he followed closely. They found themselves in a heavily curtained window which faced out on Sixty-sixth Street.

"Oh, Martin, what are they trying to do to me?" Her eyes looked up at him, round and bright and innocent.

Yet he wondered. Her behavior was strange. She was concealing something —even from him.

"The police," he said, "are naturally suspicious. They found the handkerchief in Walloon's room. They deduced immediately that you had been there and foolishly reasoned that if a woman goes to a man's apartment she must be in love with him."

"Then—then he was the man whose presence I felt in my room."

Masterman nodded. "And I think some one else was in there, too. I can't believe that Walloon left that threatening note in what we now know to be another's handwriting."

"But—but these Three Men from Cayenne? What in the world does that mean?"

"If—if we knew that we'd be closer to the solution of this horrible mystery surrounding your father's death."

Eve's eyes grew wet with tears at the mention of her father. She turned away from Masterman and looked into the street.

Then she screamed with profound terror and pointed out the window.

"Voiseau! There's the man I saw last night."

She collapsed into Masterman's arms. He looked through the windowpane. A tall, gaunt man was walking rapidly toward Lexington Avenue, frequently looking back over his shoulder at the Lamore house.

CHAPTER IX.

STOCK MARKET.

THE afternoon wore itself away slowly, packed with activity on the part of the police. Eve remained in her room, whence Masterman carried her after the shock of seeing the man named Voiseau. Cadigan had sent his men out to find the Frenchman, but they came back empty handed. Voiseau had vanished like a needle in a haystack.

Grogan reported toward four o'clock, after having made a study of the finger prints at headquarters. He confirmed that Walloon had been in Sing Sing from 1922 to 1925 for extorting ten thousand dollars from a wealthy compatriot living in New York.

And Grogan startled the inspector.

"There were some finger prints on a chair in Lamore's office," he said—"prints made by some one gripping the arms of that chair. They tally with those I found on the telephone in Walloon's apartment and with those on Walloon's criminal record."

"Then he was in the house—some time during yesterday," Cadigan agreed. "Perhaps he came to get that two hundred-dollar check."

"And since you were so curious about the girl, I took a few prints in her room. I found a set on the wall—dirty marks. They were Walloon's. And I found a second strange set—unidentified, as yet. Then there were, of course, the girl's and the maid's and Mr. Masterman's."

"So you found Walloon's prints up there!" Cadigan growled. "I'll be damned! Masterman, of course, was up there to see the girl a few times. They're natural prints."

"Thanks for not suspecting me," Masterman laughed.

"I'm still interested in that girl, however," the inspector said doggedly. "I'm not swallowing everything she said, but I'll admit that she did get me on the de-

scription of Voiseau." He wheeled around and faced Grogan. "I have it! Ratine was in a cell in the house part of the night. Go over there and see if you can find any new prints—and check them with those found in the house here. And go over this building with a fine comb."

"Sure," was all Grogan said, picking up his hat and starting to leave.

"What about the prints on the gun in Lamore's pocket?" Masterman asked. Cadigan pricked up his ears and looked at the finger-print expert.

"It's all in my report, inspector," he said. "I think those prints are similar to the strange prints I found up in the girl's room. But I'm not prepared to swear to it."

"What!" Cadigan stared at Grogan like a wild man. "Why didn't you tell me that first. That's damned important!"

"Evidently there were two people in the house last night when Lamore was shot," Masterman said—"Walloon and another."

"God, if I could only get my hands on Walloon!" Cadigan cried. He paced up and down the drawing-room, a caged beast—kept from its prey.

Half an hour later Calder admitted Walter Grainger. He bowed to the detectives in the drawing-room and Cadigan introduced himself.

"I hear you're looking after things for Miss Lamore," he said. "And you're familiar with Mr. Lamore's affairs, I believe."

"I've handled his estate for a number of years," Grainger said in a well-modulated voice. He was a man easily fifty, but well set up and alert. His hair was white, his eyes a pleasant blue, and his mouth was of the cut that commanded men. He wore a cutaway coat and had a habit of standing with his hands behind his back, Masterman noted in his glance at the banker.

"Do you know if Mr. Lamore had any enemies?" the inspector asked.

"I've never heard him speak of any."

"I suppose you have his will?"

"No, the lawyers, Barton & Brady, have it. But I am more or less familiar with its contents."

"May I ask what they are?"

"Mr. Lamore left his entire fortune to his daughter, Eve, save for a few bequests to servants and myself. I'm named executor."

Cadigan looked at Masterman with a cunning gleam in his eye. It said that his suspicion that Eve killed her father for his money was not unlikely.

"I suppose Mr. Lamore died many times a millionaire?"

Grainger coughed uneasily. "I'm sorry to say that he did not." Masterman started and stared. "He died, I regret to say, a poor man—a pauper, if the truth be known."

"But—but—we thought he was a millionaire," Cadigan stammered.

"Mr. Lamore invested heavily and rather unwisely in the stock market," Grainger explained in a soft voice. "He was wiped out in the October and November crashes. What little he had left, he lost again in a copper stock I advised him not to buy last month. His homes are heavily mortgaged. He died in debt, Mr. Cadigan."

Masterman was shocked. What a blow this would be to Eve, a girl brought up to be accustomed to every luxury money can buy. What could she do? She was not suited to hunting a job. There was really nothing she could do.

"Does Miss Lamore know this?" Cadigan asked.

"I think not. She was not cognizant of her father's affairs. I think it best not to inform her until after the funeral. I have made all arrangements for tomorrow afternoon. Mr. Lamore will be buried privately from Garden's Funeral Home."

"That sort of knocks your ideas into a cocked hat," Masterman whispered to Cadigan. "She knew nothing of her father's business or wealth."

"H'm. She might have thought he still had the coin." The inspector turned to the banker again. "By the way, Mr. Grainger, how did Mr. Lamore make his money? Was it inherited or did it come out of a business?"

"He inherited it with the stipulation that it pass on to his daughter, Eve."

"Who left it to him?"

"A Frenchman by the name of Andre Lefebre, a prominent banker in Paris ten or twelve years ago. Lefebre and his daughter were killed in an automobile accident in Cambodia a few weeks after the will was drawn. Lamore was in China at the time."

"Say!" Kildane blurted out. "I know something about that Andre Lefebre! I was just coming on the force at the time and I read the papers every day. He was a big shot in Paris and got mixed up in something or other." His voice grew woeful. "But I can't think what it was."

"That's a lot of help," Cadigan snapped. "Well, thank you, Mr. Grainger. I suppose you want to see Miss Lamore now. You can go right up."

Grainger bowed, thanked the inspector, and turned toward the door.

"Spring that crank letter on him!" Masterman whispered.

"Oh, Mr. Grainger, we've a letter here we'd like you to see!" Cadigan took out the note saying that Grainger was in Sixty-sixth Street the night before at the hour of the murder.

The banker took the note and read it slowly. Masterman saw him redden; his hand trembled slightly.

"Why—why, it is obvious I have some one who does not wish me well," he said huskily. "I might have come through this street last night. I was dining with friends—Colonel Vance—on Park Avenue at Sixty-ninth Street. I remember I walked home—I live east of Lexington on Sixty-first—and I might have come through this block. But I don't really remember. You know how it is."

Cadigan nodded skeptically. Grainger left the room and Masterman watched him mount the stairs. He was hardly out of sight when the inspector barked out a few curt orders.

"Check up on that dinner with Vance. Find his name in the phone book, Costello. Murphy, go out again and try to find a neighbor who heard the shot. We haven't really fixed the hour of the killing yet. No one seems to have heard the shot fired."

As the detectives moved toward the door, Masterman inquired of the inspector: "Did Murphy find anything in Eve's room to-day?"

"Not a damn thing!"

The phone in the office rang. Cadigan answered it.

Masterman waited in the drawing-room, smoking. He must see Eve—have a long, heart-to-heart talk with her. She must be warned of her penniless condition—steeled for the news from Grainger and the lawyers. And she must reveal her true identity to Lefebre—even if only to disarm him by telling the truth. He half admitted to himself that her story of meeting Voiseau was a bit melodramatic—far-fetched. He did not question her innocence—but——

Cadigan bounced into the room and danced a few short steps like a chorus girl. His face was beaming. He spoke excitedly, boyishly.

"They've landed Walloon. Picked him up in the Pennsylvania Station with a ticket for Chicago. He denied his identity but Clancy took him into a private room and searched him. There were letters on him addressed to Walloon and a speakeasy card made out to Walloon. Damn useful, these speak-

easy cards. They're like the French identity cards. No American is without one."

He picked up his hat and coat and swung into the latter.

"I'm off to headquarters. They've got him down there."

"May I come along again?" Masterman asked tremulously.

"Sure. We'll take the subway. It's quicker."

CHAPTER X.

FOUR SHADOWS.

THEY left the subway at Canal Street and Broadway and walked east to Center Street, where, on the corner, stood police headquarters, a huge white stone building looking more like a Mid-Western city hall than a house of criminology. Cadigan led the way into the building to the chief inspector's office, saluting men here and there and greeting friends gruffly but cordially.

Millen, the inspector in charge of the detective bureau, sat in a huge room with his back to a Center Street window. He was stout and dark and fierce looking. But his voice was gentle, kindly. Five other detectives attached to his immediate staff sat around the room smoking, while in the center stood a tall man, rather lean and well dressed, in the Broadway fashion. His face was as if cut from stone and his eyes held a nameless fear.

"Here's your Walloon," Millen said to Cadigan. "Kennedy and O'Hart got him with a Chi ticket in the Penn Station. All ready to light out."

"You know we got his prints, chief," Cadigan said proudly. "Found them in the girl's bedroom on the wall. He was in the house some time yesterday after he paid a call on Lemore in the morning. Calder told us he saw the old man but said he wasn't above the first floor."

"Well, you go at him, Cadigan. We can't get a word out of him." Millen sat back in his chair and stared at Masterman as though he were an intruder. "Who's that?" He pointed at him.

"This is Mr. Martin Masterman, a friend of the Lamores'. He has sharp eyes and has given me some dope. I want to see if he can identify Walloon." Cadigan nodded to Masterman. "Do you know this jailbird?"

Walloon's eyes had been on the carpeted floor; now he raised them and looked full into Masterman's. The two men studied each other closely, and finally Walloon dropped his gaze to the floor again.

"Never saw him before," Masterman said. "And I don't know him."

"Now, Walloon, suppose you tell us about your peculiar behavior. You got two hundred dollars from Lamore yesterday?" Cadigan walked over to the suspect and, setting his legs apart, planted himself directly in front of the man. "What about it?"

"I called at the house yesterday morning," Walloon said in a frightened voice. "He owed me some money—the two hundred. He paid me by check. The butler will tell you I was there in the morning."

"And you weren't there later in the day—or last night?"

"No, I swear to God——"

"What did Lamore phone you for?" Cadigan snapped.

Walloon started. "He didn't phone me!"

"That's a lie! The telephone company has a record of his house calling yours. The connection was made."

"He didn't speak to me."

"And how did Miss Lamore's handkerchief get into your house—on your table?"

Again the man showed signs of fear and surprise. "I don't know what you're talking about. Honest!"

"Now stop lying, Walloon, or whatever your name is! Can you explain how your finger prints got on the wall

of Miss Lamore's bedroom—where she last saw the handkerchief in question?"

Walloon stared at Cadigan as though the man were a mind reader. The blood drained from his face and he fell forward against the inspector and slumped to the floor. Millen got up from his desk, got a glass of water from a tap in the room, and handed it to Cadigan. The latter emptied it in Walloon's face and the man slowly opened his eyes. Two detectives picked him up at a sign from Cadigan and shoved him into a chair, where he slouched like a bag of meal.

"I swear—honest to God—I didn't do it!" he cried. "I didn't kill him."

"Who said you did?" Cadigan snapped. "What are you afraid of—if you've done nothing wrong?"

"If—if I tell what I know—will you—protect me?" the suspect pleaded. "I didn't kill him!"

"Protect you from what?" Cadigan was curious.

"From them—the men who call themselves Cayenne!"

The inspector was deeply interested now. "Who do you mean? Who are these men?" He glanced at Masterman, signifying that the ramifications of the mystery were indeed great.

"I don't know. But they—they threatened to kill me—to kill me for what I knew when I recognized one of them—who had been in Cayenne—a prisoner, there."

"Come on! Tell us the whole story. How did you get into Lamore's house last night?" Cadigan took a chair near Walloon's, took out a cigar, and lighted it. Masterman and Millen drew near, to hang on every word the suspect uttered.

"I was in the house last night," Walloon began, shifting his eyes from those which sought his. "Lamore did telephone to me—to come at ten. He said he wanted to see me. I don't know why."

"You weren't up to your old tricks—blackmail?"

Walloon was startled again. "No—no. I don't know why he wanted me. I went to the house about a quarter to ten and rang the front-door bell. But no one answered. I saw that the door was open, so I went in—into the dark hallway.

"The minute I stepped inside, the door was slammed behind me and a gun was put against my back. 'Get upstairs, whoever you are,' a voice said. 'Move fast or I'll drill you!' I started up the stairs, and another man appeared at the head of the flight. He had a searchlight which he flashed on me. I turned my head away, because the light blinded me, and I saw the light full on the face of the man with the gun—behind me."

"You recognized him?" Cadigan asked quickly, anxiously.

"Yes—his name was Claude Ratine!"

Cadigan gasped with amazement. "Go on. Hurry up, Walloon!"

"I went up the stairs, pretending not to have recognized Ratine. There was a whispered conference by the two men and then I was ordered to go through a door into a dark room. 'If you come out of there, I'll kill you!' Ratine said. 'We'll be outside.'

"I stumbled about the room, and, falling over a chair, my hands touched the wall. I was so frightened, I wanted to cry out. And then I learned there was another person in the room! He heard me listening to him, and then he spoke: 'Keep quiet. Don't cry out or move or I'll shoot you!' The voice was low, disguised, I think. I wanted to scream. Then the front door downstairs opened and closed. I thought I couldn't resist crying for help, so I picked up a handkerchief on a dressing table and stuffed it in my mouth. Then I sat down on the edge of the bed and held my ears.

"The man in the room—I couldn't

see a foot in front of me, it was so dark—left. He went out into the hall. A little while later—I don't know how long—there was a shot. It came faint and far away, but I knew it was a shot. My one thought then was to get out of the house. I didn't want to be found there and accused of—of murder.

"I finally went into the hall, on my hands and knees, and crept through the darkness to the head of the stairs. There wasn't a sound. I went down slowly until I came to a bend that hid me from being seen by any one below. Some one was in the living room, ripping something that sounded like cloth. Then there was silence again.

"A few minutes later I saw a shadowy form open the front door and go out. A little while later, two more shadowy figures went through the half-opened door. Then I waited. The silence was deadly. I descended to the bottom step. And then I heard some one else moving from the back of the house toward the hall. I ran into the living room and hid behind the curtains on the door. The fourth shadow paused in the opening, and then, turning, went up the stairs. I waited. I heard a noise toward the top floor. The skylight was being opened. Then it banged shut. I ran to the front door and out into the street and down to Lexington Avenue. There I got a taxi and went home and started packing. I left Gramercy Park and took a room at the Franley Hotel, then tried to leave town this morning. That's all—so help me God! I—I didn't kill Lamore. I swear it!"

"Did those two shadows you saw going out at one time seem to be together?" Cadigan inquired.

"No—no. The second man was cautiouslike. He seemed to be following the other man."

"You heard no voices?"

"No, only Ratine's and the man's in the bedroom."

"Do you know who Lamore really is?" Cadigan asked. Masterman held his breath in apprehension.

"Yes, he was Andre Lefebre of Paris—a famous banker ten or twelve years ago. It was he who sent three men to Cayenne for robbing his bank. They were Ratine, Voiseau and D'Arnet, and they swore vengeance on him. They swore they would tear him apart and kill his daughter, too." Walloon spoke listlessly now. He wanted to confess all he knew to convince the police of his innocence in the murder.

"So that's the case!" Cadigan sighed. "Motive was vengeance!"

"But they knew where he had money hidden," Masterman pointed out. "That's rather odd."

"Perhaps they made him tell them—told him they'd spare his life for ready cash, and then double-crossed him."

"But he was shot—according to Walloon, if he's to be believed—before the chair was ripped open," Masterman said.

"Yes, yes. They took a chance. So they are the Three Men from Cayenne—Ratine, who I had in my hands; Voiseau, who fooled me and threw a scare into Eve Lamore; and D'Arnet. I wonder who he is?"

"Walloon, why did they threaten Lefebre when they were sentenced to Devil's Island?" Millen asked with interest.

"Because—because they were framed by Lefebre," the man blurted out. "He wanted the insurance money and he had to convict some one to convince the insurance company!"

"How do you know all this, Walloon?" Masterman demanded. The man was baring all that Eve desired to be kept secret—for her dead father's sake.

"I was Lefebre's butler—eleven years ago. Ah, I will tell you all, messieurs. I am French, as you have perhaps guessed. Lefebre feared those men. He was haunted by them—by thoughts of the hell to which he had sent them! The night he read in the paper that

they had escaped, he collapsed and remained in a coma for three days. Then he sold everything he owned in France, made a will leaving his wealth to Andrew Lamore and Eve Lamore, named an old friend of his, Walter Grainger, executor, and fled to Cambodia, where he staged a fake death. Then he came to America as Andrew Lamore. Eve was young then and probably remembers little. They both spoke excellent English and could easily pass as Americans."

"Sounds like a story," Millen commented. "But if this guy is handing us the straight dope, we can use him as State's evidence and get a conviction against the three escaped Devil's Islanders."

"You were blackmailing Lamore about his past—threatening to expose him!" Cadigan said intuitively. "You threatened to give him away to the world—and to the Three Men from Cayenne!"

Walloon bowed his head. "Yes—but he never paid me—only two hundred."

"How much did you ask for?"

"Fifty thousand. He had it. He could spare it."

"And he promised to give it to you?"

"Yes, to-day."

Cadigan made note of this. "We'll talk to Grainger about that. Lamore might have asked him to raise the ready cash."

"No wonder Ratine recognized Lamore as Lefebre," Millen observed. "He killed him and was shocked by seeing the body."

"Isn't that rather unusual?" Masterman said nervously. "If he was one of those who killed Lamore, he would not likely betray himself that way."

Cadigan had a ready answer. "It's quite likely, too, that he didn't know he killed Lefebre until he saw the man dead. Men change in ten or twelve years. But I think the ordeal was too much for him. We want Ratine, Voiseau and D'Arnet for that murder. Three escaped convicts who swore they'd get him."

"Four shadows in the house," Masterman mused. "We know of Ratine and Voiseau, but are you certain that D'Arnet was there? Who was the fourth person?"

"Was it a man or a woman?" Cadigan demanded of Walloon.

The blackmailing butler hesitated and then tried to recollect. "I'm not sure. They were only shadows to me. One might have been a woman—but I'm not sure."

The inspector grinned at Masterman. He was thinking of Eve again. Just like a policeman, thought Masterman—he had a notion she was implicated in the case and he couldn't be shaken from it. Masterman frowned and shook his head.

"You know," he said, "Calder might have been one of the four shadows. He could have come back again. He might have known where the money was hidden in the chair."

Cadigan's jaw fell. "Damn it, that's an idea! We'll grill him again!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE VAULT BOX.

CADIGAN ordered that Walloon be held for illegal entry of the Lamore house but cautioned that the arrest be kept from the newspapers. The Three Men from Cayenne must not know how much the police knew. The blackmailer was assured that he would be released when the escaped *transportés* were arrested.

The inspector then decided to return to the scene of the crime, while Masterman said that he had to go down to Wall Street and look over his mail and affairs. The two men parted cordially in front of police headquarters.

The first taxi that came along was an object of dispute.

"You take it, Masterman. There'll be another in a minute. I'm in no hurry."

"No, inspector, you take it. You're on police business."

"What on earth are you shaking for, Masterman?"

Masterman was aware that his whole body was atremble. "It's ague, a by-product of my old malaria. I had it bad."

"You've been in the tropics?" Cadigan asked as he climbed into the taxi.

"Yes, in Cuba. I got it there."

"Tough luck. See you later." And Cadigan drove off.

Masterman took the second taxi that came along and was driven to the offices of Clare & Co. The afternoon was ebbing fast and a few of the office buildings were alight. He made his way through the home-going throng and finally reached his own private sanctum on the twentieth floor of a towering structure. His secretary greeted him with businesslike precision and recounted the matters that had been referred to him by other members of the firm. And there was his mail. He went through it quickly, found little of importance, and began to dispose of accumulated referred matter.

The afternoon ran quickly into evening. The chimes of Trinity sounded six o'clock. His secretary grew restless taking dictation and it was easy to see that she wanted to go home.

"You can handle those letters in the morning," he said. "You may go now." She beamed and within five minutes was battling the subway crowd. Her office efficiency ceased at five o'clock.

Rand Clare, the senior partner, poked his head through Masterman's door. "Saw your light and thought I'd come in. I'm sorry about Miss Lamore's father. What's new on the case?"

"Nothing," Masterman said. He didn't want to talk about the problems that were constantly cropping up in his mind. "The police are doing the best they can."

"What about the mysterious Three Men from Cayenne? It was all in the evening papers about the death threat from them. Why, it reads like a murder mystery novel." Clare was expansive, curious in a normal healthy way.

"It seems that Lamore sent them to jail—to Devil's Island, for robbing him when he lived in France. They threatened to get him. But I'm speaking in confidence. Only the police know about that."

Clare was pleased and grew serious. "Oh, I won't mention it to a living soul." Masterman knew that his wife would be spreading the news around New Rochelle in the morning, but then, New Rochelle was miles from New York.

"We had some day here!" Clare enthused. "The market went up. A few new fortunes were made. Gonch cleaned up. So did Grainger and Muhlener. They were almost on the rocks, you know. It sure was a lucky day for us, too. I made about ten thousand myself. Not so bad, eh?"

"Congratulations. I wish I'd been here."

"By the bye, old man, you can do us a great favor," Clare said. "We have eighty thousand dollars' worth of securities in the house. Can you take them over to the bank? I don't want to trust them with a boy and I can't go myself."

"Sure, I'll go. Send them right along in."

Clare went out and returned with the securities in a suit case, and a glass of Scotch balanced in one hand. "I thought you'd appreciate this. One good turn deserves another."

A few minutes later, Masterman was on his way to the bank with a swank bag in one hand and the safe-deposit box key in his pocket. He passed among hundreds of men and women earning twenty-five dollars and thirty-five dol-

lars a week, and to whom eighty thousand dollars' worth of negotiable securities would give ease and luxury for the rest of their lives. But they probably took him for a commuter.

On reaching the bank, he went downstairs to the vault in the basement. A uniformed guard, who knew him by sight, saluted and called the manager, a Mr. Burke, who was young, eager and talkative.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Masterman. Have you your company's key?"

"Yes, thanks. I'm just putting some securities to bed. How's tricks in the safe-deposit racket?"

"Oh, fine. We had something exciting happen this afternoon—that is, exciting for us down here."

Masterman reached his vault box, a huge drawer made of steel, wide and deep. He started to file away the securities taken from the bag and neatly collected in separate packs.

"It's our only connection with what happened at the Lamore house," Burke said.

"What was it?" Masterman asked, hiding his instantaneous curiosity.

"Eve Lamore came down here and filed away some hard cash."

"What's that?"

"Eve Lamore came down and rented a small safe-deposit box and put a pile of bank notes in it. I saw the top one, and it was for a thousand of the U. S. Treasury's best!" Burke smiled, proud of his news.

"Are you sure it was Eve Lamore?"

"Well, she said she was. She signed a rental blank, and she had on the weeds."

"Let me see the blank."

Burke went to his desk, drew out a sheet of paper, and handed it to Masterman.

"Do you give customers such dirty blanks?" he asked as he stared at the signature.

"Oh, no, Miss Lamore brought it in with her. I guess she made it out at home."

"I thought so. What did the girl look like?"

Burke described her ecstatically. He said he knew a beauty when he saw one. And Masterman grew pale. The description fitted.

"Have you any idea how much money she put away?"

"I think nearly a hundred grand, she said. She seemed nervous but explained that, now her father was dead, she'd have to take care of her own affairs. And she has a head on her shoulders, Mr. Masterman!"

"Did you see the money at all?" Masterman asked impatiently. "Did you notice anything about it?"

"Sure, I saw her put it in. The bills seemed to have feathers on them—like ticking or mattress stuffings. Guess she had it hidden away in the house and decided that after the robbery and murder it'd be safer in a vault."

"Thanks!" Masterman snapped. He was bitter. Burke, nonplused, saw his customer to the door.

Instead of returning the firm's safe-deposit-box key to the office, Masterman walked rapidly through Wall Street to the station of the East Side subway.

Twenty minutes later he emerged from the underground steps at Sixty-eighth Street and started walking toward the Lamore house on Sixty-sixth Street.

He must see Eve at once. He must question her. He must be convinced of the reason for this strange action of hers—taking money from her father's hiding place in the chair and putting it in a safe-deposit box—when even the police suspected her of being involved some way in the crime. What was the saying? "The light that lies in woman's eyes lies and lies and lies!"

He would have it out with her!

He rang the doorbell, and Calder, a nervous Calder, admitted him.

CHAPTER XII.

MASTERMAN LISTENS.

"CALDER," Masterman said peremptorily, "please tell Miss Lamore that I should like to see her. I'll wait down here."

But no sooner had the butler started to ascend the stairs, than Cadigan, cigar in mouth, strolled out of the dining room and caught sight of the young man. His eyes lighted up and he approached Masterman, taking him by the arm and leading him into the drawing-room. They sat down, at the inspector's suggestion.

"Don't think you're under arrest, Masterman," Cadigan laughed. "I just want to chat with you. You've got an eye and a brain in your head and you've been helpful to me, and though it's very irregular, I want to discuss this case with you."

Masterman relaxed and smiled. "Go ahead. I'm listening."

"Hear anything in Wall Street? I mean about the case or Grainger?"

"Well, I learned that Grainger cleaned up in the stock market to-day. He was stone broke two months ago, I heard. Do you suspect Grainger now?"

"Masterman, I suspect everybody—even you—and myself." Cadigan chuckled. "This case is simply crazy. There're so many angles and tangles I don't know where to begin—what to believe! I'm up against it, frankly. Everybody involved has a motive—even myself." He paused to laugh outright.

"Where do you fit in, inspector?" Masterman smiled.

"Oh, I might have killed him to give myself a hard nut of a case to crack. But if that's true, I've sure forgotten how it all started."

"Have you quizzed the butler, Calder? There were four shadows, you know, and he might have returned to the house earlier in the evening. And how about all the alibis? I believe that's what you call checking up on possible suspects?"

Cadigan sighed wearily. "We haven't left a stone unturned, Masterman. Not a stone. And I'm still deep in the dark. Let me read you a report I've drawn up for the commissioner. It's A B C stuff." He took a sheaf of papers from his pocket and began reading from the first page.

"A.—Andrew Lamore was shot through the head on the night of March 10th between the hours of ten and eleven. No one can be found who heard the shot at a definite time except one suspect, Basil Walloon, who, if his story is to be believed, had no idea of the precise minute.

"B.—Walloon is a significant witness. He has served time for blackmail, and, according to his own confession, was, at the time of the murder, engaged in extorting fifty thousand dollars from Lamore. He received two hundred dollars from Lamore on the morning of the murder day and was invited over the telephone by Lamore to return at ten in the evening.

"Walloon went to the house at ten or thereabouts, rang the bell, and presently found that the house was apparently deserted and the door ajar. He went in and was promptly covered by Claude Ratine, an escaped convict from Devil's Island, a French penal colony. Ratine threatened to shoot him and ordered him to the second floor. On the stairs, a second man, Ratine's accomplice, flashed a light on him and it was then that Walloon identified Ratine.

"Walloon was placed in Eve Lamore's bedroom, where he was ordered to keep still by a third man, who, evidently, was not known to Ratine and his friend. Walloon heard the front door slam downstairs and the second unidentified man in the bedroom left and presumably went downstairs.

"C.—It was then that Walloon heard

the muffled report of a pistol. It was a few minutes after the stranger left the bedroom.

"D.—It was learned from Walloon that there were four persons in the house at the time of the shot—and one of them, he said, might have been a woman. After a considerable interval, Walloon went downstairs in an effort to leave the house. He said he saw three persons—shadows, he called them—slip through the front door, separately, to the street. Then a fourth person climbed the stairs and left the Lamore house through the trap in the roof.

"E.—Walloon supplied a motive for Lamore's murder by one or all of three men—namely, Claude Ratine, Michel d'Arnet and Jacques Voiseau. Twelve years ago, while a famous banker in Paris, Lamore, whose real name was Andre Lefebre, sent the three men named to prison—the French Guiana colony—for robbery. Walloon states that they were wrongly convicted and that they swore revenge on Lefebre and his kin.

"F.—Ratine we found coming out of the basement of the adjoining house. He fainted on seeing the body and calling out, 'Lefebre!' We held him but his release was effected the following morning, to-day, by a man posing as the French consul general. We believe that man to be Voiseau.

"G.—Voiseau's whereabouts at the time of the murder are cloudy. Eve Lamore told us that she was on her way to meet a friend when Voiseau approached her, took her to a restaurant and impressed upon her the fact that her father must give up three hundred thousand dollars to the Three Men from Cayenne or forfeit his life. She left the house after eight o'clock but is not certain at what hour Voiseau left her. She said she walked the streets before returning home.

"H.—It is significant that Eve Lamore lied to withhold information from the police. Her explanation that Voiseau threatened both her own and her father's life if she spoke of the interview to another save her father, is not satisfactory.

"I.—Lefebre, when he fled from Paris, turned his estate over to Walter Grainger, the New York banker, and left a will leaving the Lefebre money to Andrew Lamore and his daughter, Eve—in other words, to himself under an assumed name. He effected the change of names in China and had American passports bearing the Lamore name. Grainger was the executor and supervised the Lefebre and Lamore estates.

"J.—A crank letter sent by messenger to the precinct house, spoke of Grainger passing the Lamore house at the time of the killing, between ten and eleven. Grainger was dining at Colonel Vance's apartment at Sixty-ninth and Park and he said he walked to his own flat on Sixty-first, east of Lexington. He does not recall what street he walked through.

"K.—Checking up on Grainger, we learned he left Vance's at about ten fifteen and arrived in his own flat, according to his valet, shortly before eleven.

"L.—According to Granger, Lamore died penniless. He lost everything he had in the October and November stock market crashes of last year.

"M.—We would believe suicide possible if the gun found, a .38 revolver with one exploded chamber, had not been found in the dead man's pocket.

"N.—Beneath the body was a note threatening Lamore's life and signed: 'Three Men from Cayenne.'

"O.—In Eve Lamore's bedroom, beneath the bed, a second note was found, reading:

"Lefebre, I want the money by noon to-morrow. You can send it to Basil Walloon, 103 Gramercy Park North.

"We discovered that this note is not in Walloon's handwriting.

"P.—At Walloon's apartment the police intercepted a telephone call from a person who identified himself as 'Cayenne.' He wanted to speak with Walloon. Walloon is terrified and fled, not only from the police, but from Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau. He was picked up in Pennsylvania Station with a ticket to Chicago in his pocket.

"Q.—Sergeant Grogan of the finger-print bureau has identified six of eight finger prints found in the house. They are the dead man's, Eve Lamore's, her maid's, the butler's, Walloon's, and Martin Masterman's. Masterman is a friend of the family and a junior partner in the brokerage house of Clare & Co. of Wall Street.

"R.—There are two other sets of prints still unidentified. One set was found both on the gun that fired the fatal bullet—for we believe Lamore was killed with his own weapon—and on the wall of Eve Lamore's bedroom. The second set found in the office were on the desk and walls, as though some one were groping his way about the room. These prints might belong to Ratine, D'Arnet or Voiseau.

"S.—I have cabled to the prefect of police of Paris for descriptions of the prints of Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau. They will be cabled in finger-print code and copies will follow by mail.

"T.—A chair in Lamore's living room had its back ripped out. Walloon also heard the noise of this being done. We found a thousand-dollar bill, Serial B 456729, hidden in the ticking. Evidently there was more money hidden there. Whoever took the money, knew where it was hidden.

"U.—Hannah O'Hart, Eve Lamore's maid, was in a motion-picture house at Third Avenue and Fifty-eighth Street from nine till eleven.

"V.—Robert Calder, the butler, was visiting a friend at No. 682 East Fifty-sixth Street. He was there from nine till ten and then he visited a pool room on Third Avenue and Sixty-sixth Street between ten thirty and eleven.

"W.—The cook and three maids had the night off, it being Thursday, and visited friends between eight and eleven thirty. All visits were checked by police.

"X.—Lamore sent Calder and Hannah O'Hart out at eight, and, before they left the house, went out himself. Where he went and when he returned cannot be ascertained, but it is possible it was he coming in when Walloon heard the front door slammed.

"Y.—Lamore was much of a recluse, obviously fearing to make contacts that might betray his true identity to the world and the three men he feared most.

"CONCLUSIONS:

"1. That the motive for the crime was revenge.

"2. That Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau are the murderers.

"3. That they planted the false Walloon note in Eve Lamore's bedroom to throw suspicion on him.

"4. That they know Walloon, though they may be unknown to him.

"5. That Eve Lamore knows more than she's telling.

"6. That she might have been one of the four shadows seen by Walloon in the house.

"7. That she knows the identity of the murderer or murderers and will not reveal it for fear of her own life.

"8. That she be arrested as a material witness."

On that dramatic note, spoken in an excited voice, Cadigan ceased his reading and looked up at Masterman.

"What's wrong, Masterman? You're shaking like a leaf," the inspector observed.

Masterman smiled wanly. "It's ague —malaria. I told you about it this afternoon."

"Oh, yes. What do you think of the report?"

"I think you're jumping at conclusions—about Eve Lamore. I believe her story—her explanation for withholding information."

Cadigan grinned. "Well, I don't."

"It was clever of you to send to Paris for the finger prints. But do you know, inspector, there are only three of the men from Cayenne, and there were four shadows? Eliminating Miss Lamore, you have four men and Walloon in the house. Do you believe Walloon?"

"More or less."

"If each of the three from Cayenne was in the house, who was the fourth man—or shadow? Unless you know who it was, your motive for the crime is not sound. It might not have been revenge. It might have been plain robbery with the coincidence of the Three Men from Cayenne being present!"

"You're talking through your hat!" Cadigan scoffed. "One of the three got him, the way they said they would. Probably they made him tell about the money in the chair before they shot him. I've a hunch the fourth shadow was Eve Lamore!"

Masterman frowned at him. This was not pleasant, a policeman's stubborn hunch. An arrest—even if it proved groundless—would be a shock and a disgrace for Eve. It must be circumvented at any cost.

"What about Grainger and Calder?" Masterman asked.

"What motives?"

"Robbery. Grainger was losing in the stock market. He needed money very badly. Calder might have known where the ready cash was—in one-thousand-dollar bills. Temptation!"

"You're just guessing, Masterman. I'll concede the point that Grainger or Calder might have entered the house. But we have no trace of them, so far as finger prints go, in connection with the shooting. Calder's prints aren't on the gun and those gun prints are clear enough to convict."

Masterman leaned forward. "Have you Grainger's prints?"

"No, we have no reason to ask for them."

"I'll get them for you!" Masterman got up to indicate that he wanted to leave. Calder had been hovering in the doorway the past five minutes with word from Eve—word whether she would see him.

Masterman went over to the butler. "Yes, Calder?"

"Miss Lamore begs to be excused, Mr. Masterman. She cannot see you now. She is indisposed."

The young man took a step backward. He was amazed, hurt. Eve had given him cause to believe that she would welcome him at any time, now that he was trying to help her in this hour of trouble. True, his help had been futile. Her father's secret was known to the police.

But what caused her change in attitude toward him?

He left the house with forebodings. The scene between himself and Burke in the bank vault haunted him all the way to his hotel.

Eve had put nearly a hundred thousand dollars in a safe-deposit box and had not told him—or the police—about it.

CHAPTER XIII.

"EVE LAMORE."

THE following morning, after a sleepless night, Masterman decided to go to his office instead of attending Lamore's private funeral at Garden's. Eve had not asked him and he would not intrude. And there must be a reason for her behavior—her not wishing to see him. The safe-deposit box! But Inspector Cadigan would have to find out about that himself.

Masterman shaved and dressed slowly. March winds had dispelled the

first balminess of coming spring and he did not relish fighting his way through the gale to the nearest subway station.

The telephone bell rang.

"Hello, Martin. This is Eve. You're coming up this morning, aren't you? I'd like to have you go with me to Garden's. Mr. Grainger is going, too."

"Why, of course, Eve—if you want me."

"Of course I do. I'm—I'm sorry I couldn't see you yesterday evening. I had a splitting headache."

"You should have gone out for a walk—some air."

"Oh, I did go out. I went to the bank to put some things in the safe-deposit vault. I'm afraid to have them around, considering what has happened."

Masterman trembled and, looking across the phone, saw his face in the bureau mirror. It was ashen—dead-white, like the ash of a fine cigar.

"What bank do you use?" he asked, trying to control his voice.

"The Cressley."

That was the bank where he had been. That was the bank where Eve Lamore had salted away nearly one hundred thousand-dollar bills!

"I'll be up as soon as I can," he said. "Good-by."

"Good-by, Martin."

He stopped in the hotel grill for a bite of breakfast and then started uptown in a taxi. All the way, his thoughts were confused, troubled—horrified. What did Eve know about those who signed themselves "Three Men from Cayenne"?

At the house he found Cadigan and Kildane still on the job.

"We're going to the funeral, too." Cadigan's tone was crisp. "We're not letting her out of our sight."

"Eve?"

"Sure. There's something queer about her tale. The more I think of it, the less I believe it. But we haven't enough for a pinch yet. The commissioner read my report and told me to go easy."

Masterman felt sarcastic. "Well, *he* has some sense, thank heavens!"

"Yeah?" Kildane grinned. "You're pretty sweet on her, aren't you?"

Masterman turned on his heel and left the pair. Calder was waiting in the hall. "Miss Lamore said for you to go right up. She's with Mr. Grainger now."

He climbed the stairs, and, coming to Eve's door, tapped on it. A cheery voice invited him to come in. Strange that Eve was not more broken up over her father's death! She seemed quite cheerful, he remembered, on other occasions.

Grainger had a glass in his hand when Masterman entered the boudoir. Eve was in mourning and dressed for the street, a heavy veil thrown back over her shoulders revealing a wan white face.

"Hello, Martin," she said. "I'm awfully glad you came."

"Hello, Mr. Masterman," Grainger smiled. "Have one?" He indicated his glass, which held a reddish fluid. "I'm trying to get Miss Lamore to take something to buck her up."

"I don't need anything, thank you."

"No thanks," Masterman said. His eyes were fixed upon the glass. There was no better medium for finger prints than glass.

"I suppose the police are still completely in the dark," Eve said.

"They think it's one of the men who sign themselves the Three Men from Cayenne," Grainger explained. "But they haven't the slightest idea who they are or where to find them."

"Oh, they're Ratine, D'Arnet and Voiseau," Masterman said. "The inspector has sent to Paris for their finger prints and descriptions."

"Very clever of him," Grainger commented. "But will that help?"

"It might. It might identify the prints found on the gun."

"Are they convinced that the murderer's prints are on the gun, Mr. Masterman? Mightn't they belong to another?"

"Hardly. If Lamore put the gun in his pocket, his prints would be on it. But his markings are blurred. Another's are superimposed on his. And the pistol expert is determining if the bullet came from the gun in Lamore's pocket. He thinks it did, but he's making tests to be certain, I'm told."

"Well, I hope they find the murderer. Lamore was one of the kindliest men I knew." Grainger turned to Eve. "Shall we be going? It's nearly time to be at Garden's. You will bear up, won't you?"

Eve got up from her chair. "I'm ready, Mr. Grainger. I'll do my best."

Grainger put his glass down on a table. "I understand the police are coming to the cemetery, too. Don't be annoyed, Eve. It is only a matter of form."

He accompanied Eve to the door and held it open for her as she passed into the hall. While his back was turned, Masterman caught the glass Grainger had been drinking from from the inside, and, pulling open the table drawer, laid it among odds and ends of letters and gloves and what not.

They drove uptown to Garden's Funeral Home in a taxi. The inspector and Kildane followed in another. The funeral services were brief. The girl wept but bore up quite well.

The trip to the cemetery was without incident. The body was placed in a receiving vault, since Grainger had made arrangements for the construction of a small mausoleum which would not be ready for two or three more months.

Always Cadigan and Kildane hovered in the background. They watched, but said nothing; gave no indication that they were interested in what went on.

Returning to the city, Masterman asked to be put off at the nearest subway station; he had to go to his office. But he promised to dine with Eve that night. Grainger accompanied her to the house. It was understood that the two policemen were going to the precinct house and continue their investigations from there.

In his office, Masterman went about his business. There was considerable matter that had been accumulating during the past three days that now required immediate attention. He worked like a Trojan until five. There were more valuable securities to be taken to the bank for safe-keeping and he agreed to put them in the vault.

With a suit case loaded with nearly a hundred thousand dollars' worth of stocks and bonds, and, this time, with a private detective close behind him, he made his way through the evening home-going crowd to the Cressley Trust Company's building near Hanover Square.

He entered the bank building and descended the stairs to the vault. As he was passing through the steel gate from behind which Burke smiled a greeting, a fashionably dressed young woman brushed past him—literally bumped into him and started up the stairs.

Burke was at his side. "That's Miss Lamore. She's beautiful, isn't she?"

Masterman started. The girl wasn't Eve Lamore at all.

But she was the one, Burke said, who put nearly a hundred thousand dollars into a safe-deposit box under the name of "Eve Lamore."

"Burke." Masterman said in a commanding tone. "Go up after her. Detain her somehow at the door—until I come up." Burke was startled and hesitated. "Do as I say, Burke!" The bank man automatically obeyed.

Masterman quickly opened his large box of steel and dumped the suit case

into it without bothering to empty it. Then he followed Burke to the street level. The bank man, seeing him, said good-by to the girl who used Eve Lamore's name, and she left the building.

"What was she doing here?" Masterman asked, keeping his eye upon the girl, who was now in the street.

"She took out a thousand-dollar bill."

Masterman said nothing but went to the street and followed the girl up toward Wall Street. Once or twice he lost sight of her, but she was wearing a red cloche hat and he quickly picked her up again. She went through Wall Street, buffeted by the subway-headed throngs, and turned south on Broadway.

To Masterman she looked like somebody's stenographer. She evidently was at home in the financial district and knew her way about.

In front of a large office building she turned and went through its front door. Masterman was now but a step behind her, and he managed to get into the same elevator with her. She got off at the twentieth floor, at the office of Marlow & Co., a large brokerage house. While he stood at the reception clerk's desk, from which the clerk was absent, he watched the mystery girl go to a typist's desk, take off her hat and coat, sit down, and start typing from her notebook.

When the receptionist turned up, Masterman said he was waiting for a friend and contented himself with pacing the long strip of carpet in front of the elevators. At five thirty sharp, the girl ceased typing, filed her letters in a basket, and put on her hat and coat again. She chatted a few moments with another girl and started for the elevators.

Masterman descended to the street floor with her. She would take the subway, he concluded, and it would be easy to keep an eye on her—to see whom she met or where she went.

But there was a taxi at the curb and the girl got into it, after mentioning an address to the driver. The taxi shot up Broadway and was lost in the traffic before Masterman could find another with which to pursue her.

Disconsolate, he returned to the Cressley Trust Company to put away properly the securities he had dumped in his firm's safe-deposit box. Why did the girl use Eve Lamore's name, he wondered? And why should an ordinary typist draw out one thousand dollars from the hoard and take a taxi from Wall Street? Surely the subway was the quickest way out of the financial district, the traffic on the streets being heavy and slow moving. He could not rid himself of the hunch that she was taking the money to some one else.

When he had returned to his office, he looked up the directors and officials of Marlow & Co. in the "Directory of Directors."

His eyes widened with amazement. There was a name that caused him to catch his breath!

Michael d'Arnet was one of the directors of Marlow & Co.

Michael d'Arnet—Michel d'Arnet. They were the same name. And an unusual one, at that.

And Michel d'Arnet was supposed to be one of the Three Men from Cayenne.

But Masterman decided not to tell Inspector Cadigan. It was something he would look into himself.

He picked up his phone and called Marlow & Co. Tommy Warner, a friend of his, worked there. He got Tommy on the wire.

"Hello, Tommy," he said. "I'm trying to get a line on Michael d'Arnet, one of your directors. How can I reach him?"

"You can't," Tommy laughed. "He's traveling abroad with the old man—Marlow."

"What's he look like, Tommy?"

"You've got me, Martin. I've been with Marlow & Co. for nearly four

years and I've seen neither D'Arnet nor Marlow. They run the business from abroad, I hear. But none of us here know much about them. I don't think any one here has ever seen them."

After a few more questions about Tommy's health, success in the new market, and summer plans, Masterman hung up. So D'Arnet traveled with Marlow. And they were supposed to be in Europe. And no one in Marlow & Co. had ever seen them.

He decided that he must find out who Marlow was—Hiram J. Marlow, the "Directory of Directors" gave his name in full.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHADOWED!

ANOTHER thought came to Masterman and he phoned Tommy Warner again. Fortunately, Tommy had not left his office.

"Sorry to bother you," Masterman apologized, "but I've got another question, Tommy."

"Shoot!"

"Do you people handle Andrew Lamore's stocks—ever buy or sell any?"

"Sure. We handled a lot of his stuff. Sold it high, too, before the crashes last year. But I understand what we got big money for he lost, anyway, trying to cover other margins."

"Where did you hear that, Tommy?"

"I don't remember. It's all over the Street, I guess."

"I've never heard of it. Always thought Lamore was a millionaire."

"No, Martin. He was wiped out, I think. Say, what's up?"

"Nothing. I'm just curious. See you for lunch soon."

Again Masterman hung up. He felt that he was getting close to something. It was odd that Marlow & Co. should handle Lamore's stock buying and selling. Walter Grainger was an established broker and banker—was fully equipped to handle such business—and, in view of the fact that Andrew Lamore was his client——

But Marlow—Hiram J. Marlow! Was he the man they really wanted? Could he throw any light on Lamore's murder?

Nursing such speculations, Masterman went uptown to his hotel. He bathed and changed his clothes and set out for the Lamore house.

He was about to leave his room when the phone rang. It was Tommy Warner.

"Say, since you're so curious," Tommy said, "I can tell you some more about the Lamore business. We dealt through his daughter, Eve Lamore. She gave us all the buy and sell orders."

Masterman gasped. "What? You've seen her at your office?"

"No, we did all business over the phone. She sent us the security and we bought and sold on it."

"To whom did you turn over the profits, Tommy?"

"We sent a check to her at her hotel. She's been living at the Fitchton."

Nothing was any longer a surprise to Masterman. Events had an incredible slant to them and he was now prepared to hear almost anything. The stock transactions Tommy spoke about were quite regular. Many brokers never see their clients—haven't the slightest idea what they look like. They receive security in the form of stocks, bonds or mortgages, and buy and sell on instruction. Then they return the security and profit checks by registered mail to the unseen client.

"What did the profits amount to, Tommy? Have you any idea?"

"Oh, over a period of a year, I guess we made about a quarter of a million on as much security. Doubled her money for her. Not bad business, eh? She's poor, though, if the father lost principle and profit on other stocks."

"Yes. Thanks for calling, Tommy."

On reaching the main floor on the

Fitchton, Masterman went to the hotel desk. A clerk waited on him.

"Is there a Miss Eve Lamore living here?" he asked.

"No. We had her about two months ago, though. She was here for about a year. Funny thing, she rarely lived in her room. Was out of town a lot. But she got tons of mail here."

"Brokerage house circulars?"

"Why, yes, they were mostly that, the letters were. I was mail clerk then and noticed it."

Masterman thanked the man and left the Fitchton. On his way up to Sixty-sixth Street, he pondered the question. Which Eve Lamore had a mailing address at the Fitchton for the purpose of playing the stock market? The real Eve or the impostor?

The taxi went over a bump, and when Masterman landed in his seat again, his thoughts were, for a moment, jumbled. In trying to sort them out, an idea dawned upon him. The motive for the murder—the execution of the murder—the possible identity of the murderer. Why, it was so daring—so colossal in conception, that he could not expect even the police to really fathom the depths of the mystery. He hardly dared think of it, and, to ease his mind, started whistling *Rudolph's* song from "La Bohème," concentrating on the melody to rid his mind of a murder plot so great in its ramifications that he thought for a moment that he was insane to have entertained it.

But his mind could not stray from the few facts which the police had gleaned. The note from the Three Men from Cayenne—the forged Walloon letter—Lamore murdered with his own gun—Lamore's secret life—the chair that had been raped of its wealth. All these factors, if fitted properly into the puzzle, betrayed the actual killer. They could point in the direction he desired.

He realized, however, that only a confession—finger prints, too—would betray the person who really shot Andrew Lamore. Red-handed evidence was what was needed. There had been too much clever camouflage!

The taxi pulled up in front of the Lamore place, and as Masterman got out, Eve waved to him from the drawing-room window. And it was she who opened the door to him.

"More bad news," she said, taking his hat and stick. "Calder has had a nervous breakdown."

"Really," Masterman said with a smile.

"He collapsed this afternoon when Mr. Grainger and I got home. I had him sent to Doctor Bruce's Sanitarium. And can you imagine what's happened now?"

"He has disappeared."

The girl stared at him with unbelieving eyes. "How did you know?"

"I expect all sorts of things to happen now."

"He did disappear. He left the sanitarium an hour after he arrived. I called up at six to find out how he was and they said he had gone home. I phoned his home. His sister said he wasn't there, and was surprised to learn that he had had a breakdown. I haven't told Inspector Cadigan, though he phoned a few minutes ago."

"Don't tell him—yet, Eve."

"Do you think Calder is a little—unbalanced?"

"No, he's quite sane. I suppose one of the maids will take his place?"

"Yes, I'm breaking Moira in."

They went in to dinner. Eve was rather a little sad as she stared from time to time at her father's empty chair. But Masterman did his best to cheer her up, recounting amusing stories and scenes from musical shows he had seen. She responded but frequently lapsed into despondency.

They returned to the drawing-room, where the coffee was served.

"By the way, Eve, did you ever stop

at the Hotel Fitchton?" Masterman's question was put casually.

She looked at him sharply. "Why, no. But it's odd that you ask that. I've been receiving a lot of redirected mail from an Eve Lamore that used to live there."

"Circulars about stocks and bonds?"

"Yes. Why, you must be a mind reader!"

They laughed, and, despite Eve's curiosity, Masterman skillfully turned the conversation into other channels. But while he talked, his mind ran on two tracks. He spoke from one and wondered with the other. Why did Eve look at him so sharply when he asked her if she had ever stayed at the Fitchton? Was it surprise over the coincidence of the two Eve Lamores, or surprise that he had found out?

At his insistence, Eve went to the piano. She didn't want to play—hers being a house of sorrow—but Masterman was insistent. He reasoned that she was headed for melancholia if she was permitted to brood over her father's murder. She loved music, and it would help to ease her emotions.

They began to chat while she played, and presently she left the piano and he rose from his chair and faced her.

"Eve," he said in a serious voice, "I love you."

She dropped her head and her hand fell on his arm.

"I've loved you," he continued, "from the first moment I saw you."

She raised her head. Her eyes were bright as they met his.

"It was that way—with me, Martin!"

He took her in his arms and pressed his lips upon hers.

"Eve, let's get married. Let's forget the past—what has happened here. We can go away—abroad—and seize a little happiness—the happiness that belongs to us."

"But—father!"

"Oh, we can wait a while, dear. But I only want to be sure of you, certain of your love."

"Martin, I love you. That's enough for me to say. I'll marry you whenever you say the word." Hers was a true, unquestioning faith—a trusting love.

"Tell no one for a while, darling," he said. "Not even Grainger. We'll keep it a secret."

"It'll be thrilling, Martin—us loving each other and no one else knowing."

"Not for a while, anyway."

Before he left her, Masterman asked for permission to go upstairs to her boudoir. She was puzzled but she let him go. He went to the table where he had hidden Grainger's whisky glass, and, taking it out nimbly, he wrapped it in his handkerchief and dropped it in his pocket. He said he would produce Grainger's finger prints for Cadigan, and he meant to keep his word—even now, knowing what he knew, suspecting what he suspected.

When he took his leave of Eve, he walked as though he were parading on a pavement of eggs. His heart was high and he felt as light as a bit of down. The precinct house was in Sixty-eighth Street and he made his way there.

Cadigan was not in, so he left the glass with a note, asking that Grogan phone him in the morning.

There was a moon out and he was in love. He wanted to walk and think—think of Eve who loved him, too. So he decided that a stroll down to the Fitchton would do him good. He started down Lexington Avenue.

At Fifty-ninth Street he stopped a minute to let the east and westbound traffic go its way. Then he felt that feeling which is perhaps part of man's heritage from his animal ancestors. He felt that somebody was following him.

Pausing to light a cigarette, he turned and faced north. Half a block away, there was a man in a felt hat and a loose gray overcoat. The man was facing him, standing still.

Masterman crossed Fifty-ninth Street and waited for traffic again at Fifty-seventh Street. He looked over his shoulder and the man in the gray overcoat was still half a block behind him.

He went west to Park Avenue and down to Fifty-fourth Street before he turned again. The man was still half a block behind him, standing still.

He went over to Madison Avenue and his pursuer still followed. At Forty-sixth Street he dodged through the lobby of the Ritz Carlton, going in on the Madison Avenue side and coming out on the side street. The man in the gray coat was waiting for him at the corner of Madison. Evidently, he, too, knew that the Ritz had those two entrances.

Masterman decided to change his tactics, and walked directly toward his shadower. The man's eyes flashed and he turned his back to Masterman, who approached him.

"Are you, by any chance, following me?" Masterman asked. He could not see the man's face.

Instead of replying, the man walked rapidly northward, and, a good half a block away, turned and watched Masterman. For the moment, Masterman was moved to going after the fellow, taking hold of him, and forcing an explanation of such strange behavior. But he thought better of it and continued his way down Madison.

At Thirty-fourth Street, he looked back and was relieved to find that his shadower was not in sight. There was another man in a dark coat walking toward him slowly. He returned to Lexington and turned south again. The towers of the Fitchton were now in sight, their illuminations vying with those of the invisible Metropolitan Tower.

He lighted another cigarette at Twenty-third Street, and, turning away from the wind, happened to look northward and caught sight of the new man in the dark coat. He was obviously the same man by virtue of his size and mannerisms. He, too, had stopped walking.

Two men were following him. Masterman was puzzled but unafraid. Since they had not stopped him by this time, they were only interested in where he lived. And they would find that out sooner or later. They knew him but he didn't know them. So he went on to his hotel, determined to wait for his shadowers' next move.

At the entrance to the Fitchton, he stopped and saw the wearer of the dark coat staring at him. The man was too far up the block for his features to be distinguishable; but somehow, there was something about the man that was familiar to Masterman.

He went up to the hotel desk.

"I'm expecting a visitor," he said to the clerk. "Get a good look at him. But don't bother him. Tell him all he wants to know."

Masterman went to his room. He undressed, took a shower, and, after putting on his pajamas and a dressing robe, sat down to read. There was a copy of Edgar Wallace's latest thriller on his night table and he was soon immersed in a horrible mystery plot replete with murder and poison and crooks.

The telephone bell jangled, piercing the stillness of the night. Masterman reached out and took up the receiver.

"Is this Martin Masterman?" a hoarse voice inquired.

"It is."

"We want to see you."

"Who is this?" Masterman thought he recognized the voice.

No reply was made to that query. "To-morrow night come to No. 786 West Forty-ninth Street. And come alone, if you value your life. No harm will come to you if you obey instructions. We only want to talk to you. Knock at Kling's door."

"Who is this?" Masterman reiterated impatiently.

"Cayenne!"

"Oh. Very well, I'll be there."

"At eleven thirty. And alone!"

The invisible speaker who identified himself as "Cayenne" hung up without further ceremony.

Masterman quickly called the desk clerk.

"Has anybody been here for me?" he asked.

"Yes, two men. One wore a dark coat and one was in gray. They wanted to know who you were. They came in after you went in the elevator. I think they were foreigners—Polish or Armenian. One had an accent. I gave them your name. No trouble, I hope?"

"No, it's perfectly all right."

Masterman went to bed confident that the secret of Andrew Lamore's death was no longer his own property.

CHAPTER XV.

CALDER.

THE telephone was beginning to play a vital part in Masterman's life. Every detail of the Lamore murder solution seemed to come out of one of Alexander Graham Bell's improved invention. Its bells awakened Masterman at seven thirty the next morning.

"Grogan speaking," the caller said. "I got those Grainger prints."

"And what did you find?" Masterman asked casually.

"That they're not the same as those on the girl's bedroom wall—or the same as those on the gun."

"They're left-hand prints, aren't they, Grogan?"

"Yes, they are. I meant to say that."

"And those on the gun are right-hand prints?"

"That's it. So are the ones on the wall."

"Thank you very much, Grogan. Any trace of them in your criminal files?"

"No, we looked them up days ago. But whoever left them had dirty hands, I know."

"And now they're bloody hands."

Masterman breakfasted heartily and went to his office. He signed a few letters, dictated others, and notified his secretary that he would be out for the day.

His first move was to go to Marlow & Co.'s offices. But when he arrived in the reception room, he saw that the girl who posed as Eve Lamore was not at her desk. It was ten thirty and her typewriter was closed.

He asked for Tommy Warner and was shown to his friend's private office. Tommy was effusive with his greetings. The two men had not seen each other in ages, though they had done business by telephone.

"Tommy, I want you to help me—and no questions asked."

"Gee, but you're mysterious these days. All right, what's up?"

"I want you to identify a certain lady for me. Come to the typists' room with me."

Masterman led his friend to the desk of the girl he sought. "Whose desk is this, Tommy?"

"Why, that's Miss Kenton's desk. I use her for dictation lots of times. She's sick to-day."

"Get me her address and telephone number, will you?"

"Say——"

"Now, no questions, remember."

Tommy went to the head typist's desk, asked her a few questions, and after she consulted a little book of hers, returned with the desired information. "Her full name is Helen Kenton. She lives at No. 9871 Broadway—that's pretty far uptown—and her telephone is Van Cortlandt 67323. She's been with us about two years. A very fine stenographer, I might add—has a head on her shoulders."

"I've no doubt of it!" Masterman was sarcastic.

He returned to Tommy's private office and called Miss Kenton's number. A gruff-voiced woman answered the phone.

"I'd like to speak to Miss Kenton," Masterman said.

"You would? Well, she's not here. She left last night for a trip to Europe —I think it was Europe, she said."

"Has she left a forwarding address for her mail?"

"Sure. The American Express Company, Paris, care of Drake."

That was a blind alley, Masterman thought. But he had one more question.

"Did she say what boat she was going on?"

"No, she didn't. But I think it's that new boat—the *Bremen*. I saw it on pasters she was putting on her bags."

Masterman thanked the woman for her information. Tommy Warner was staring at him, open-mouthed.

"What's the idea of this Sherlock Holmes business, anyway?" he demanded. "What do you want with Kenton?"

"Big secret. See you next week."

And Masterman dashed for the elevator. When he reached the ground floor, he called Cadigan. The inspector was in and he listened attentively to Masterman's account of the false Eve Lamore, Miss Helen Kenton's behavior, the money in the Cressley Trust Company vault, and Miss Kenton's flight to Europe on the *Bremen*.

"I'll put a dozen men on it right away," the inspector said. "The *Bremen* sails to-night at twelve one, I believe. We'll cover the ship. But you should have told me all this when you first found out about it. You've no right, Masterman, to play detective by yourself. It looks odd to me."

"Forget it!" And Masterman hung up.

He returned to Marlow & Co.'s office and went in unannounced to see Tommy Warner.

"What? You back again?" Tommy cried in surprise. "I suppose you want the lowdown on Marlow himself now."

"Precisely. The words out of my mouth. I want Marlow's cable address. And D'Arnet's, too."

"Go chase yourself. I'll not get mixed up in any of your funny business." Tommy was angry now. He felt that he was being used as a pawn in a strange game of chess.

"Tommy, if you don't help me, I'll have to call in the police."

"Police!" Tommy thought fast. It would not help the house of Marlow if the Street knew that the police were conducting an investigation in their office. "All right, I'll get the addresses."

He left the office. Masterman smoked. It was easily half an hour before Tommy returned. His face was a picture of bewilderment.

"We've got no addresses for Marlow and D'Arnet," he said. "Caster didn't want to tell me about it, until I told him about your police threat. We get all our instructions from the old man through Picke & Co. on Broad Street. The old man has a slice of that partnership. The dope on how we are to behave is phoned over to Caster every evening around six by a Miss Drew or a Mr. Hant. They get cable and telephone instructions from Paris, Caster said."

"That's a rather strange procedure, isn't it?"

"Very. I can't figure it out. Why should the old man relay stuff from another brokerage house—even if he has an interest in it?"

"Maybe I'll tell you some day."

Masterman left Tommy in a state of complete befuddlement. He walked around to the offices of Picke & Co. on Broad Street, right next to the Stock

Exchange itself. He knew no one there and had to trust to luck that he would get the information he sought.

Arriving in the reception room of Picke & Co., he asked to see Mr. Hant.

"Hant? There's no Hant here," the receptionist said.

"Well, Miss Drew then."

"Drew? I guess you've got the wrong office. There's no Miss Drew working here. I know all the names."

Masterman returned to the street and went over to Trinity Churchyard into which Wall Street emptied its noon-hour strollers. He found a place on a bench and carefully pieced his points together.

It was clear to him that Wall Street was involved in the murder of Andrew Lamore. An Eve Lamore put up two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in securities with Marlow & Co. and doubled her money. She was living at the Fitchton then. Also, she was working for Marlow & Co. under the name of Helen Kenton, pounding a typewriter daily from nine to five thirty. And she had deposited nearly one hundred thousand dollars in the vault of the Cressley Trust Company—in Eve Lamore's name.

Marlow & Co. had a director named D'Arnet. The latter bore the same name as one of the Three Men from Cayenne. Both were supposed to be in Europe. Yet they gave their business orders to Marlow's firm's office through Picke & Co. A Miss Drew and a Mr. Hant were the relayers of such orders.

Yet there was no Miss Drew or Mr. Hant.

It was clear to Masterman that some one in New York was communicating with Marlow & Co. from some other place than Picke & Co. Nor was there any proof that Marlow or D'Arnet existed. Mightn't they be the names used by others who had reason to hide their identity? And somehow, Marlow & Co. had something to do with Lamore's murder. Helen Kenton was undoubtedly the tool of those who hid behind the names of Marlow and D'Arnet. And their connection with the case was through the money the Kenton woman put in the vault under the name of Eve Lamore—money that looked as if it might have come out of a stuffed chair —Burke had said it had "feathers on it"—down and ticking.

That money!

Masterman leaped to his feet. Several people near by stared at him, wondering if he had been seized with a fit.

That money would be the first thing Helen Kenton would go for if she was leaving the country. He dashed through Wall Street, walking rapidly, running at times, headed for Hanover Square and the Cressley Trust Company. He must stop Helen Kenton from getting that money.

Burke met him as he went through the steel doors of the vault.

"That Lamore woman," Masterman said breathlessly. "Has she been here yet?"

"Oh, she was here at nine this morning. She cleaned out her box and gave it up. Said she was going away."

Masterman cursed himself for his behavior. If that money really belonged to the Lamore estate—which was Eve's —he was responsible for it. He should have told Cadigan—let the inspector handle it in his own way.

Somewhere in New York—one of millions of people—Helen Kenton was safe from scrutiny—with nearly one hundred thousand dollars in her possession. She was wanted by the police for posing as Eve Lamore. And with her possibly, were those who called themselves Marlow and D'Arnet!

Masterman left Burke and returned to the street. But he stood in front of the bank building as though getting his bearings.

A familiar face bobbed out of the passing throng. It was Calder's.

"Hello, Calder," Masterman called to him. "What are you doing in this part of the world?"

The butler's eyes met Masterman's. "I'm to meet a friend." His tone was one of annoyance.

"I heard you were ill yesterday, Calder."

"I was." The man's eyes now avoided the other's.

"Why did you leave the sanitarium? Miss Lamore was worried about you."

"I went home. Thought I'd be better off there with my sister."

"But your sister said you weren't there," Masterman snapped.

"You're calling me a liar, Mr. Masterman!" Calder had become surly.

"Are you by any chance waiting for Miss Helen Kenton?" Masterman asked quickly.

Calder's face betrayed him. It was filled with surprise—that his secret was known. He turned to move off when Masterman caught him by the arm.

"I think you've got a lot to explain —to the police, Calder."

"The police!" The man's voice grew hysterical. "No—I have nothing for them, Mr. Masterman. I swear to God, I haven't! I wasn't in the house that night."

"But you saw who was!" Masterman divined.

"No—no, I didn't."

"You're here to collect hush money from the Kenton woman."

Calder admitted Masterman's guess by the look in his eyes. Then, with a mighty effort, he wrenched himself free of Masterman's grasp and ran toward Wall Street. Masterman tried to give chase but the noon-hour crowd of office workers was at its thickest and the butler was soon lost to sight.

Masterman felt a keen sense of defeat. In Calder he had held a key to the mystery. Five persons were in Lamore's house the night he was shot. Walloon identified one of them—and said one might have been a woman. Helen Kenton? He doubted it.

But the butler's behavior was significant. If he wasn't one of the four shadows seen by Walloon, he had a pretty good idea who one or more of them was. And that person was willing to pay blackmail money to him through Helen Kenton.

Helen Kenton. Calder had been expecting to meet her at the bank. She was bound to turn up. But after waiting an hour or more, Masterman gave it up. She either recognized him or was disregarding the butler altogether.

He was returning to his office when a newsboy touched him on the arm.

"A guy down the block give me a note for you. Said you'd give me four bits for it." He flourished the note

Masterman redeemed the note with a fifty-cent piece. "Who was the man? What did he look like?"

The newsie's description was entirely unfamiliar. Masterman turned to the note. It consisted of a few lines of hastily scribbled words:

MASTERMAN: Keep your nose out of affairs that don't concern you. Otherwise, you'll get a piece of lead with your name on it. And you won't remember the gift.

CAYENNE.

The handwriting was the same as that on the forged note of Walloon's which was found in Eve's boudoir.

And he had an appointment with "Cayenne" at eleven thirty that night. Perhaps he would learn more then. He hoped so, anyway.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STRANGLER.

WHILE he was in his hotel room toward six thirty, Masterman received a telephone call from Eve.

"How are you, darling?" he said.

"I've been happier than ever before. I've known for a whole day that you

love me, Martin." Her voice was ecstatic.

"I feel the same way about it. I know that you love me--and nothing else matters."

"What have you been up to, Martin?"

"Busy at the office all day." He could not tell her that the mystery surrounding her father's death was coming to a head.

"And Eve, would you love me, no matter what happened to me?"

"No matter what happens, darling. I'll always love you, Martin."

Masterman gave her an excuse for not having dinner with her. He wanted to be by himself before his interview—safe from betraying his fears to her whom he loved. They agreed on dinner the following night.

He dined alone in the hotel dining room and went for a stroll in Gramercy Park. He was conscious all the while that he was being watched. Cayenne was taking no chances.

Walking the streets seemed futile, so he took a Fifth Avenue bus up to Forty-second Street and went to the Paramount. The movie was about love and Masterman assured himself that he knew more about it than the scenario writer. He stayed to see part of the show a second time, until his watch warned him of the hour of eleven.

On leaving the theater, he walked up Broadway to Forty-ninth Street. The famous thoroughfare was ablaze with a million lights, and casehardened New Yorkers passed through their light with no thought of the source. Only the out-of-towners paused to stare at the dots of brilliance that spelled out the names of shaving creams, coffee, actresses and new movies to be seen. He turned west and walked several long blocks.

He found himself a block from the river in a dark, deserted street. There were warehouses on either end, and hudbled between them on the north side of the block were four tenements, drab and lightless. The third one from Twelfth Avenue was No. 786, the house designated by Cayenne.

It was only eleven fifteen and Masterman decided to wait—to see, if possible, the man who was expecting him. He slid into the deep, dark doorway of a warehouse opposite No. 786 and watched.

Presently a man entered the deserted block. Masterman recognized him immediately. It was the wearer of the gray coat, the man who had shadowed him the night before. The fellow entered No. 786.

A minute or so later, Masterman noticed the light in a top floor flat was turned on. Whoever did so, drew the curtains together in two windows, but still light leaked through them.

It was not long before a second man entered the block, and vanished into the black maw that was the door of No. 786.

Instinctively, Masterman's eyes went up to the two slits of light in the top floor windows. They were thin strips of light running from the top to the bottom of the window.

And while he watched, they went out.

Now that, Masterman thought, was strange. He had deduced that the first man he saw enter the house turned on the lights. Now, after the second man went into No. 786, the lights in the top floor windows went out.

The sound of heavy footsteps rang out in the night, echoing from wall to wall. A third man, who Masterman identified as his dark-coated shadower of the previous night, was making his way toward No. 786. There was something in his walk that reminded Masterman of a cat.

This third man entered No. 786 and vanished.

Masterman glanced at his watch and saw that it lacked but a minute to eleven thirty. He crossed the street, went up the stoop of No. 786, found the front

door open, and went into the narrow tenement hall.

The footsteps of the other man who preceded him could still be heard on the bare wooden stairs near the top of the house. Cautiously, Masterman mounted the first flight. On the second landing, he struck a match and looked at the names scribbled on the doors. There was no "Kling" to be found there.

If his hunch was right, the three men he had seen were in the flat on the top floor. He went to the third and fourth landings and still found no "Kling."

On the fifth floor front there was a door that he approached noiselessly on tiptoe that bore the name of "Kling." He figured it out that the lighted windows belonged to this flat.

There was a noise in the flat. Some one struck a match behind the door.

Masterman realized that if some one opened that door they would see him crouching by the banisters in a much-too-curious attitude. A sputtering gas jet lighted the hall, but the stairs leading above, evidently to the roof, ended in darkness. He slid past the door and climbed the stairs until he was safe in the pent-house shadows.

Another match was struck behind Kling's door.

Masterman realized that the speaker was referring to him. Cayenne was in that flat and expecting him. There was no use stalling any longer. He quickly descended the steps and knocked at the door.

It opened.

Within was inky darkness.

"Come in, Masterman," a voice said.

He stepped forward. He could see light coming through a door crack at the end of a hall.

The door slammed behind him. Something slipped over his head. A noose. It was of wire.

The wire tightened about his throat. He managed to slip a finger under it. But the wire was merciless in the hands of the strangler. He sank to his knees. His blood throbbed to get above his throat. His head grew thick, heavy. He was conscious that his eyes were bulging and hurt.

Air—— Air! He wanted air!

The strangler knocked his knees from under him and he fell to the floor, his head suspended by the biting, choking wire. The breathing of the strangler grew hard.

Masterman ceased to fight back. His plight was one of sheer helplessness His body relaxed, crumpled at the strangler's touch.

A breath whipped across his face. But he could not move or draw a lungful of air. Was he dead? He tried to open his eyes. It was an awful effort. They felt sore and thick. But he managed to force the lids apart.

A face was close to his. Narrowed eyes were peering into his own.

And he knew that face—recognized it.

Then infinite darkness engulfed him —before he could utter the name—even in his own mind.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIRD MAN FROM CAYENNE.

BUT Masterman was not dead. He was suddenly aware of the fact. He tried to open his eyes again and, much to his amazement, he found that the lids moved easily. He opened his eyes wide but was only conscious of a vast white haze.

His throat hurt—burned like blazes. His fingers went up to it and discovered that his entire neck was swathed in bandages. Then he tried to smile. He knew he was in a hospital and not in heaven, because they wouldn't bandage a neck in heaven.

"He's coming out of it," a strange voice said from afar.

"It's about time!" That was Cadigan's voice. Masterman knew it easily.

He attempted to focus his eyes. The white haze began to take form. He saw black bulks. They were people. Then a face bent close to his.

It was Eve's.

And she kissed his lips.

"I was so afraid, Martin, that you'd never come back to me," she whispered.

"Now, Miss Lamore," Cadigan snapped. "Please let him alone. I want to talk to him."

Masterman moistened his lips and a nurse wet his mouth with a sponge.

Masterman tried his voice. It worked. "I want some water."

"Not right away," the nurse said. "In a little while you can have some."

A doctor came into the room. He took Masterman's pulse and nodded to Cadigan. Masterman watched them; they seemed like slow motion pictures to him. His eyes still hurt.

"Do you want to sit up, Mr. Masterman?" the doctor asked. "Inspector Cadigan wants to talk to you."

"I'm all right. I can sit up," Masterman said.

The nurse brought more pillows, and, with the doctor's aid, propped him up in bed. It was then that he saw Cadigan's face was serious, troubled.

"How did I get here? Who found me?" were his first questions.

"The police found you, Masterman," Cadigan explained. "They found you in the flat with Ratine and Voiseau. You were hanging from a gas jet with your head through a wire noose. If you hadn't gotten your finger through the noose, you wouldn't be here. You'd be in the morgue."

"Martin!" Eve said in a pleading voice. "What happened? How did you come to go there? There must be an explanation."

"I was invited there by Cayenne."

"Yeah, Cayenne my eye!" That was Kildane, sour and sardonic.

"What happened?" the inspector demanded.

"I went into the dark flat. Some one called to me to come in. When I got beyond the door, it was kicked shut. Then the wire noose went over my head and I passed out for want of air."

Cadigan came close to the bed and transfixed Masterman with his eyes. "Is that all?"

"No. I saw the face of the strangler —and I believe that person was the person who killed Lamore. In fact, I'm sure of it."

"You saw *his* face?" Cadigan sneered.

"Yes, I saw it. But I didn't say it was a man!"

"You saw the same face then when you were shaving yourself this morning—saw it in your own mirror." Cadigan's words came slowly but forcefully.

"What?" Masterman was bewildered.

"You're under arrest for the murder of Andrew Lamore, Masterman. And I could add the murders of Ratine and Voiseau if I wanted to, for they are dead, as you know. You killed them because the game was up. Then you tried suicide—hanging by the wire. But Kling came home and found you."

Masterman's eyes met the policeman's fierce glare—a look laden with hatred and anger.

"You are pretty smart, Masterman, misleading the police with your cockeyed theories—involving everybody imaginable from the famous Three Men from Cayenne to Calder and Grainger and Walloon."

Eve was sitting in a corner, weeping. Her sobs reached the man in the bed and he writhed. But Cadigan was not through.

"We know who you are, Masterman. That private detective agency turned up the dirt last night, and I went after you, but you'd flown the coop. You never went to Princeton and you have no parents out West where you said they were.

"But we've identified you—Michel

d'Arnet, escaped convict from Cayenne. You're the third man from Cayenne; Ratine and Voiseau were the others. The Paris prefect of police cabled your finger-print classifications and a perfect description of you when you were convicted a month after the armistice—convicted of robbing Andre Lefebre, who was Andrew Lamore. You three swore you'd get him, and one of you did. But you're all in it, accessories after the fact."

Eve got up and ran toward the bed, her face wet with tears. She caught up Masterman's hand and kissed it.

"Martin, tell him it isn't true! Please! It's killing me, this terrible accusation!"

"I guess it's time for truth, Eve." Masterman turned to Cadigan. "Yes, I was Michel d'Arnet. What you say is true. I was convicted of robbing Lefebre. I was sent to Cayenne with Ratine and Voiseau."

"And you escaped and made good your threat. You killed him." Cadigan leaned forward and spoke insistently.

"No, I didn't do that."

"You even went farther, Masterman. You swore you'd even get his kin, and you've gotten Eve Lamore to agree to marry you. We got that much out of her this morning. You wanted all the money that was left and you'd marry her to get it."

Masterman made no answer to these charges. He merely watched the inspector with calm, quizzical eyes.

"You were one of the four shadows Walloon saw in the house the night of the murder. Ratine and Voiseau were the others."

"That makes only three, inspector. Who was the fourth man?"

"Ah, I've got you on that, too. It was Calder. We picked him up last night on the pier from where the *Bremen* sailed. And we got Helen Kenton, your side kick, too. She'll say nothing, but we've connected you two and the Cressley Trust Company. Burke, the vault manager, saw you two meet outside there the other day."

"You say Calder was the fourth man in the house?" Masterman said, puzzled.

"Yes, he admits it. He saw you coming out of the house after the shot was fired. He even heard that."

"What was he doing on the *Bremen's* pier?"

"He hasn't said yet, but we'll knock that out of him soon. Do you deny being in the house that night?"

"No, I was in the house."

Eve screamed and fell down beside the bed, clutching hysterically at the counterpane. The nurse and doctor picked her up, held smelling salts under her nose, and sat her in the chair by the window. Masterman watched all this with pain in his heart.

A nurse announced Grainger and he was ushered in. He shook hands with Masterman.

"I've just heard about your unpleasant experience," he said. "I'm very sorry for you. If I can be of any service——"

Masterman smiled at him weakly. "No, thanks just the same."

"He's charged with Lamore's murder!" Cadigan said proudly. "He's D'Arnet—one of the Three Men from Cayenne. French finger prints prove it. And he admits it. Even admits being in the house when the murder was committed."

"Masterman!" Grainger was amazed. "Is this true?"

"That much of it is."

"And he was going to marry the girl," Cadigan added scornfully. "He wanted all he could get."

"Shut up, Cadigan!" Masterman said fiercely. "If you want me to talk, keep a decent tongue in your head."

"You want to make a statement now?" Cadigan whipped out a notebook and nodded to Kildane to do like-

wise. "Anything you say can be used against you, you know."

"Thanks for telling me, Cadigan. But I want Calder—and Grogan, with his powder—here before I say my piece. And I want Walloon along, too. Bring them here and I'll make a statement."

"I'll do no such thing!" Cadigan barked.

"Suit yourself, Cadigan. Get them here or you get not a word out of me."

The inspector and Kildane withdrew to a corner for a hurried conference. They returned to the bedside.

"All right, Masterman. We'll give you your way."

"It's wise of you, Cadigan. And have Grogan bring all the photos of the finger prints with him. I think I can surprise you."

A uniformed policeman was called in from the hall and directed to sit at the prisoner's bedside. He was warned to frustrate any attempts the prisoner Masterman might make on his own life.

"I'd like Mr. Grainger to wait, too. I may need your advice, Mr. Grainger."

"Why, you even suspected him," Cadigan sneered. "Had his finger prints sneaked and compared."

"I'm sorry. I was mistaken. I was too anxious to run down the murderer. But I know him now."

"Of course I'll help you, Masterman," Grainger said. "Though things look bad for you, you haven't been proven guilty."

In a little while, Masterman was alone with Eve—and the policeman beside his bed, a big, beefy-looking Irishman who thumbed the pages of the *Police Gazette*.

"Eve, come here."

The girl looked up and stared at him from her chair by the window. Her eyes were clouded with tears and the sound of his voice made her cry again.

"Please, Eve." He held out his hand for her.

She approached the bed but avoided his hand.

"Remember our phone talk last night? I asked you to believe in me—to love me—no matter what happened."

She nodded and turned her head away.

"You said you'd always believe in me. I asked you to do that because I feared I might be in a predicament like the one I'm in now."

She looked at him quickly—searchingly.

"I didn't kill your father. You must believe me, Eve darling."

She took his hand, hardly aware of what she was doing. Her eyes grew bright, happy. "I do believe you, Martin."

He drew her down and they kissed. The Irish cop on duty beside the prisoner grew red in the face, coughed and rattled his paper. But the two lovers paid no attention to him after that.

An hour later, Inspector Cadigan returned with Calder, Walloon, Grogan, and Helen Kenton thrown in for good measure. Grainger, who had been waiting in the reception room downstairs, was notified and went up to the private room. Chairs were brought in at Masterman's request and all sat down. Three newspaper men who heard of the unusual procedure were bodily ejected from the floor by the Irish cop.

"I see you brought Helen Kenton, Cadigan," Masterman laughed. "Why didn't you bring Hiram J. Marlow, too?"

The Kenton woman started. Her eyes looked from side to side at those in the room, but she said nothing.

"I'll begin what I've got to say," Masterman said. "I was Michel d'Arnet. I served two years with the French army during the war. In 1918 I was nineteen, and I went to Paris from my home town to make my fortune. Ratine and Voiseau were two men I had fought beside, and naturally I looked them up.

They were kind to me and I visited them often and we went to the cafés together.

"I was with them one night when the police entered the place and arrested the three of us for robbing the bank of Lefebre Frères—they said we tunneled our way into the building and blew open the safe.

"Andre Lefebre was passing the bank shortly after the robbery. He identified us as the three men he saw coming out the front door of his bank with the loot in suit cases."

Masterman looked at Eve. Her face was distorted with horror.

"Though Lefebre stuck to his identification, I believe he made an honest mistake. He thought we were the men. If you know Paris, all working men look alike in the night. They're like Chinamen that way. We were convicted and sentenced to transportation to the prison colony in French Guiana. We were young and we had been wronged; and in the heat of rage, we swore we'd cut Lefebre's throat when we got away. Everybody who goes to the Devil's Island colony thinks he can get away.

"We went to that hell on earth. We chopped wood at St. Laurent du Maroni. We lived like dogs. I was sent to Charvein in the jungles, where I cut mahogany—without a stitch on me. That was punishment for an imagined infraction of rules. Insects crawled and lived on my body. I couldn't even bribe a guard for some covering. It was there that I contracted malaria.

"Later I was sent to Cayenne, and there I met Ratine and Voiseau again. We plotted with Dunois and waited for a chance at the governor's launch. We got it. Dunois was killed by a guard and we dumped him overboard. We made Brazil and got to Para. They couldn't send us back from there, thank God.

"We separated. I made my way to New York on a tramp steamer. Luck was with me and I got a job as kitchen boy in a French restaurant. I learned English. I learned it well, because I wanted to. It was a refuge from the past. In two years' time, I spoke without an accent and knew American idioms and slang like a native.

"I had saved my money, so I bought myself a fine outfit of clothing. My plans were made. I wanted to be rich, to make money—and Wall Street was the place. In my new clothes I tackled the big banking houses for a job. Clare & Co. took me. They believed me to be a Princeton graduate. I began at the bottom and worked my way up to a junior partnership. I had nothing to be ashamed of. I was not a thief. But I knew my past record was against me.

"I never heard of Andre Lefebre after leaving France, nor did I seek him. When I met his daughter, Eve Lamore, I hadn't the slightest idea who her father was. It was only on the night that I met him with Eve that I recognized him.

"But vengeance was far from my thoughts. I, too, had made a new life and had no desire to jeopardize it by evening an old score with Andre Lefebre. I had suffered because of him, but I had lost nothing that life can give by it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GLASS.

THESE statements were met with a deadly silence. Cadigan and Kildane were frankly incredulous. Only Eve seemed to have faith.

Masterman continued his story:

"Now as to the night of the murder: About nine thirty, I decided to drop in on Eve, and I went uptown on a street car. When I reached Sixty-sixth Street, I saw a man whom I had seen before. He walked ahead of me up the street, and, to my surprise, quickly mounted the steps to the Lamore front door, pushed it open, and stepped into the darkened hall.

"The man's identity came to me in a flash. My comrade from Devil's Island —Voiseau. Then I remembered the threat. And Andre Lefebre was no longer my enemy, but Eve's father. I, too, entered the house and hid myself in the living room.

"There wasn't a sound to be heard in the house. I was certain that the servants were all out. There were voices on the stairs, and I identified Ratine talking with Voiseau. They knew the house was empty and were planning to rob it.

"Somewhere I heard a clock strike ten. The men on the stairs were startled. A little while later, there was a noise at the front door. It was Walloon coming in. I overheard Ratine hold him up and lead him upstairs.

"Again the house was still. It was like a graveyard—or the Guiana jungles at night when there's no moon. Presently Ratine and Voiseau descended the stairs and went to the back of the house—to the dining room, I think—probably looking for the silver plate.

"Then I heard another noise. There was some one at the door. Lamore entered, slammed the door behind him, and went directly to his office, where he turned the light up. I could see him removing his coat and hat. I debated whether to tell him about the burglars in the house. I was also a housebreaker in the eyes of the law. But I decided to brave it.

"I was coming out of my hiding place when I heard some one descending the stairs stealthily. It was Walloon, I thought, but the light from Lamore's office made the hall a little bright and I saw that it was not.

"The figure straightened out like a dart, shot through the office door, and the door closed, blotting out the light and the figures behind it. I could hear excited voices in the office. The two were in there for fully five minutes. Then came the muffled report of a pistol.

"The door of the office opened, but there was no light inside, now. I saw the figure cross the hall and enter the drawing-room where I was."

Cadigan couldn't contain himself any longer.

"Was it a man or a woman?" he demanded.

"I didn't have the slightest idea," Masterman replied. "But I knew it wasn't Lamore. The figure crouched beside a chair. I heard the cloth ripped open and then a crunching sound as of crisp, new money being handled. The figure was busy at the chair for some time—three minutes, I should say. Then it vanished into the hall, and I heard the front door open and close.

"Without a thought for Lamore or the other men in the house, I ran to the door and looked up and down the street. There was no one in sight—not a soul on the block. I knew that Lamore was dead and that I could not help him. How I knew it, I don't know—but I did know it.

"I waited in a doorway across the street, wondering who the killer could be. And I knew I had to wait for Eve and be with her when she learned that her father was dead.

"I saw Voiseau come out of the house, and, a little later, Walloon. They both walked quickly out of sight. Where Ratine left the house puzzled me, but I surmised that he heard the shot and left, too.

"Miss Lamore came up to the door in a taxi and I met her. We entered the house and found the body. The rest you know."

Kildane coughed to clear his throat. Then he went to the bedside. "You know who the murderer is now, Masterman?"

"I do."

"Who?" Cadigan cried. "For Heaven's sake tell me!" He was believing Masterman's story.

"You'd laugh at me if I told you,"

Masterman chuckled. "You'd all think I was crazy."

Cadigan fumed. "It's a trick to stall us. You're up to more tricks."

"Please tell, Martin!" Eve cried out. "Who killed my father?"

Masterman was about to speak when he suddenly developed a fit of coughing. His eyes got red and he seemed to be choking. But he waved the doctor and nurse into their corner and seemed to gain control of himself. Yet the moment he started to speak, the coughing returned.

"Calder — some — some water — please!" Masterman gasped.

The butler's eyes held terror in them. He stood with his back to the wall, trembling. He did not move to help the man who was gasping for water.

Grainger gave Calder a contemptuous glance, stepped forward and picked up the hospital water jug beside Masterman's bed, and poured him a drink. Masterman took the glass gratefully and gulped the water. He smiled his appreciation to the banker.

With his voice now under control, Masterman caught Miss Kenton's eye. "Miss Kenton, will you please tell us who Mr. Hiram J. Marlow is?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," she said defiantly.

"Where did you get the money you put in the Cressley vault under the name of Eve Lamore? Why did you use her name? Who told you to?"

"Nobody. It was a name that came into my head. I inherited the money and didn't want anybody to know." The woman met his gaze boldly.

"You inherited the money from Andrew Lamore's drawing-room chair—at the cost of his life." Masterman accentuated his last six words.

The woman stared at him. Her eyes grew uneasy. "I don't know what you're talking about." She spoke without nervousness.

"You know Hiram J. Marlow is wanted for the murder of Andrew Lamore."

Miss Kenton grew pale. Now terror did light up her eyes.

"You're as liable to a death penalty —the chair—as he is!" Masterman went on. "You're his accomplice—if there is a Hiram J. Marlow."

"There isn't!" the woman cried. "But I didn't kill Lamore! I swear I didn't!"

"Then what is the meaning of Hiram J. Marlow? Are you Marlow?" Masterman was relentless, but a smile of triumph was on his lips.

The woman put her hands over her mouth. She stifled a scream and fell to the floor—would have fallen heavily had not Cadigan caught her, breaking the fall. The doctor and nurse scrambled to her side.

"What's the meaning of all this?" the inspector demanded. "Are you accusing this woman of Lamore's murder?"

"I'm just trying a little psychology," Masterman said. "And I think we have our murderer with us, Cadigan!"

Every eye in the room fell on Helen Kenton's recumbent form. She was breathing heavily, fearfully, but her eyes remained closed. Then all in the room looked at Masterman.

"Grogan," he said, "you've got all the finger prints with you? You know the print found on the gun?" He was eager, alert.

"That print? Say, I'd know it in my sleep!" the expert laughed. "I can even draw it for you."

"Then get out your dust, Grogan, and look at that fine set of prints on the glass water jug!"

There was a hoarse, wild, beastlike cry.

Grainger sprang forward—reaching for the glass water jug—to smash it. But Masterman was the quicker man. He swung out of the bed, planted himself firmly in front of the banker, drew back his arm and drove home a well-placed uppercut. The banker top-

pled over backward, fell heavily to the floor, and lay still.

"You've gone crazy, Masterman!" Cadigan roared. "You might have killed him!"

Grogan had lost no time. He spread his magnesium powder over the prints on the water jug and was holding them to the light. A low, surprised whistle came through his teeth.

"They're not the prints you want," Cadigan said, glaring angrily at Masterman. "We've seen Grainger's prints before. This is some trick of Masterman's!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MURDERER.

BUT they are the prints we want!" Grogan cried. "I'll swear to them in any court! Grainger's right hand prints are identical with those on the revolver that killed Lamore!"

"Impossible! You tested his prints before, Grogan!" The inspector refused to believe that the celebrated banker was the killer.

"Those were left-hand prints, I told you. The right-hand set is in this glass water bottle—and they're the same as those on the revolver."

Kildane waited for a signal from the inspector, but he received none. He hesitated a moment and then knelt down beside Grainger. He took his handcuffs from a hip pocket and snapped them over the banker's wrists.

"Kildane!" Cadigan roared.

"I'm taking no chances, inspector. If Grainger is our man, we have him. If he isn't, we can apologize."

Masterman interrupted a quarrel brewing between the two policemen. "I think Calder can help you, Cadigan. Ask him to identify Grainger—then I'll give you your case."

"Well, Calder, what do you know about this?" Cadigan demanded.

"Nothing—nothing!" The butler was terrified.

"You'd better tell him, Calder. Grainger can't hurt you now—nor can the Three Men from Cayenne."

Calder seemed reassured. "I—I saw him—Grainger—coming out of the house that night. I was coming up the block. He walked by me without recognizing me. But I knew him. I thought he'd been to see Mr. Lamore. I decided not to go in the house and walked past it. But a few doors toward Park Avenue, I turned. And I saw Mr. Masterman come out. Later, when I learned about the murder and neither Mr. Grainger nor Mr. Masterman admitted being in the house, I kept quiet."

"Because you wanted to blackmail us!" Masterman added. "You tackled Mr. Grainger first, didn't you?"

"Yes. He invited me to meet him at his house, but I was afraid."

"Then he told you he'd send the money by Miss Kenton."

"That's right. And you met me at the bank, where I was to meet her. She wasn't there and when I ran away from you, Mr. Masterman, I met Mr. Grainger. He told me to see Miss Kenton on the pier where the *Bremen* was sailing last night. There's where the police got me."

Masterman was triumphant. "Well, inspector, are you ready to be convinced further?"

"No. But I'd like to hear the rest of your yarn. Grogan can't be wrong. And how did you spot Grainger?"

Masterman climbed back into the bed again and made himself comfortable. Both Miss Kenton and Grainger had revived, and Kildane made them sit on the floor with their backs leaning against the wall. To make absolutely certain of his prisoners, he drew out his automatic and sat facing them with the weapon ready in his lap.

Eve was happy—the happiest woman in the world. She stood beside her fiancé, and he held her hand while he spoke.

"To begin," Masterman said, "I didn't know Grainger was the shadow I saw go into Lamore's office—the shadow that ripped open the chair where the money was hidden. But I knew the next day, when he informed us that Lamore had no enemies and was penniless. The man lied, and he had a motive.

"But let us take the clews. The first one we had was the gun that fired the fatal shot. It was found in Lamore's pocket. That was done to mystify, but it also betrayed the killer by the fine set of finger prints it carried.

"Knowing what I did about Ratine and Voiseau—being the third man from Cayenne myself—I knew that they would resort to no such mystifying tactics. I knew no ordinary housebreaker would. It was the act of an intelligent man.

"And that man betrayed himself by the notes he left behind him—the one found under the body threatening Lamore's life and the one found in the bedroom throwing suspicion on Walloon.

"But before the notes meant anything to me, I overheard you grilling Ratine, inspector. I had been up to see Eve, and I was standing behind the bend on the stairs. I didn't want to show myself to Ratine lest he recognize me and complicate my predicament.

"But I did hear Ratine scream, 'Lefebre!' when he was shown Lamore's body. It was a cry of surprise—recognition. I knew then that if he had killed Lefebre he would not betray so much impulsive surprise. I was convinced also by the shadows I had seen in the house that Ratine and Voiseau were in the rear and not near the front of the house. And the murderer had come from upstairs. I thought for a while that it might have been Walloon.

"However, if Ratine and Voiseau had killed Lamore, they would not have left that note signed 'Three Men from Cayenne.' It would have given them away. You police could have gotten fairly good descriptions from the Paris police and you could have sent out a general alarm for them.

"I was certain that Walloon was not the murderer when I found the telltale note in Eve's boudoir. Then I suspected Calder and Grainger. It was likely that either or both of them knew of Lamore's past, his fear of the men from Cayenne, and the chair filled with money.

"I eliminated Calder because of his type. He is too weak to kill—even if he stood a good chance of a get-away. And Grainger was the more likely man.

"Then it was easy to reconstruct the crime, after we got hold of Walloon and heard his admissions. But I was confused by the fact that one of the two from Cayenne had phoned him. He was implicated in some way, I thought."

Cadigan interrupted him. "Of course, you knew you were the third man from Cayenne and that the note found with the body was a fake. But how did you reconstruct the crime?"

"It was easy. We had the crank letter putting Grainger in the neighborhood. But I began with Walloon. He called on Lamore in the morning and demanded fifty thousand dollars. Lamore promised to have it for him the next day. When he left, Lamore called his business manager and told him to raise fifty thousand. That was Grainger, and Grainger had converted all of Lamore's estate to his own uses. He couldn't raise the money and probably stalled the dead man.

"Grainger was hard put. Lamore was asking for a large sum of money and he couldn't deliver. But he could silence Lamore. And he knew enough about Lamore to throw suspicion elsewhere. I'm sure he knew Lamore's true identity—the whole story. He had to be in that plot eleven years ago or it wouldn't have gone through.

"The night of the murder, Grainger established a very questionable alibi. He dined with the Vances. But it took him three quarters of an hour to walk about twelve blocks to his home. What he did was enter the Lamore house. How he did, I don't know. Perhaps that front door was left open accidentally.

"He found the house empty. He might have hidden in the office but for some one at the door. It was Voiseau coming in, and Grainger fled to the second floor. He probably heard Ratine entering from the roof, so he ducked into Eve's bedroom. And he was the man Walloon heard speak to him—threaten him for silence.

"Then the downstairs door slammed shut. Andrew Lamore had come home and was in his office. Grainger knew the house well and got down the stairs noiselessly. He had the note signed 'Three Men from Cayenne' ready in his pocket. He entered the office and surprised Lamore, as I said.

"But the two were closeted for some five minutes before I heard the shot. There were excited voices that I could hear, but none of terror—I was convinced when I thought it over later that Lamore knew his visitor. He probably told Grainger about Walloon's threat; he probably showed Grainger his gun and told him about the money in the chair. What the banker said, I have no idea, but I do know that he took up Lamore's gun and shot him with it and then stuck it in Lamore's pocket. He dropped the Cayenne note beside the body, turned out the lights, and went directly to the chair, where he ripped out the money. Then he vanished.

"The next day he went to see Eve and planted the Walloon note. That was a very false move. It detracted suspicion from the men from Cayenne. It canceled their threat. And then we found out that Walloon hadn't written the note—couldn't have.

"While the police still sought Ratine and Voiseau—and D'Arnet, who was at their elbow—Grainger was fairly safe. Their case was complicated by the Cayenne phone call for Walloon. But those men probably spotted Walloon and were out to shake him down for what money he had since he was in the house at the time of the murder!

"Then I came across a woman who was posing as Eve Lamore—who put nearly a hundred thousand dollars in a safe-deposit box in the Cressley Trust Company's vault. I trailed her to the offices of Marlow & Co. the evening she took a thousand-dollar bill from the vault. I lost track of her in traffic and the next day I learned she was headed for Europe on the *Bremen*.

"Tommy Warner, a friend of mine, told me that Marlow and D'Arnet, a director in that firm, ran the business from abroad. Their instructions came through Picke & Co. from a Miss Drew and a Mr. Hant. Nobody had ever seen Marlow or D'Arnet, and I learned that Drew and Hant were names unknown to Picke & Co.

"But the name D'Arnet—Michael d'Arnet—was an unusual one. I doubt if there are others like it in all France. I was convinced that some one who had heard that name—knew all about it—had used it as a fake director's name in a rigged-up brokerage house. And the only two people in America that were likely to know the name D'Arnet were Lamore and Grainger. And Lamore was dead.

"Though Grainger was supposed to handle all of Lamore's stock market activities, being his sole representative, I learned that Marlow had disposed of a lot of Lamore's stock and that the fake Eve Lamore received both the security put up and the profits—a total of half a million dollars.

"I was convinced then that she was Grainger's confederate. It would be easy of them to instruct Marlow's office

under the names of Drew or Hant. And that's probably what was done—for Grainger is also Marlow; he used the Marlow firm as a medium for getting rid of stocks that he did not want to show on his books.

"I missed Miss Kenton at the vault yesterday and I lost track of Calder. Then I received a note from a newsboy warning me to mind my own business. It was signed 'Cayenne,' but the handwriting was similar to that on the forged Walloon note.

"And the night before, I was followed from Eve's home to my hotel by two men—Ratine and Voiseau. One of them phoned me and ordered me to meet him at No. 786 West Forty-ninth Street at eleven thirty last night. I was assured that I would be in no danger if I came alone. In view of that invitation, I knew that the note I received on Wall Street was not from either of them.

"I suspected that either of the men from Cayenne had seen me going in or coming out of the Lamore house and recognized me. They probably thought I had something to do with the murder —or had my hands on some money and they wanted to share in it.

"I went to the Forty-ninth Street house early and saw Ratine go in. Then a familiar figure followed him and the lights in his house went out. Then Voiseau entered. And I decided to follow him.

"Outside Kling's door, I heard a man strike a match. I thought that odd, since there were perfectly good lights in the place. I knocked on the door; it opened; I went in. You know the rest—about the wire noose.

"I said I saw the face of the strangler in the dim light of the hall. It was Walter Grainger's. He had been recognized and had probably been summoned to pay blackmail. But he went to silence those who knew his secret."

Cadigan broke in at this point. "But why didn't you tell us that in the first place?"

"You wouldn't have believed me. You were convinced that Grainger's prints were not on the gun. And if I accused Grainger to his face, he would have laughed at me and said I was crazy—delirious—and you'd have believed him. He was smooth, clever and had an iron nerve. He avoided all of the traps to-day—except one.

"You know that most people when they pour themselves a drink—no matter what it is, so long as it is in a bottle —and if they're right-handed—they hold the glass in the left hand and the bottle in the right. That's what Grainger did. And the day I got the glass he used in Eve's room, I only got his left-hand prints. I'll bet the murderer's prints that we sought were on the flask in his hip pocket."

The inspector walked over to Grainger. "Well, you've heard his story. You know we can convict on a finger print."

"Yes, I know."

"What about it?"

Grainger smiled. "I suppose I should have killed Masterman long ago, but I had no idea he was so astute."

"Yeah!" Kildane cried. "That's an admission."

The banker smiled at him and nodded.

Cadigan was back at Masterman's side again. "I suppose you can even tell me what Grainger did with all Lamore's money?"

"Well, I can make a good guess," he laughed. "He's no fool and he has converted the money into sound bonds and good stocks. You might find them in Miss Kenton's trunks if you look hard enough. That's where I'd put them, if I was crooked!"

"That's a good guess, Masterman!" Grainger said with a tired smile. "You'll find about a million and a half dollars' worth of stuff in two trunks Helen Kenton had."

"And with due process of law," Masterman added, "I think that it can be proven that you owe Miss Lamore that much money—which you illegally converted to your own use."

"Yes, a good lawyer could do that," the banker admitted. "Shall I recommend one to you?"

"No, thanks." Masterman's face suddenly clouded with apprehension. "Cadigan! Did Miss Kenton's trunks sail on the *Bremen?*"

The inspector sat down abruptly, dazed. "Hell, I think they did!"

"No," Kildane spoke up, smiling, "I got them off. They're down on the pier in the customs office."

"You'll be promoted, Killie!" Grogan chuckled. "You may be commissioner yet—if you vote the right ticket."

The Kenton woman was weeping bitterly. Her eyes regarded the handcuffed banker with reproaches and he tried to console her.

"She wasn't in on the murder," he explained to Cadigan. "It's all news to her now. I tried to keep it from her. We were to have been married when we got to Europe."

Masterman nodded. He felt sorry for the woman, though her activities had caused him great anxiety when he believed her to be Eve. "Well, I'll always remember you, Grainger. You put your mark around my neck!" He felt the sore crimson circle which the strangler's wire had made.

Grogan suddenly seemed bewildered. "Inspector, Mr. Masterman has done us a great service. But—but he's wanted in France for escaping from Cayenne. He admits he is Michel d'Arnet. We have his finger prints."

Cadigan frowned and fixed Masterman and Eve with sympathetic eyes. He was a policeman—an arm of the law. Masterman was D'Arnet and the French police wanted him. But Masterman's faculties had saved his reputation as an inspector of police and had yielded up the real murderer of Andrew Lamore.

"To hell with the prints!" Cadigan growled. His eyes then smiled, while his face was grimly serious. "I don't believe that Mr. Masterman is Michel d'Arnet. I don't believe him even when he says so. I think it's a cock-and-bull story. He's Martin Masterman, as far as I'm concerned."

He took Masterman's and Eve's proffered hands in his and winked.

Grainger asked for permission to speak. "I admit I'm licked. And to relieve your minds, I'll tell you that the three men sent to Cayenne by Lefebre were innocent. Lefebre—Lamore—admitted that to me." Seeing the horror come into Eve's face, he added graciously and nimbly: "Lamore tried to effect their release but his efforts failed."

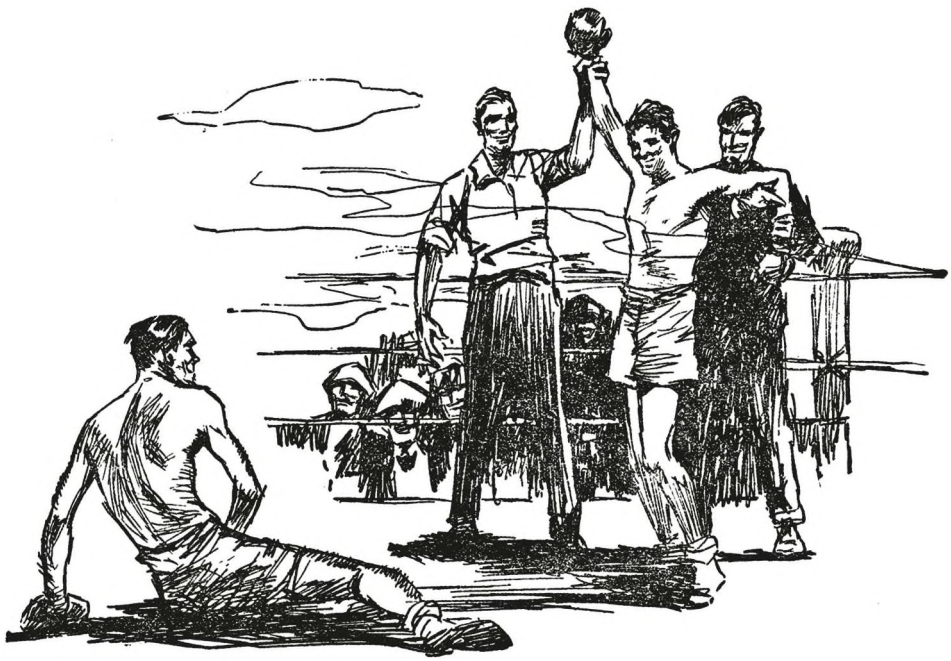
With his eyes and a kindly smile, Masterman thanked the murderer for the lie.

THE MOST TALKATIVE TOWN

NEARLY ten per cent of all the telephones in the United States are in New York City, which has one million seven hundred thousand of the instruments served by one hundred and forty-six central offices. Fifty-six central offices look after nine hundred thousand telephones on the island of Manhattan where four million six hundred thousand telephone conversations are engaged in every day, not including calls from out of town. Some of the Manhattan Borough switchboards are of the largest capacity made, each serving more than ten thousand subscribers.

VICTORY

By William Hemmingway



Here Is a Story That Will Leave You Stunned!

NED MALLORAN took a black cigar out of its case, nipped the end off it and tucked it in one corner of his broad mouth for a dry smoke. He threw the sports page over his knee and pointed at it with his thumb.

"Hype says the boys to-day are as game as they ever were," he remarked, "and I'm with him that far. But while they are as game and they certainly hit as hard—maybe harder—they're more like business men. What I mean, they're too much business."

Ned was playing around the edge of a story. If I asked questions, the chances were that he'd shut up and stay shut. The only thing to do was to watch and pray.

"Funny thing, this is a Jerome Avenue train," he mused. "Why, it was right along here, before they even dreamed of running subway trains up in the air, that I had Johnny training that time—guess there's something in the old air that puts a fellow in mind—yeh, that's it: the queerest thing you ever heard of."

How many times I had lost the chance to hear a good story by interrupting Ned at this point! I devoted all my attention to unwrapping and nibbling a

fresh stick of gum: not a word. Ned is some kind of a deputy tax assessor now, and he was on his way to appraise a piece of real estate for me; but in his day he was middleweight champion —for a month.

The red slash from the outer corner of his right eye to the angle of his jaw and the slight stiffness in his right leg showed how the gang overplayed their hand the night they took his championship away from him in a north Jersey barn. He bears no grudge against anybody; says it was all part of the game in those days—not so long ago as yours are reckoned, but ages ago as we count progress.

"Yeh, that's it," he repeated, as the train pulled out of the One Hundred and Sixty-seventh Street station. "Just a little way above here, at Johnson's road house, that Johnny trained. My! My! Those were the days. Why, I could 'a' bought land here then at what were acreage prices, say ten dollars a front foot, and to-day I could see it at a hundred dollars to a hundred and fifty for corners—but I was too busy with fighting to pay any attention to real estate——"

"And I suppose your friend Johnny bought acreage, and is rolling in wealth to-day——" I interrupted with deliberate cruelty; for the way to get Ned Malloran going is to put one of his friends in a wrong light. I landed him, all right.

"Rolling in wealth? Johnny Grady!" he exclaimed, and bit the end off his dry smoke in his excitement. "Sa-ay, what did Johnny Grady have to do with wealth, except reading about it in the Sunday papers? Honest, don't you remember him? Well, yes, he was before your day; but at that you ought to know about him, seeing you follow the game so close. Maybe I'm prejudiced about him, account of being his friend, but if you can find a better boy to-day I'll go jump off the dock."

It was a little mean to trick Ned like that, but it is the only way to start him; for he feels affronted if you compare the fighters of to-day with the true men of his time. However——

Ned Malloran knew before he left St. Vincent's Hospital that his fighting days were over. That knife jab in the leg had severed a tendon and, in spite of all the massage and electric treatment, the leg would never be itself again; so fighting was out of the program. It is a curious thing that the moment a man's footwork slows down he is through with the ring, though his fists fly as fast and hit as hard as ever. You'd hardly notice that little limp as Ned walks; but there it is—the tiny fault that came between him and the comfortable fortune his ready fists would have gathered.

But there was no use crying over a lost championship, and Ned began to look about for the next best play—to train some other fellow for the title. He was thinking about writing a letter to "Wild Bill" Halligan, when he saw a friendly grin moving toward him. The face that bore the grin was round and freckled, the eyes as blue as the deep sea, the chin as solid as a bit of sculptured marble, the close-cropped hair above it as red and curly as carved mahogany.

"Hello, there, Johnny, my boy," Ned called as the lad came toward him, stepping lightly and with a rolling stride that seemed to be at the point of breaking into a skip and a jump—the gait of a young athlete overflowing with energy. "Hello, there, John!" Ned hailed him. "How's tricks?"

"Not so bad," Johnny answered briskly. "I've got a chance, if things break right. But how about yourself, Ned? How soon'll you be out of this and back in the business?"

"I'm through with the business," Ned replied. "Look at this." He rose from

the wheel chair and walked a few steps, halting ever so slightly. "The docs have all been in to look me over, and they say this bum leg'll never be right again; so I'm all washed up and nowheres to go. I'll have to go to work, I guess."

"Gosh! That's awful," said Johnny with ready sympathy. "The alderman asked me last night to tell you he can get you a match with Walter Watson, and he's so busy with a fellow wants to buy his place he can't come down here himself, so he says——"

"He's lucky he ain't saying it with flowers," Ned interrupted. "That stab in the jaw came near letting me out for good. But what's the use kicking? I'm through."

"Aw, gee! but that's tough," said Johnny. "I was hoping you'd let me train with you, go on the road with you, and maybe you'd show me some more about that straight left; but I guess that's out now. Gosh! and the alderman's got me a match with 'Spider' Burns for the feather championship. Well, that's off, then. Say, do they let you smoke here?"

As Ned assured him smoking was all right in the sun room, John took a blue-silk handkerchief out of his inside pocket, unwrapped it with care and exhibited a long cigar neatly clothed in a sheath of glittering silver foil.

"One of your regular Vencedoras, Ned," he said proudly. "I went over to the Hoffman House to make sure I got it right, the kind you smoke—and, say! the guy knows you; or anyway he's made money betting on you. Says you're the boss o' them all. Here, light up!"

Perhaps it was this little act of hero worship that influenced Ned's judgment, we all appreciate that sort of thing, though we'd rather die than admit it. At all events, Malloran thought very fast as he puffed comfortably at the cigar, the first he had tasted in two months—six weeks in training and two weeks in the hospital.

"Say, what do you know, Johnny, about me to train you and second you against this fellow Burns?" he asked after a long and puffy silence. "I've seen him in all his fights, and I've got his style down pat."

"What?" cried the youngster. "Wha-at? You'd train me for Burns and go in my corner? Say, Ned, that'd be like finding the title! Gee!"

Three nights later Ned and John met the Spider and his backer at the alderman's place in upper Tenth Avenue. Their business was contrary to law, so they sat in the private office, a dingy little cubby-hole off the back room, and put their signatures to articles of agreement to battle for the featherweight championship, Queensbury rules, two-ounce gloves, to a finish, at a place agreeable to both parties, for five hundred dollars a side, the men to weigh one twenty-five at the ringside.

The time of weighing was usually two o'clock in the afternoon, but the Spider and his backer knew that Johnny was rugged and growing so fast that he might easily put on five pounds in six hours; so they held out for ringside weight, and, being champion, Burns had his way. A good stroke of business for him.

Next day Ned and John moved their scanty baggage, mostly gloves, trunks, sweaters and fighting shoes, up to Johnson's road house, away up Jerome Avenue in the "Annexed District" and far from the city of New York. They sent it in an express wagon that started at seven o'clock in the morning, and themselves began their long journey into the distant north after their midday dinner, arriving in good time to unload their stuff. The boy was so keen to get to work that Ned let him go out for an easy jog of six miles soon after they had unpacked their trunks.

"Just once around the reservoir, John," Malloran directed him, "and be sure you take it easy, mostly walking. Do a couple of sprints just at the finish."

"Aw, Ned, I'd like to time myself over the route," the lad protested. "Honest, I'm so full o' steam I want to let myself go."

"Time enough for that," Malloran decided. "It don't pay to try to do it all in the first day or the first round. Regulate your power; that's the idea, see? Spread your work out so it'll do you the most good. Don't think about the time. Go on, now."

Ned had a tub of warm water waiting for his lad when he dashed in an hour later, and after the bath and drying off gave him a thorough massage as he lay stretched out on a high table. The room was full of steam and the pungent odors of Ned's special rub-down liniment. Every athlete has his special liniment, a marvel for taking the kinks out of tired muscles, which he fondly believes is his own secret; though they are all much alike—witch hazel, a little oil, to make the rubbing smooth, and wintergreen to make it penetrate and yield an aroma of magic.

"That smells good," said Johnny, sniffing eagerly.

"It's the best in the world," Malloran assured him. "I got it from a fellow who was in Barnum's circus, Danny O'Brien, who does the triple somersault over a herd of elephants. It's magic, that's what it is."

"Sure makes me feel fine as silk," Johnny agreed.

"It'll bring home the bacon for you, that's what," said Ned, and they both believed it. Some day a mathematico-psychologist will figure out just what proportion of faith goes into the making of a champion, and we need not be surprised if this factor leads all the rest.

In a week Malloran was able to go out on the road for the first mile or so, cheering Johnny with his stories of great battlers he had known and coaching him to stop and do deep-breathing exercises once in a while. He walked in with him at the finish, and held him down to four sprints in the last half mile. The last hundred yards was measured, and Ned timed Johnny over it with a jeweled stop watch an admirer had given him.

"Eleven and a fifth; not so bad," he said.

"Aw, gee! I've got to do eleven flat," John complained.

"Eleven-one's good enough," Malloran told him. "Don't strain yourself trying to do too much."

He was down to one twenty-eight now, two weeks before the battle, and eager to put on double sweaters and run off the three pounds, but Ned held him back with the threat of making him stop work for a whole day. He consoled the boy with a rare treat, Dinny "the Blacksmith," a welter weight, was coming up to work eight rounds with him that afternoon. That eight rounds was as good as a battle; for Johnny stood toe to toe and matched wallops with the big husky who outweighed him by seventeen pounds, and gave as good as he received. No one could ask for a more willing lad.

But next day, when he wound up with Harry Harris, the tall Chicago bantam, Johnny did not look so good. He could hardly lay a glove on Harry, who flitted here and there, left-handing him high and low.

"Time him, Johnny! Time him!" Ned shouted again and again, but all in vain, as the lanky Chicagoan flew around him in half circles like a ghost, pelting him with stiff jabs that were anything but ghostly. Ned stopped the bout, showed his lad how to judge when Harry was going to start a punch, and then beat him to it; but somehow, though he thoroughly understood the

tactics, Johnny could not translate his understanding into action. But you had to hand it to him for trying. No matter how often he was hit, he shook his head, grinned and tried again.

"He's some tough bird," Harry remarked to Malloran at the end of the eight rounds.

"That's the boy!" Ned shouted after Johnny's thirtieth try. He let go left, right, left, and hooked the last one on to Harry's chin so that he had to hang on half a minute to clear his head.

"You got the idea right that time, John," said Malloran delightedly. "You want to remember, though, that Spider Burns is ten pounds bigger than Harry; so don't let him hit you the way Harry does." Harry had worked with the Spider, and knew he was not quite so fast as Ned believed; but it was no part of a sparring partner's duty to contradict the boss; so he held his peace. The etiquette of the training camp is complicated, but one of its principal rules is that whatever the boss says is right. Harry worked with John every day of the last two weeks, and groaned within to see how often he could make him miss, but whenever Ned remarked, "He's picking up speed, ain't he?" he made it his business to say: "Sure is!"

The fight was set for Saturday night in a dancing pavilion at Guttenberg, New Jersey, west of the Palisades. Thirty tickets had been sold at fifty dollars each, and the chances were that twenty more would be taken. Johnny Grady looked so good that Ned had borrowed two hundred dollars to put with his last three hundred and bet on him at the prevailing odds. The first hundred was covered at five to one on the Spider, but Monday night when he telephoned Al Smith at the Gilsey House, Ned was tickled to learn that the odds had shortened to two to one. "And they'll be at evens when the crowd sees my boy start," Ned reflected.

At three o'clock Tuesday morning a voice woke Ned Malloran from his light slumber. He sat up and looked around the big bedroom he shared with Grady. In the opposite corner the boy was sitting up in his bed, eyes wide open and staring toward his trainer in the late moonlight.

"What is it, Johnny?" Malloran asked in soothing tone.

"He can't lick me unless he knocks me out," the boy replied emphatically.

"Sure he can't," Malloran said. "Go to sleep now, and don't be bothering yourself."

"Ned, he can't lick me unless he knocks me out," the boy repeated, then closed his eyes, stretched out and was breathing slowly in deep sleep. But there was no more rest that night for Ned Malloran. The only thing that he had not anticipated as threatening his boy had happened; the championship had got his goat so badly that he was dreaming of it. Not that he blamed Johnny; for anybody going into a title contest was apt to worry a lot because such a great honor was involved—that sounds funny to-day, but it was true then—and the best of men had cracked under the strain of a championship contest; but he had thought Johnny Grady was made of tougher fiber than that. Ned tossed from side to side, worrying, until six o'clock, when he woke Grady in time for his half-hour stroll before breakfast.

The boy threw an old glove that hit Malloran's head as he was tying his shoe, and pretended that some one in the street must have thrown it. He was playful as a young bear cub. Anxious as Malloran was, scrutinizing the lad for some sign of strain or worry, Malloran could not find anything wrong in him. On the way to breakfast he was practicing a few new jig steps, singing as he danced.

"How're you sleeping these nights?" Malloran asked, as they rested on the porch after his meal.

"Like an eight-day clock." Johnny replied.

"Ever dream about the fight?" Malloran pursued his subject. "Lots of fellows dream about their fights."

"Me?" laughed Grady. "Me dream about a fight? Nix. Never did and never will. Let Spider Burns dream; he has a licking coming to him."

When they turned in at nine o'clock Malloran was asleep before he settled on the pillow, making up for the night before. But at three o'clock in the morning he was again awakened. Grady was sitting up in bed, staring in his direction.

"He can't lick me unless he knocks me out," he said once more, then settled down without another sound. Malloran crept out of bed and watched him for nearly an hour, but the boy, never stirring, slept like a baby. And he did his work that day as gayly as ever.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings the same thing happened, but Malloran no longer worried about it. Was it imagination, or was the boy simply expressing confidence in the highest degree? The Spider was known as a feather-duster puncher, who always won his victories by outpointing his man, with only two K. O.'s in his long record. That must be the answer; Johnny Grady was so sure of winning that he was really prophesying victory every time he repeated, "He can't lick me unless he knocks me out!"

The boy was full of play as they made the long journey to One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, where a carriage was waiting to take them to the ferry and up the long, winding road over the Palisades.

"Can the Dutchman cook a steak?" he asked as they drove into the picnic grounds where the ring was pitched in the dancing pavilion. "You tell him, Ned," he continued, "to broil me a steak about as long as my arm and have it ready for me twenty minutes after time is called." He was amused when Spider Burns, meeting him at the scales, tried to get his goat by sneering, "Well, kid, you've come a long way to get a boxing lesson."

"Yeh?" he answered, "but you'll be a pretty bum teacher, spread out there on the floor." The Spider gave him a sour look. He couldn't think of a word to say.

Johnny took a few sips of the beef tea Malloran offered him in the dressing room: "But I don't need it, Ned," he said. "I've dried out naturally, and I feel fine."

Four big lamps with huge reflectors made the ring as light as day when the boys took their corners, and Mike Doyle, the referee, held up his hand for order.

"Any noise or hollerin' or interference with the men, and I'll stop the contest," he warned the fifty men clustered around the ring. "That goes. You know me."

So it was in profound silence that the fighters answered his call of, "Time!" The soles of their fighting shoes, rough porpoise hide, made squeaky sounds as they tiptoed toward each other, the pale Spider half a head taller than ruddy-cheeked Johnny Grady, who was smiling with all the confidence of a man sure of himself. As they circled about each other, it could be seen that Burns had much the longer reach, while Grady's rugged frame seemed almost twice as strong as his.

After half a minute of feinting and measuring distance, Johnny leaped at the Spider, jabbing with his left fist and hooking the right to follow; but the champion coolly sidestepped and let him fly past to bump into the ropes, and, as he bounded off, tapped him high on the cheek with his right. Johnny clinched to avoid more punishment, but soon a blue lump began to form under his left eye, the decoration known as a "mouse," which a fighter would rather

give than take. He tried two more rushes before the end of the three minutes, but he did not land a blow on Burns, who jolted him in the ribs with perfectly timed counter blows that raised angry red splotches on the white skin.

"Wait him out, Johnny," Malloran counseled as he fanned him with a towel after the round. "He's the champion; make him fight."

"Gee! No! I'd rather lick him!" laughed Grady. "You watch me this time."

But the second round was no better. The elusive Spider either slipped away from the boy's rushes, or with his black-haired, spidery arms fended off the blows. He allowed himself to take liberties, grinning and smirking at his admirers as he made Grady miss. Now and then he shook Johnny, but the lad laughed mockingly and tore in after him faster than ever. Toward the end of the round Grady let go a right swing, but Burns thrust up his shoulder and laughed as the force of the blow drove him halfway across the ring. Johnny leaped after him, but the call of time stopped him.

In the next four rounds young Grady repeated these blows twice, but the Spider's timing was so perfect that neither one of them did him any harm, and meanwhile he kept up a steady jolting and drumming on the lad's mouth and ribs and damaged eye which showed results in sundry lumps that disfigured his countenance but could not stop his smile.

Then for several rounds Grady tried faithfully to follow Malloran's instructions and wait him out, hoping to counter his blows, but as he was going up for the tenth Malloran said: "Try him your own way now, Johnny. Maybe you'll have better luck with your own style." And still Burns worked his magic, escaping every punch that was thrown at him. It is the most discouraging thing in the world to keep forcing the fight and find that you can't hurt your man, but Johnny Grady was still smiling as he came to his corner. "Get him next round sure," he assured Malloran, time after time; yet Ned was beginning to worry, because he felt sure the scores of blows Burns was landing must be weakening his boy.

"Have a sniff of this?" he asked, taking the stopper out of a bottle of smelling salts.

"Phew! Take it away," laughed the lad. "Keep it for the Spider."

Round followed round with deadly monotony, Grady making the pace but getting nowhere, while Burns continued to chip away his vitality with well-placed counter blows. At the end of the fifteenth Johnny stumbled the least bit as he returned to his corner. From shoulder to hips his body was one reddened mass, and while he could still see out of his right eye, his left was closed tight from the pounding it had received. His nose was swollen and his lips puffed into a caricature of a smile.

"Listen, Johnny," said Malloran; "you've been taking it for an hour, without ever shaking that fellow with one good punch. Every one gives you credit for being a game young fellow. Now, here's what you'll do: let loose everything you've got in this next round. If you cop him, all right; and if you don't cop, I'll toss in the sponge in the next round."

The red-headed boy turned so that he could glare at his second with his one good eye.

"You——" he said, "if you chuck in the sponge for me, I'll kill you!"

"But listen," Malloran urged; "I've got every penny I have in the world on you, and I know that all the neighbors who bet on you will be satisfied. All I want is to save your strength, so that you'll get this fellow after you've had a little more experience."

"You chuck in that sponge, and I'll kill you—that's all," said the boy. "I'm going to get the Spider. Nothing can save him unless you throw me down by quitting. You leave him to me."

Malloran said no more, and when in the next round one of Johnny's wild swings hit Burns on the shoulder and spun him across to the ropes, the boy winked his good eye at Ned by way of showing him he was forgiven.

"Did you see that one?" he asked when he came to the corner. "An inch higher and I'd 'a' had him out. You watch him next round."

But next round and the round after that Burns stood off at long range and left-handed Grady so that he slowed down considerably, and although the boy rallied wonderfully after each one-minute rest in his corner, he was losing the speed that had kept him out in front, making the pace. The Spider was tiring, too, and he was arm weary from hitting a man who absorbed blows like so much morning mist. You could see disappointment in every move he made and that he wearily went on trying from mere pride and force of habit.

Malloran and Tom Butler, his helper, massaged Grady's legs furiously after the twenty-fifth round of this appalling contest. The thigh muscles were quivering as the jaded nerves shook from exhaustion.

"It's this round or out for you, Johnny," said Malloran as he dug into the loose, relaxed fibers to stimulate the circulation. "Throw everything you've got at him, and if you miss him we'll call it a day. Then we'll get another match and finish the job."

"Ned," Grady answered, "I'm wearing him down fast now, and I'll out him in a couple more rounds. If you chuck in that sponge, I'll kill you, so help me God!"

"If it wasn't for making the kid feel I'd cheated him, I'd chuck it right now," Malloran said to Butler as the lad rushed at Burns. "He's been licked for the last hour, only he can't see it. If the Spider was to drop him now, he'd never get up."

"Chuck it anyway, Ned," Butler urged. "You might be saving his life and——"

"No; 'twould break his heart," said Malloran. "I know how he feels."

The dreary battle went on in monotonous repetition: Grady rushing, Burns slipping or blocking and always planting a counter blow or several of them on jaw or body. The fifty spectators seemed fascinated by the spectacle. Now they were in the thirtieth round, the thirty-fifth, the thirty-seventh, when Burns' tired arms fell by his side——

Up came Johnny Grady's right fist in a swing from the knees, a wild overhand blow that should not have caught the rawest novice; but Burns was spent after two hours and a half of such grueling work as he had never before endured, and the fist caught him flush on the side of the chin. He jumped forward as if he had been shot, plunged onward and downward to the floor, where he slid for yards and at last lay limp with his head under the ropes. While Mike Doyle was still counting, Johnny Grady staggered back to his corner.

"Gimme that chair, Ned—quick!" he panted, his chest heaving. "Well, old grouch, what'd I tell you all along, eh? Is he out, or is he not? Who's champion now, and who done it, eh? Ned Malloran done it, I'll tell the neighbors. Gee! I'm the champ now! And you done it, Ned!"

Even the indignant roaring of Mike Doyle could not stop the cheering for Johnny Grady. He rose, swung his clasped hands above his head by way of thanks, and dropped into his chair. Spider Burns was sitting up, restored to consciousness and looking as good as new. There was not a mark on face or body. His thick, black hair still lay

unruffled and shiny as the side of a coach.

"Be a regular champ, now, Johnny," Malloran prompted. "Go over and shake his hand."

"Cheese it, Ned," Johnny whispered. "I'm so weak I couldn't walk way over there for a thousand bucks—honest, I couldn't." So Malloran and Butler and a few friends stood close around him and hid him from sight until Burns and his party had cleared out of the pavilion. Then, with an arm drawn over the shoulder of each second, the lad managed to stumble down the steps and shuffle along to his dressing room, where they stretched him out on a rubdown table. His wrists were so swollen that they had to cut the gloves off, and his ankles were so enormous that they had to slash his shoes to get them off. From waist to shoulders, his body was one continuous swelling, and his face was a blur of contusions.

Malloran and Butler rubbed in the magic liniment, and under the influence of its cheery odor and the massage and, above all, the stimulus of victory, Johnny soon began to chuckle.

"Hey, Ned," he inquired, "what'll you gimme for a nice new sponge? Hasn't ever been chucked, so it's nice and clean. Ha, ha! Who'll we fight next, Ned?"

But he was in such pain that the two men took an hour to dress him, and they had to help him down the stairs and into the carriage. In spite of the twinges that now and then stopped his breathing, he broke into a bit of song again and again—"I believed it, for my mother told me so."

"Feel all right inside, Johnny?" Malloran asked casually; for he would not let the boy guess how anxious he was.

"Sure!" Johnny laughed. "Only when I want to catch a deep breath, I feel as if I had a big balloon inside of my lungs. I'm all right, at that."

In spite of his gayety, Johnny found that his legs would not carry him up the steep stairs of the tenement in West Forty-seventh Street that he called home, and he made the climb with Malloran's arm around his waist and his own left arm clinging around Malloran's shoulders. "Gee! Fireman, fireman, save my child!" he chuckled. His mother heard them coming and stood at the third landing with a lighted lamp in her hand, trembling a little but mindful to greet her son's friend.

"Good evening—or maybe it's good morning—Mr. Malloran," she exclaimed. "What's this? Johnny turned his ankle?"

"No, mom; just a little tired, that's all," Johnny laughed. "I'm just after winning the prize waltz over in Jersey. And, say, mom, looka——" He drew out of his inside pocket a packet of one-hundred-dollar bills. "Look, mom—six hundred bucks, all yours, and me the new champ!"

"Glory to God!" cried Mrs. Grady, devoutly looking upward. "We won't be worrying over the rent now for this long time."

Within half an hour Malloran had undressed the boy and tucked him away for the rest he sorely needed.

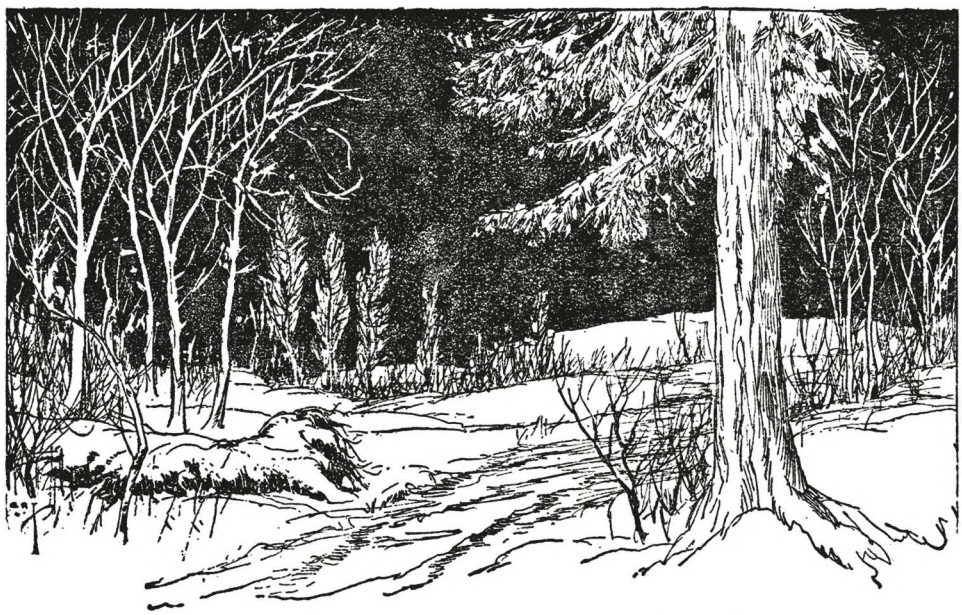
"Don't stir till I come back," he said at the door. "I'll be here to give you a good rubdown before breakfast. Good night, champ!"

"Champ! That's me. Gee!" chuckled Johnny from his pillow, and Malloran softly closed the door, bade Mrs. Grady good night and went home.

Six hours later he tapped at the outer door, and the gray mother smiled as she welcomed him.

"Come in; come in," she said. "He's sleeping like a baby. I've been up this long time, and not a sound out of him. Easy with that latch, now! Don't disturb him."

Very gently Ned swung back the door, and they looked in at Johnny Grady—*dead.*



Trees In Late Winter

By Willard E. Solenberger

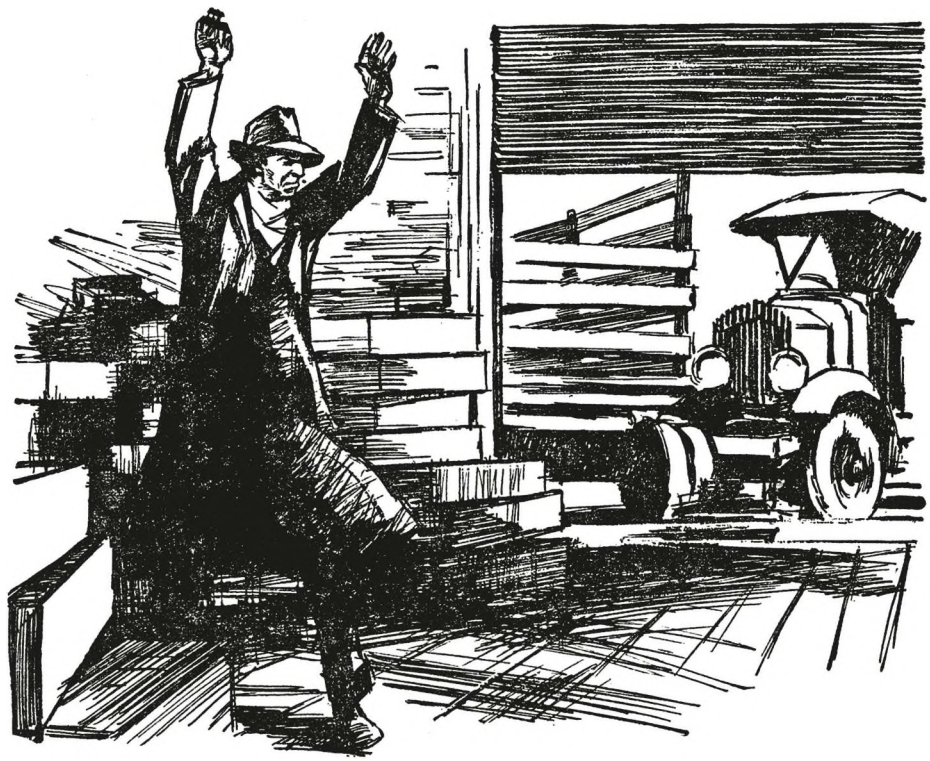
IN hill slopes crusted with old snow
The iron-gray trunks of maples rise,
And toss their spindle-fingered boughs,
Like phantoms, 'gainst the winter skies.

The ghosts of slender poplars line
An icy hedgerow, straight and tall;
And winds seek vainly for their leaves
That danced so freely in the fall.

There lies a basswood that went down
Before a blizzard, weeks ago;
How tranquilly it sprawls, asleep,
And dreams of skies it shall not know!

But by yon rutted, frozen lane
One giant pine tree, live and proud,
Holds needled limbs aloft and hums
An anthem to a passing cloud.

A Booze Racket Boss Comes Face



THE MAN WHO WAS

IT was always an event when Jack Chapman entered the pool room, as when royalty invades the retreat of the commoners. He came in now, bundled up in a big overcoat, and held the door open long enough for a gust of winter air to chill those sitting near the front. His eyes went over the pool room; he nodded curtly to Henry Streeter, who owned the place, and to one or two others. Slowly he unbuttoned the overcoat.

Henry Streeter was making signs to him behind his hand. Chapman went over to the desk.

"What's eating on you?"

Streeter leaned over the desk and whispered: "Chap, I got news."

"Yeah? Seen a Federal hanging around, I reckon?"

"Listen, Chap. This is bigger'n that. More important. 'Smoky' blew in tonight."

Chapman stiffened, tensed, and the bored look on his face vanished. "Yeah? Where is he? What's he want?"

"Listen, Chap, he says he wants to see you. He says he's gotta see you—to-night. An' he's down at the back table now shootin' way pool with Charlie and Dave."

Chapman leaned across the desk. "He say anything else? How'd he act when he said that? Is he heeled?"

"How the hell should I know whether he was heeled? It wasn't none of my

to Face with the Man He Framed.

FRAMED *By* John Randolph Phillips

business to go up an' feel him, an' naturally he didn't tell me. Now if I was you, Chap——"

"Aw, can that. I ain't afraid of Smoky. I handled him once, and I can do it again, believe me."

"That's just what worries me," Streeter said. "You handled him once all right. Maybe that's why he's back. Now if I was——"

"I told you to can that," Chapman said, "and I meant it, see?" He leaned back from the desk and straightened up, fished out a cigarette, fumbled with the lighting of it, and slowly stepped away from Streeter. He ran a finger around the inside of his collar band, as if to loosen it. Then, as though to assert himself, he walked toward the back of the pool room. He walked with his right hand shoved deep into his overcoat pocket.

Presently he stopped near the back table and watched the game in progress there. Smoky Greene had his back to Chapman. He was trying to figure out a combination shot on the seven ball. The five was the next in rotation and he was intent on hitting the five so that it would throw the seven into the corner pocket. Gently he stroked his cue stick, back and forth, back and forth, with his right hand.

Charlie and Dave, looking up, saw Chapman standing on the other side of the table. They moved away from

Smoky and came around to Chapman's side. Smoky made his shot and missed. Without straightening, he reached for chalk and began to chalk the tip of his cue.

"Hello, Smoky!" Chapman called.

Smoky straightened, turned, set the chalk down on the rail, and stood looking at Chapman. He saw Chapman's cold eyes and the line of his right arm disappearing in his overcoat pocket, and he saw the tenseness of Chapman's face. He smiled and came around the table. He held out his hand.

"How're you, Chap?"

Chapman gave Smoky his left hand to shake. He said, "When'd you blow in, kid?"

"T'-night," Smoky said. "'Bout an hour ago. How's tricks, Chap?"

"All right," said Chapman. "How've things been with you? Heard you'd left the big house." He turned and bent hard eyes on Dave and Charlie and one or two other spectators who had formed a ring around himself and Smoky. Dave and Charlie went back to their game, the others returned to their seats along the wall.

"Yeah," said Smoky. "Good behavior. Got off at six years."

"You been out a whole year then," Chapman said. "That's fine."

"Sure," said Smoky. "It's good to be out again." He laughed. "I was always a fresh-air guy, Chap. Nothin' like it."

"You said it. Well, I don't want to break up your game. Think I'll have a seat and watch it. You used to could make a cue ball do tricks, Smoky. There hasn't been——"

"Your shot, Smoky," Dave called

Smoky turned back to the table, sized up the positions of the balls, chalked his cue, and made a difficult cut shot on the nine. He missed an easy try on the ten, and came over to sit by Chapman.

"I want to see you, Chap."

"What for?"

"Want to talk business with you."

"Yeah? Well, I'm afraid I ain't got anything for you, Smoky. Things ain't breaking so good, see? I really ain't making no money."

"How come?" said Smoky.

"Aw, the damn Federals are after me. I never saw anything like it. They watch me like a hawk. I'm paying big protection to the local bulls and that part's all O. K. But them Feds—— Geez, Smoky, it's a crime the way them guys hang on. And now I understand they're sending that guy Peters down here. Heard of him, haven't you?"

"Yeah," said Smoky. "He's a namesake of mine."

"Namesake? What the hell—— Oh, you mean they call him Smoky, too. Yeah, I heard about that. But he got his name a lot different from the way you got yours. He got his from smoking up Jim Pender's gang. You may have heard of it."

Smoky glanced to the table where Charlie was making a long run.

"Yeah, I did hear about it," Smoky said. "I run across one of Jim's men a month or so ago. He said this Peters was hell on wheels. A guy don't have no show if he bucks that guy."

"He's just been in the business a year, too," Chapman said. "And now he's got the biggest rep in the country. Well, hell, what's the use gassing about him? If he's going to get me, he's going to get me. But I ain't any too worried. I just got to be careful for a while. Maybe it ain't so about his coming down here."

"It is so," Smoky said, speaking softly. Immediately he got up and went to the table, missed an easy shot, and stood for a moment chalking his cue. From the corner of his eye he watched Chapman. He saw Chapman's big hand come out of his pocket, clench itself into a corded fist, then slowly return to the pocket. Smoky kept on chalking his cue. Deftly he touched the chalk to

the edges; then, as if dissatisfied, he took a piece of sandpaper from a rack on the wall and began to massage the tip of the cue with it. This finished, he chalked again, put powder on his hands, and ran them up and down the stick.

By that time Charlie had made the last ball and the game was over.

"Want to shoot another one?" said Charlie.

"I reckon I got time," Smoky said. He pounded on the floor with the butt of his stick and a rack boy came and began to rack the balls. Chapman got up and came over to the table.

"You said you wanted to see me. Let's go and talk." There was a deep, hard glint in his eyes.

Smoky hesitated.

"I want to get the low-down on this Peters," Chapman whispered.

"Oh, all right," said Smoky. "Guess I'll have to go, boys." He looked at the little blackboard behind the table, on which the scores were kept. "Le's see, Charlie, you owe me three bucks, an', Dave, it's five an' a half from you."

They paid him and he and Chapman went out through the back of the pool room, after Smoky had put up his cue and donned his overcoat.

"Needn't keep your hand in your pocket, Chap," Smoky said when they stepped out into the alley.

"I think different," Chapman said. "Don't mind going in front, do you, Smoky?"

"Hell, no! Come on."

They went down the alley. The ground was hard and it crackled a little under their feet. Far overhead Smoky could see a myriad of pale stars twinkling in the chill night. It had been a long time, he thought, since he had seen the stars twinkle in this man's town. He had lain awake nights in the prison, thinking of the time when he should return, thinking and planning and cursing. Yeah, cursing everybody that had ever come into his life. Cursing that big stiff who walked behind him now, hating that guy's guts. Cursing and hating while he rotted away six years in a State prison.

At the end of the alley they came upon a broad street where artificial lights dimmed the cold flare of the distant stars, and where men and women hurried by. He and Chapman stepped out into the throng. A girl went by that Smoky knew—a jane that lived over on Banker Street. He remembered getting drunk at her place one night and having a fight with some guy from out of town. Now she passed him without recognition. And he and that dame had liked each other pretty well.

Prison did things like that to a guy—made his friends forget him. You could forget a lot in seven years; you could forget anything you wanted to unless you were shut up in a cell where you didn't have anything to do but remember. Now that girl, she'd wanted to marry him if he'd get out of Chap's gang. He had told her to wait a while, wait till he got a stake. He guessed he'd told her that a thousand times. One night she'd cried.

And now she passed him without knowing him!

"We turn up here," said Chapman at his elbow.

They followed a deserted street and the street lamps cast yellow splotches around their feet and tried to get under their pulled-down hat brims. Their feet rang on the cold sidewalk.

Presently Chapman indicated a house and they went in. Chapman pointed up the stairs. Smoky climbed them. This was a new place and better looking than Chapman's old dump. Chapman must be making it all right, in spite of what he had said in the pool room.

In the back of the house they entered a two-room apartment. It was furnished in better taste than Smoky had anticipated. Chapman must have an-

other jane on the string. That old one wouldn't have known mahogany from pine.

Taking off their coats, they sat down, in two chairs facing each other. Chapman transferred his gun from his overcoat pocket to a pocket of his suit. He gave Smoky a cigarette, took one himself, and waited for Smoky to light them both.

"What d'you mean it's so about Peters?" Chapman asked.

"I got a tip," Smoky said. "One of Jim Pender's old gang got it straight. Peters is on his way down here. Tha's all I know, Chap."

Chapman leaned forward and peered at Smoky. "What the hell do you want to go back to work for me for?"

"I need a job," Smoky said. "Booze runnin' is my game. You ain't never had a guy that could bring a load through like I used to do."

"That's so," Chapman said. "But is that your real reason? Don't beat around the bush with me, Smoky. I gotta know."

"I need a job," Smoky repeated. "You can pay more'n anybody I know, an' with Peters out to get you, you need me."

"You know a hell of a lot about Peters! How'd you get wise to that bird?"

"Listen, Chap. I been workin' up in the northern part of the State right where Peters got his rep. I've seen the rat. Yes, damn it, I've even shot pool with him. An' I heard him say he was comin' down here to land you behind the bars in the big house. He told me that hisself. Heard I was from down this way an' asked me a lotta questions."

"All right, all right," Chapman said. "So you think I need you? How do you figure that?"

"Well, I know this here guy, for one thing. Then, like I said before, I'm the best driver you ever had. You know that damn well. I got a nose for smellin' out trouble an' I always know what to do in a pinch. Ain't that so? You're damn tootin'! Nobody ever caught me deliverin' a load an' no Feds ever even got close to me when I was runnin' a load in from the coast. Get wise to yourself, Chap. You need me, fella, a hell of a lot worse'n I need you. How many guys you got now that you can really trust?"

"Not so many," said Chapman.

"Yeah, I knew it. I bet you ain't got nobody but Pat Mason."

"Listen," Chapman said, "I don't get you. Just before they put you in stir you was all hot to quit the game. You had a dame and you and her was going to step off. Now you show up and want to come back."

"The dame—the dame went back on me," Smoky said slowly.

"Oh, yeah. That explains a lot. Plenty of guys has traveled that road. Well! We can do some real talking now. But listen, Smoky. Do you know why you went to the big house?"

"Yeah," said Smoky. "You framed me."

Chapman drew back. Smoky could see his muscles go tense, could feel the cold hostility in the air. Smoky gestured with his right hand.

"Don't be feelin' your rod, Chap. If I wanted to bump you off I wouldn't be comin' to see you. I'd wait in some alley or get me a hired killer. Be yourself, Chap. I've learned sense."

"D'you know why I framed you?" Chapman said.

"Yeah, I know that, too. I got framed because I knew too much for you to let me outa the racket. You was just gettin' started good an' you hadn't been able to grease the local bulls yet. I was a good guy, but I had to go. You framed me on a holdup I never was near an' you thought you was sendin' me up for life, but your plans went wrong an' your hired men didn't bump off the guy they was supposed to.

You was scared then, but you felt better when you found out I wasn't goin' to talk. Hell, I wasn't no dirty rat. Is there anything else I'm supposed to know about that deal?"

"No," said Chapman. "You've covered the ground. But I still don't get you. Most guys would want to cut my heart out. Most guys think prison is hell."

"It is," Smoky said. "Plenty hell. An' I wanted to cut your heart out, all right. That is, I did at first. After a time I got sense an' seen the thing in its right light. I seen that you did the only thing you could do—the thing I'd've done myself in your place."

"And you didn't come back to get me?"

"Geez, you're thick headed! No, I didn't come back to get you. I ain't a murderer, an' besides, bumpin' a guy off ain't as much satisfaction as you might think. What I want is money —an' you're the guy that can help me get it, Chap. You owe me that much. You sent me to stir an' you owe it to me to——"

"To maybe bump you right now," Chapman cut in. "Listen, Smoky. How the hell do I know but what you're plannin' to double cross me? You got every reason in the world."

"I got every reason, all right. But where would it land me? Back in stir, that's where it'd land me. I've seen enough of that dump. Why, Chap, if I was after revenge, know what I'd do? Hell, I'd fasten my hooks some way on your bank roll. That'd hurt you worse'n any other way. I know you. You're buildin' for the future. You want this game to put you in the millionaire class. You're ambitious. If a guy copped your roll or a big part of it, it'd hurt you worse'n anything in the world. An' you know I ain't got a chance to clamp my feelers on your cash. Come off, Chap, an' see sense."

Chapman leaned back in his chair; he did not relax his watchfulness, but his hand came out of his pocket. He took out cigarettes, lit one, then passed the pack to Smoky. He blew rings into the air and watched them float toward the ceiling, tiny circlets of gray going up uniformly in the still air of the room.

"I still can't make up my mind," he said. "I framed a guy once and he beat the charge, then he come after me. I had to have him bumped."

"I'll make it up for you," Smoky said. "Listen, Chap. I know how to beat this guy Peters' game. I know how he works. An' if he does get by—if he does get by, see?—I know how to grease him."

"Grease him, hell!" said Chapman. "I've never seen that baby, but I've heard enough about him to know he's one guy that can't be——"

"Aw, come off," Smoky said. "They can all be greased. Some just come higher than others. I can fix this Peters an' I don't mean maybe so."

"Smoky," said Chapman, "you can have your old job back. Damn if I don't take the chance. Your argument sounded good to me all the way. Only I didn't see how a guy could go to stir and then want to come back and work for the guy that sent him up."

"I learned sense, that's all."

"Listen, kid," Chapman said. "You got real opportunities with me, now that you're cured. You stick to the truck a while, but you don't stick there always, see? A guy with sense and the guts you got don't juggle a steering wheel all his life."

"You're talkin' now," said Smoky. "I kind of like that tune you're playin'. It's called 'Big Dough,' ain't it?"

Relaxing, both of them laughed.

"You sure you ain't got hard feelings toward me, after all?"

"I wisht you'd get off that stuff," said Smoky. "I told you what was what with me."

"O. K., kid. The past is the past, huh? All right. Suits me."

They sat and smoked for a few minutes, then Chapman said: "I got a call or so to make, Smoky. Just make yourself at home till I——"

"Believe I'll take a little walk," said Smoky, "an' come back when you're through." He was conscious, as he stood up and donned overcoat and hat, that Chapman was watching him narrowly, and deliberately he turned his back on Chapman. When he turned back, Chapman's face had lost its suspicion.

"I may need you to-night," Chapman said. "I'm going to call a guy now that's due to want some stuff. Where'll you be?"

"Right back here in an hour," said Smoky. "I just want to walk down by the river an' look things over. Kind of glad to be back, I guess."

Going down the stairs, he paused long enough to light a cigarette and to gaze back at the closed door of Chapman's apartment. Then he went on down the stairs and out the front door, into the cold dark of the wintry night lighted by the transient yellow glow of the street lamps and the perpetual radiance of the pale stars. The lamps looked warm and the stars looked cold. Smoky thought about that and wondered if it was because the stars were so far away, wondered if everything was like that, and decided that it wasn't, because the things that he wanted most in life were very far away and yet looked warm and enticing. What a hell of a funny way to be thinking! The automatic in his pocket was very close and yet it felt awfully cold——

He went down the street toward the river, and he was thinking of the girl they had passed on the street that night. It didn't seem possible that he could have forgotten her—he knew he hadn't —but still, having seen her again, his memories of her had come in fragments. First, he'd remembered getting drunk at her place and having a fight. That had come before he remembered that she had been ready to marry him.

There was the river. Same old river. He watched the shine of the stars on it and smiled. Yeah, same old river that he hadn't seen for seven years. He'd been born in a shack over on the other side of the river, and the river was one of his first memories. Sometimes back in prison he'd got sloppy about the river, like a fellow gets when he's in love. Hell of a note to be in love with a river. Smoky laughed.

Banker Street was the same old thing, too, when he reached it. Same dirty little houses and ugly yellow street lamps set far apart. He stopped before a house and stood looking up at it. There was a light in an upstairs window, in her old room. Smoky watched that window. Maybe he ought to go in. She'd be glad to see him all right after he told her who he was; she'd kiss him, too. She was a swell girl.

He started up the walk toward the steps. Then the light in the window went out. Smoky went back to the street. After a time he heard something at the front door, then the door swung open and a man and woman came out. The woman took the man's arm. She clung to him and Smoky saw her face with the street light shining on it. She was older all right, but God, how pretty she still was! He'd seen that much when he'd passed her on the street—— Then he heard her voice.

"We can't stay long, Frank, because the kid'll be awake in a couple of hours. Let's hurry."

Smoky was a hurrying figure far up the street before they reached the sidewalk. He turned into an alley known of old and came out onto Main Street. His forehead was damp, because he was sweating a little, and he walked very fast.

"Where the hell you goin'?" a voice snarled at him. "Can't you keep from walkin' over a guy?"

"Listen, you," said Smoky. "You want me to take a poke at you?"

The man leaped back, hesitated momentarily, then disappeared in the crowd. Smoky went on up the street. He couldn't seem to walk as fast as he wanted to; he had to hold himself in to keep from breaking into a run.

"Back on the hour," Chapman said to him, when he came in. "Getting punctual, ain't you, kid?"

"Maybe," said Smoky.

"Had a drink, too," Chapman said. "Always could tell when you had one. Eyes give you away. Get wild looking You ain't had too much, have you?"

"No," said Smoky. "I'm all right. You got something for me?"

"Yeah, I got something for you. You know 'Dutch' Brown. No? Well, he's where the Greek used to be and he wants a half dozen cases to-night. I want you and Pat Mason to deliver it. I got a sweet-running bus for you to drive and Pat goes along as lookout, see?"

Chapman bundled himself in his big overcoat, shook himself like a setter, and picked up his hat. He was smiling.

"You know, Smoky, I sure felt funny when Henry Streeter said you was back. Geez, I'll say I felt funny. I walked back to where you was and I had my hand on my rod all the way. I was scared. I kept saying to myself over and over, 'If this rat makes a move, I'm going to drill him quick as hell.'" He laughed. "Sounds funny—but that's the truth." He slapped Smoky on the shoulder. "Geez, kid, you don't know how relieved I was when I finally saw you was on the square!"

Smoky slid out from under Chapman's hand, and the two of them went out the door, down the stairs and into the street.

"Cold," said Chapman. "Le's get a taxi. Find one up on Main." They walked along for a way in silence, then Chapman said: "I phoned Pat to meet us at the warehouse. He'll prob'ly be a little late."

After they found a taxi they rode many blocks down side streets into the poorer section of town until they came to a dark, somewhat dilapidated building which was the warehouse. Chapman paid the taxi driver and he and Smoky stood in their tracks until the taxi was out of sight; then Chapman led the way up an alley by the side of the warehouse to a door. He unlocked it and they went in. Chapman snapped a light switch and a soft glow resulted. Smoky saw half a hundred cases of whisky arranged on the far side of the building and, near a large rolling door, a couple of trucks and a trim, low touring car, with the side curtains up. Chapman walked across to the other side.

"That's all uncut stuff," he said. "I run every case of it in from the coast. I sell most of that to private parties, but there's one or two fellows like Dutch Brown running swell places that take it, too. I got synthetic stuff for the cheap guys."

"It's a nifty layout," said Smoky. "When's Pat due?"

"Twenty minutes or a half hour."

In one corner of the long, low room Smoky noticed a telephone; he went over and made sure that it was in working order and connected. There was a tenseness, strained and yet somehow lithe, about his movements. He watched Chapman all the time out of the corner of his eye. He crossed to where Chapman was bending over a case.

"You got backin', I s'pose, Chap?" said Smoky.

"Course I got backing. I'm my own boss, see, but I got a big guy that stands behind me."

"I reckon he'd fork over for you if necessary."

"Sure—but it ain't never been necessary yet, kid. Not with me watching my p's and q's like I been doing. Why?"

"Nothin'. I was jus' thinkin' what a lucky guy you really are."

"Yeah? Well, I *made* my luck, see? S'pose we load up the car."

"Le's wait," Smoky objected. "Pat ought to be here any minute. He can help us." Casually he walked over by the door at which they had entered. He listened. "Thought I heard him then," he said. "I'll just step out an' see."

He slipped through the door, and shut it behind him. Outside in the utter dark of the alley he waited, every sense alert, eyes peering into the gloom, ears straining. There was a sound up the alley. Smoky flattened himself against the wall. The sound became a footstep, and presently a figure loomed in the darkness ahead. Smoky leaned forward. He could see the figure better now. It was Pat Mason. Smoky brought his right hand out of his pocket, swayed away from the wall enough to give his arm room, and brought that arm up above his head. It came down like a piston suddenly released, and the butt of the automatic hit Pat Mason just above the temple.

Smoky bent over the inert form. He worked fast. A bandanna handkerchief came out of his pocket and was fashioned into a gag, and applied quickly and thoroughly. Cord came out of another pocket. He tied Mason's wrists and ankles, then picked him up, carried him to the other side of the alley, and dropped him in a heap.

"I hope," said Smoky, "that the next guy you help frame won't be so soft hearted. Yuh damned rat!"

Through the tightly drawn dark he went back to the door, opened it, and stepped inside. "It wasn't him," he said. Jus' some guy prowlin' round like a cat."

Chapman looked across at him suspiciously. "What was your idea in stepping out? Lemme tell you, Smoky——" He stopped. Smoky was walking toward him, his eyes glued on Chapman's face. In Smoky's hand, as it came up from under the folds of his coat, was a gun.

"Chap, you're under arrest!"

Chapman stood and stared. His hands came up slowly, as if actuated by springs that, being released, had no alternative but to move upward, regardless of any mental command of his. Finally he found his tongue.

"What the hell are you talking about?" His hands slid back to his sides and he took one step forward, to be halted by a sudden movement of Smoky's right hand.

"Keep your hands up," Smoky said. "That's it. "That's it. I said you're under arrest—that's what the hell I'm talkin' about. I'm——"

"If you're going to bump me, do it," Chapman said. "Only don't stand there spouting riddles."

"They ain't riddles, Chap. You're under arrest like I said. Chap, I'm Smoky Peters." He laughed, and the sound of his voice rang out hollowly in that silent room. "How do you like them apples, Chap?"

Chapman sneered. "Sure you ain't Napoleon or Bishop Cannon? Come off, Smoky. What's your game?"

Smoky came a step nearer. He was smiling in a thin, unamused way.

"Chap, you use t' be a bright guy. You use t' could read the truth when you seen it. Why, hell, fella, I was 'most afraid you'd be smart enough to catch on when I was gassin' about how much I knew about Smoky Peters. Of all the dumb guys! An' yet you was smart an' foxy enough to send me to stir once. Lamp this, guy!"

With his left hand he threw back the fold of his overcoat and the light glinted yellowly on something pinned there. Chapman's eyes that had narrowed went

wide again. He swayed as a man does when he is about to take an uncertain step.

"My God!" he said weakly.

Smoky withdrew his hand and the coat fell back into place.

"Chap, it's all up," said Smoky. "You're goin' to the big house—to the place where you send innocent guys. Guys that sweat in a rotten hole an' think an' dream about the time when they can get out."

Chapman got command of himself. "So you got to be a Fed—just—just to finally get your hooks on me?"

"Yeah," said Smoky. "That's what I done. An', boy, I got 'em on you now an' they're goin' in deep—deep as all hell."

"I'll have you bumped for this! You'll never get outa this town alive. I'll——"

"Remember, Chap, you ain't talkin' to Smoky Greene—you're talking to Smoky Peters—an' you never did have an' never will have the nerve to bump off a Federal agent."

The intensity died out of Chapman's face; he shook himself, like a wet dog, and suddenly sat down on one of the cases. Smoky came over and took his gun from his pocket. He dropped it into his own pocket, then stood looking down at Chapman. Finally Chapman spoke.

"C-can a—can you be greased, Smoky?"

Smoky laughed. "I come too high for you, Chap—way too high. I go up in the thousands."

A sudden light leaped up in Chapman's eyes. "Then it ain't impossible Just how high do you go?"

"Well, my last job went to five thousand—but you're a special case, Chap. I sweated six years in stir for this night. I don't reckon I'll sell it."

Chapman was on old, familiar ground now. "How much?" he said. He came to his feet. "You know damn well five thou' is outa the question. But name what you will take."

"Ten thousand!" Smoky said. His voice rang out.

"Don't be a damn fool. I couldn't raise half of that. Hurry up!"

"Ten thousand," Smoky said.

"That would break me, you fool."

"What do I care? Ten thousand."

"Now listen, Smoky. I ain't got that much in the bank even."

"You got a big guy backin' you. Ankle over to that phone an' give him a ring. Tell him to bring the cash down here an' leave it on the ground by the door. Tell him to beat it outa here soon's he does it."

"You're crazy——"

Chapman stopped. Smoky's gun was against his ribs; it was pushing in; it hurt.

"Do you want to see the big house, Chap?"

Chapman recognized the intensity and the earnestness of that voice. He capitulated. He went to the phone and shakily called a number. After a time there came an answering voice, and with Smoky's gun trained on his forehead he spoke with a dead voice into the mouthpiece.

Presently he turned back to Smoky. He seemed to have aged ten years, and there was a droop to his big, square shoulders.

"You've broke me," he said. "The big guy is coming through, all right, but he's sore. He knows I'm caught in a jam, and he's forking over because he's scared not to. The big guy knows the things I've done in this racket. He's the only one that's kept the cops off me—and now, after to-night, he's through—he—he said so."

"I kind of figured on that," said Smoky.

An hour later Smoky went swiftly up the alley. There was a big bulge in two of his pockets, and he could hear

the crackle of big-denomination currency. Far overhead the stars were as pale and as cold as ever, but the lights on Main Street, when he reached it, were all adazzle and their warm, yellow glow fell all around him.

He took a taxi to the Union Station. For a while he walked back and forth along the street outside, and he took from the lining of his coat the shining metal thing that had been pinned there. It was a flat, rounded piece of thick tinfoil ingeniously stamped and lettered. He threw it into the street. Then he went inside the station and bought a ticket to a city half a continent away.

Watch for more stories by John Randolph Phillips.

HOW HE FELT ABOUT IT

AN army blimp was moored at Bolling Field near Washington. During the afternoon the skies were overcast and the rain fell. Toward dark the rain was intermittent, but the wind did everything but intermit. It blew great guns. It became a fifty-mile gale. And the way it tossed that blimp about was something worth seeing.

Before long seven hundred soldiers and civilians were fighting the gale for possession of the blimp. All night long the battle raged, with the seven hundred clinging to ropes and feeling as if at any moment their arms would be pulled from their sockets. That gale was a magic giant, a demoniac power determined to carry the blimp to destruction. But at long last the seven hundred won. The wind died down, and the blimp was saved.

When the sun rose, one of the seven hundred, exhausted, mud-caked, and panting, was leaning disconsolately against a hangar.

"If that darned blimp was to poke its nose around that corner," he confided with all the energy left in him, "I'd shoot it!"

BROOKHART OF IOWA

SMITH WILDMAN BROOKHART, United States senator from Iowa, is the man who startled Washington society by calmly rising in his place in the Senate one day last fall and revealing that he had seen gentlemen of social and political prominence imbibing alcoholic drinks from silver flasks at a stag dinner in the capital in the year 1926. He is also the man who announced, when he first went to the Senate, that he would never wear a dress suit—a pledge or threat from which he has never deviated.

Brookhart at various stages in his career has been a country school-teacher, a small-town lawyer, a soldier, and the champion rifle shot of the world. He is absolutely fearless, and when he starts out to fight either a cause or an individual, his colleagues in the Senate comment: "Smith Wildman is about to live up to his middle name."

Maybe one reason he is always in perfect fighting trim is that he is usually going to bed when the guests at Washington society's late dinners are taking their seats at table. So far as the fiery Iowan is concerned, Washington is a nine-o'clock town.

WHAT'S LIFE WORTH?

By CLAY PERRY

It Took a Girl Lawyer to Show Him What Life Was Worth.

NO one in Big Neck would have given a nickel for the life of the hard-faced, defiant young man who was arraigned in county court on the charge of murder of "Big Steve" Laramie, the lumberman.

At least, that was what almost every one said, when they heard the story of how he had refused to give any account of himself and his movements on the night that Laramie was shot, had given a name which was palpably false, had refused even to have an attorney.

The very name that he gave was a mockery.

"Watts Lifeworth! Watts Lifeworth!" called Clerk Calder, holding the grand jury indictment in his hands and "calling up" the prisoner at the bar.

A buzz and a murmur ran through the audience which packed the benches behind the prisoner's dock, a rustle and a stir came among the assembled barristers and court attachés within the inclosure, in front of the dock.

It was true, then, that he had assumed a name that had been given him in derision by the lumberjacks in the camp where he had worked, because of an expression it was said he was fond of using: "What's life worth, anyhow?"

"Watts Lifeworth, what say you now to the indictment charging you with the murder of Stephen A. Laramie?" demanded the clerk sharply. "Guilty or not guilty?"

Among the lawyers sat a very young attorney, just recently admitted to the bar, one whom the rest of the barristers did not take very seriously, one whom the people of Big Neck considered had gone outside of the usual conventions to enter the legal profession—because Lawyer Lee was a woman.

Mary Lee was the only woman lawyer in Big Neck, and the youngest member of the bar. Those who smiled or sniffed at her and her pretensions at law were inclined to give more consideration to her youth and a pair of soft-brown eyes and a dimple at the corner of her mouth than to the years of hard work she had done, working her way through law school, making her own clothes, caring for her widowed mother until she died, teaching school between sessions and managing, somehow, to retain possession of the little cottage which was all her father had left, except the mortgage on it, when he succumbed, a victim of one of those terrible accidents which happen in the big woods.

Other barristers were very polite to her, overpolite, in a manner of extreme condescension which indicated a sort of contempt for her legal attainments. She had managed to secure only three or four cases since her admission to the bar and one of these concerned a client whose interests, at this time, she was anxious to protect.

Bud Harper, an overgrown boy of seventeen, was held as a material witness in connection with the killing of Steve Laramie. Bud Harper had seen a man sneaking through the railroad yards, with what looked like a rifle in his hands, edging toward Steve Laramie's mansion, on the knoll above the yards, aloof and in splendid isolation from the rest of Big Neck. She had managed to get Bud out of jail on bail, going clear to Hartville to see Judge Thurman and getting the ridiculously high amount of bail, placed by Justice of the Peace Calder, reduced so that Bud's relatives could raise the amount for his freedom.

This was Mary Lee's humble connection with this case which was a *cause célèbre* for Big Neck, because Big Steve Laramie had been the "Pooh Bah" of the little Northwoods town.

Other attorneys within the inclosure were there to try cases, minor cases in comparison to this one, to be sure, but Mary Lee had not even a case for trial in the county court, nor had she expected one.

One or two criminal lawyers sat restlessly, waiting for the opportunity which might be offered them when an attorney was assigned to the man who was charged with the murder. It was considered likely that the assignment would go to the firm of Walsh & Wilker, and the fee, to be paid by the county, would be split between the partners, plus such expenses as they might incur in working on the case.

There was not one of the lawyers there who believed this man anything but guilty—not one, that is, except Lawyer Mary Lee. And she had not dared to say that she thought otherwise. It would be considered a woman's sentimental weakness for a bold, rather handsome villain such as this man Watts Lifeworth surely was.

Mary Lee looked at him as he rose to answer the indictment. It was the second time she had seen him in the month since he had been arrested. She thought that he had aged a great deal. His face was gray, sharp and tense—others said hard and bold and defiant.

A month ago, when they had brought him in from the camp, a deputy on each side of him, his wrists manacled, in a bobbing sleigh drawn by a pair of work horses, he had seemed as young as the age he had given—twenty-five.

Erect as an Indian, staring straight ahead of him as the sleigh went through Main Street, curls of crisp, black hair escaping from beneath a round, woolen cruiser cap, clapped carelessly on his head by some other hands than his own, a mackinaw open at the neck, revealing a deep chest, a strong, brown pillar of a neck rising from the blue, woolen shirt that was also unbuttoned. A powerful young man who seemed something

like a wild animal captured, one who loved life and freedom—so he had looked.

Now he looked beaten, haggard, sullen, despairing.

"Guilty or not guilty?" echoed the words of the clerk, and all the little buzzing whispers, shuffling of feet, rustle of clothing and murmurs were stilled.

"Guilty," answered the prisoner, in a dull drawl.

Mary Lee caught her breath and her lip in her teeth.

All around her a sort of "Ah!" seemed to rush in unison from the breasts of those who watched and waited, as if they all said, "I thought so!"

Attorneys looked at one another and smiled knowingly. The prosecuting attorney and his assistant almost rushed to the judge's bench and began talking to Judge Thurman, who was sitting in the criminal session. Everybody watched Judge Thurman closely. In Big Neck this white-haired, stern-faced justice was quite disliked. There were some of the most bitter who declared he was crooked. This was because he had rendered a decision in the famous case of the Inhabitants of Big Neck vs. the North Branch Railroad Company, a decision against the said inhabitants whose petition, headed by Steve Laramie, would have compelled the railroad company to erect a new station in Big Neck.

Of course, Steve Laramie would have profited most directly by a favorable decision because he owned the land the railroad would have had to buy to build the station, but the inhabitants considered themselves injured also. So the inhabitants watched Judge Thurman for a show of leniency toward Laramie's murderer.

There had been a few whispers about Big Steve, of late, but these had died down when he was killed. He was spoken of now as an honest, upright man, all his sharp practices forgotten since he had been struck down by a rifle bullet fired through the window of his home.

He had been there alone, his wife being in Hartville visiting a sister. Even the story about the man whom Laramie had paid five hundred dollars to leave town, at the time of the government timber contract scandal, was forgotten. Some said he had done it to protect the man; one or two doubted it. They noticed that the man's wife had stayed on in Big Neck and had seemed to be prosperous—until her welcome wore out and she left and went to Hartville.

Mary Lee, curiously enough, was thinking about this old story now. She had been too young to know the people. She had heard it, in part, from her father and in more detail, much later, from her mother, who had grown querulous, almost childish, in her latter days and harped on many disagreeable things.

Mary Lee was thinking, with that probing, prying mind of hers which had led her to take up the study of law, that the motive which was ascribed to this man at the bar for killing Steve Laramie was not very strong. To be sure, he had sneered at the sheriff and his deputies when they had remonstrated with him for being so casual about the charge against him, and the sheriff had said: "You are being charged with the murder of an honest, upright citizen of Big Neck."

"Steve Laramie!" he was reported to have cried out. "He was no cock-eyed angel. He was a blackguard!"

And now he pleaded guilty.

The buzzing conference at the bench ended. The prosecutor and his assistant sat down sulkily. Judge Thurman spoke to the prisoner:

"Watts Lifeworth, do you realize that in pleading guilty to this charge you give me no alternative save to sentence you to imprisonment for the remainder of your natural life?"

The prisoner leaned forward a little, his hands gripping the rail of the dock so hard that his fingers went white.

"No, your honor!" he exploded hoarsely. "I did not know that."

"You have refused an attorney," Judge Thurman went on sternly. "Under the law you are entitled to an attorney, whether you have any funds or not. The laws of this State are jealous of the rights of all men, even he who is charged with the unlawful taking of human life. You have shown by your plea and your reply to my questions that you are ignorant of the law and not qualified to make your own defense. I am obliged to protect you against your own ignorance. You are instructed, Mr. Clerk, to enter a plea of *not guilty* against this charge, in behalf of the prisoner, Watts Lifeworth. Mr. Sheriff, will you conduct the prisoner to the bench."

Messrs. Walsh & Wilker looked self-conscious, trying not to look so. Mary Lee looked at the prisoner and wondered why he had pleaded guilty.

"Was it because he thought—that would end it all?" she asked herself. "It must have been. But when he learned that it meant life imprisonment, he was startled, horrified. It seems as if he wanted to die."

Judge Thurman looked down at the prisoner and his thoughts were somewhat the same as Mary Lee's. She would have been astonished to know it, for she considered Judge Thurman's mind the highest type of legal mind and she was only a green, young, woman lawyer.

She was thunderstruck to hear her name called by Judge Thurman.

"Will Lawyer Lee please step to the bench?"

She had to struggle to get to her feet. What was it? About Bud Harper? Her face was pale as she went to the place before the bench where now stood Watts Lifeworth, the sheriff, the prosecutor and his assistant, all eyes upon her.

"Attorney Lee," said Judge Thurman, addressing her, "this prisoner has expressed a desire to have you assigned as his counsel, to defend him of the charge of murder. Do you wish to accept the assignment?"

For a moment Mary Lee could not get her breath and she stammered when she answered:

"Your—your honor, I—I have not consulted with the prisoner! I had no idea——"

"Perhaps you would like to consult with him before you give your answer," suggested Judge Thurman brusquely. "Mr. Sheriff, conduct the prisoner to the dock and make a place for Lawyer Lee, where she may speak with him, uninterrupted for a few moments.

"The court is aware," he continued, speaking again to Mary, "that this assignment is not an easy one nor is it likely to be a pleasing task, but it is one which must fall to some one of the members of the bar. In view of the fact that this man has expressed but one preference, it is the duty of the court to accede to his wishes in so far as is possible. You may now retire for consultation. Mr. Clark, will you call up the next case on the docket, to be considered for the time. We shall return to the case of Watts Lifeworth in due time."

The sheriff led Watts Lifeworth away by the arm and placed him again in the long, narrow inclosure of which he was the sole occupant, such other persons as were to appear before the court being at liberty on bail. The sheriff then cleared away chairs and asked a few other attorneys to move. He set a table near the rail of the dock, a chair beside it. Mary Lee went and sat down, her knees trembling.

Judge Thurman had his eyes upon her, squinting a little to conceal a gleam

that was in them. He was a student of mankind as well as of laws and he had learned that there is no more powerful appeal to a woman than the spectacle of a man, evidently bent upon self-destruction, especially if he be a young man whose doom is apparently sealed. He knew this is an age-old law, irrevocably bound up in the mysteries of life and sex.

He had not thought it necessary to inform Mary Lee that the prisoner's preference as expressed had been, not for her, personally, but for "the youngest lawyer you can find, your honor. That'll be good enough."

So, as she faced Watts Lifeworth, her face showing the pent-up emotion that was in her, she seemed to catch in his gray-blue eyes an appeal. He had asked her to help him.

"Did you guess," she asked him breathlessly, "that I believe you innocent of this crime?"

He smiled. It was not with his lips but with his eyes, which alone in his masklike face seemed to be alive, capable of showing emotion.

"I suppose," he said, "a man never can be sure he is guilty till after the trial. But every one seems sure about me."

There was a biting, ironic touch to his tone and his words. It brought a rush of blood to her face.

"Why did you plead guilty?" she asked him. "Why are you so anxious to die? I have heard that your favorite expression is the one from which you took the name you give, 'What's life worth, anyhow?' What has happened to you to make you feel this way? Something has happened."

He turned another of those masked smiles upon her.

"What makes you think I am innocent?" he demanded.

"Because I believe there may be some one who had a more impelling motive than any which has been suggested for your alleged killing of Steve Laramie," she said, keeping her voice low and level with difficulty, because of a rising, throbbing beat of desperation in her breast which threatened to get into her throat. "Do you think life would be worth much to a guilty man if an innocent man dies for his crime—no matter how badly the innocent man wishes to die?"

A little twist of his lips, then his answer, ironic, almost gibing: "For the sake of supposing, I'd say it might be worth more to him than mine is to me. I don't know what you think you know about this."

"I haven't time to tell you now. I've got to answer the judge's question, whether I shall accept this assignment. Before I can answer it, I have got to know whether you are going to help me —to help you. That is all."

She thought that he breathed a little faster, and that the queer gleam in his eyes was a trifle warmer. But when he spoke it was flatly, dully, and the spark of sardonic humor lay in his words:

"Well, if it's going to be worth anything to you to try to save a worthless life, sister, I'll do all I *can* to help you."

Lawyer Mary Lee accepted the assignment. Judge Thurman flattered himself he had known, all along, that she would accept it, but he was not cynical enough to believe that she did it because of the modest fee which the county would pay her.

Other lawyers smiled, sidewise, when she announced she had decided to accept the assignment, but openly they congratulated her, warmly. Attorney Walsh of the firm of Walsh & Wilker congratulated her with, "It's a rather hopeless case, Miss Lee. Not everybody would want to tackle it."

Which was as much as to say that he hadn't cared for the assignment anyway, and that he pitied her—and for a consideration, a portion of the fee, he would gladly help her. But Mary Lee

asked no one to help her or to split the fee with her. She was not thinking of the fee anyway. Lawyer Walsh was the one who was thinking of it. Because he thought so much of it he, believing the prisoner guilty, would have done his legal best to prove him innocent. Mary Lee, believing him innocent, would do a little better than her best, a lot better. She would have to, for she felt that she was going to have to fight, first of all, to put some little love of life into the heart of the hard-faced man who seemed to want to die and have it over with.

That evening she went to the jail and gained admission to consult with her client. She was allowed to sit with him on a bench in the little, square, iron-barred room into which his cell opened, a guard beyond a near-by iron door, his rifle leaning near him, a pistol in a holster at his belt.

Again she asked the question: "Why is it that you don't consider life worth living?"

"Nothing I have ever done," Watts answered her, in an unexpected burst of speech, bitter, harsh of tone, accusing, hopeless, "nothing has ever come right for me yet. When I was five years old I had a little pup that meant more to me than anything else in the world. I played with him as if he was a brother. He slept in my crib. One night the house we lived in caught fire and the pup woke us up. Father and mother got the kids out but the pup got left inside.

"I knew where he would be and I broke away from my mother and ran back to get him. He would be under my crib—or in it. Well, my mother went crazy and ran into the burning house after me. She didn't come out. Then my father went in after her—and he didn't come out. Some one found me—under the kitchen sink, which I thought was the crib—and got me out. The pup was burned up, too."

Mary felt her throat grow tight, her eyes smarting.

"I had a brother and a sister, older than I was," he went on. "My sister, whom I thought was an angel, fell for a worthless rascal. I tried to keep him away from her—and she up and ran away with him. He mistreated her; she died of consumption before I could find her and help her.

"That left me my brother. He was ten years older than I was and a hero to me. He married a girl that was no good—a pretty, flighty girl who liked men—not a man but men—and on her account he went crooked. Got mixed up in a deal that meant he'd got to stay crooked or go to State's prison. His wife didn't stick by him. His wife, when I tried to help him—tried to get her to stay with him and help him—made a fool out of me and my brother grew to hate me. He was insanely jealous. I was on the square with him, but he couldn't believe it. That woman—was crooked."

He halted abruptly. Another of those little lip-twisting quirks came, hardly a smile. "The very last thing that I tried to do for some one," he said, "it went wrong. Understand that, by this time, it had begun to seem to me that I wasn't good for much of anything. I got to be a sort of drifter. I drifted into one of Laramie's logging camps, up here. It was a miserable outfit, bum tools and bad food and wretched bunks. Even the chains that they had to use to bind the big loads of logs onto the sleighs were worn and rusted so that they were weak and dangerous. One day one of 'em did break and the bohunk teamster that was driving, walking beside the load, hadn't time to get out of the way.

"I had a chance to save him. I tried to get my peavey under the logs as they slipped and hold 'em long enough so he could get out of the way. I tripped on a root and fell and rolled to a safe place myself—but the logs fell on the teamster and broke both his legs and put

him out of business for the rest of the season. And Laramie was to blame for it," he added harshly.

"Then another thing went wrong," he added. "I said I'd help you all I can, Miss Lee. I can't tell you about this. It would make an iron dog laugh and howl. Nobody would believe it—and if they did—well, what's the use? Life isn't worth anything to me, Miss Lee."

He was leaning over, his elbows on his knees, his hands clasped tightly, head bent, staring at the floor. Mary Lee, biting her lip, sat a long time and stared at the floor, too. But she was thinking and thinking hard.

"Don't, for Heaven's sake, think I don't appreciate what you're trying to do for me," he burst out suddenly. "But don't, for Heaven's sake, try to get me off with—second-degree murder or anything that means my being locked up for life or any portion of it. I'd rather—it would be guilty as charged."

"Or not guilty?" she asked him.

He gave a short, hard laugh. "If you get that verdict," he said, "I'd think a miracle had happened for my special benefit. I'm not a man that would commit suicide," he added.

Mary Lee went away, thinking hard, knowing that miracles did not happen to save men from the gallows, except in books, but knowing that she must find something—somebody.

She would take the train to Hartville, she decided, and see if by any slender chance she could get on the trail of somebody.

But when she got to her cottage somebody was waiting to see her. It was a woman whom she never had seen before—a woman dressed in black, a black veil pinned to her hat, a woman who once had been pretty and who still tried to keep up the illusion by the use of cosmetics and much perfume, and who tossed her head in a caricature of what must have been, once, a fetching gesture.

"Miss Lee," she said, when she was admitted to the little sitting-room-study where Mary kept her few law books and had her desk, for her home was her office, "I just heard that Steve Laramie is dead, and I was told that you are going to defend the man that shot him. I am Ellie Knowles, that was Ellie Burton. I used to live in Big Neck, years ago. Your dad and Jim Knowles knew each other. They both worked for Steve Laramie, at one time. I don't know whether you ever heard of this, but Jim did a job for Steve Laramie, once, that he wasn't paid for. Steve Laramie promised to pay for it, some time. He promised me he would. He was going to deed over to me one of those lots that lies just south of the railroad station."

Mary Lee stared at the woman, hard. "Ellie Knowles—Jim Knowles," she said to herself. "Jim Knowles was paid—he was paid to leave town. That's the man my father told me about—and this is the woman my mother told me about. Why, this is the woman I was going to Hartville about—to try to get some trace of her! Miracles don't happen. This isn't a miracle—it's a coincidence. Yes, and it's natural course of events, too. She just heard that Steve Laramie was dead? She did not just hear it; she has known it for quite a long time. But why is she in black?"

She asked her: "Have you lost some one, recently?"

"My husband," answered Ellie Knowles, sniffing a little.

"Your husband is dead? Jim Knowles—is dead?"

Ellie nodded, dabbing carefully at her penciled eyebrows with a black-bordered kerchief.

"So, you see, the lot would come to me," she explained, apparently unaware that she was, in a way, contradicting herself, having already said that it was to be deeded to her by Laramie. "Jim came up to Big Neck," she went on,

"quite a long time ago to see Steve Laramie about it. Jim drowned himself, you know," she added, and with a simper: "He was a fool! But then, there's other men have been almost as foolish over me.

"But what I came to you for was this, Miss Lee. I didn't want to go to a man lawyer. You can't trust 'em. Men are all alike. I know 'em. I know you must be awful busy, Miss Lee, but I wanted to ask you if you would find out whether Steve Laramie left anything in his papers or, perhaps in his will, that would give me a claim on that lot."

"I am very busy," Mary said slowly, thinking, thinking hard, thinking what a harpy this woman was, thinking how callous she seemed about her husband, simpering that he had killed himself because of her, even indifferent to the murder of Steve Laramie. "I am very, very busy, but I'll do what you ask on one condition."

"Oh, I'll pay you the regular fee, of course!" Ellie exclaimed suspiciously.

"Never mind the fee. I appreciate your coming to me. The condition is a simple one. To help me—to help you—I shall need a photograph of—your husband. Have you got one?"

"I should say I have!" giggled Ellie. "Jim, he was always having his picture took. I don't know why; he wasn't such a looker. I've probably got a dozen of 'em lying around in my dresser or my trunk, down to Hartville."

"Send me just one, a late one." Mary Lee instructed, trying not to make it seem too desperately important and at the same time to impress the woman with the idea that it was necessary. "Do you wish to have the lot sold, in case I find it has been deeded or conveyed to you and turned into cash?"

"No sale!" exclaimed Ellie, rising. "No sale! I want the lot. A boy friend of mine who works for the railroad tipped me off to get hold of it if I could. My boy friend is fireman on the midnight limited. I'm going back on that train. You can address me at General Delivery, Hartville, as soon as you find out anything. I know you must be busy. I hope you can win your case, Miss Lee. Is the man good looking, that they got for shooting Steve? Well, don't you trust him, Miss Lee. Take a tip from me. Men are *all* alike."

She was gone. Mary Lee sat and stared at the door.

So, Jim Knowles had been in Big Neck to see Steve Laramie. A "long time ago"? And Jim Knowles was dead. He had drowned himself. He had found life not worth living. And Ellie Knowles thought that Steve Laramie would give her a lot of land upon which the railroad, some time soon, might want to build a new station for Big Neck.

As early as she dared Mary Lee called at the jail, the next morning, for another interview with her client. He greeted her with a sort of ironic cheerfulness.

"Good morning, Miss Lee. Is this the day we find out whether or not I am guilty?"

"The case will not go to trial to-day," she answered. "It will probably not be called up again until to-morrow. That means we have got one more day left to discover whether life is going to be worth living for you. I want you to try to answer some questions that I shall ask you—and I want you to remember that I am going to believe everything that you say to me. So don't lie to me. If you do not want to answer the questions, say nothing The first one is: "What is your real name?"

He shook his head, silently.

"Very well. The next one is: 'Do you know Ellie Knowles?' "

His face went bloodless.

"Ellie Knowles!" he repeated sharply. "What has she been doing? What has she told you? Do you mean that she—*has she squealed?*"

"You do not wish to have her brought into this case as a witness?" inquired Mary Knowles, ignoring his questions. calm and relentless. now that she had had an answer of a sort that more than satisfied her.

"No," he said emphatically, "I don't want her to get into this. Of course not. My God! It looks as if I'd even bungled——"

He checked himself, regarded her searchingly and asked in a whisper: "Has *he* made—his get-away?"

Mary Lee nodded "Yes," she said. "he has made his get-away. It is not going to be necessary for you to shield him any longer."

"He's made his get-away!" mused the prisoner. "Where—— No, I don't want to know where, even if you know. Are you sure he is safe? Are you sure they can't get him?"

"Before I answered that," she said, "I want you to tell me where you were and what you were doing on the night that Steve Laramie was shot."

Mary Lee recognized an advantage when she had it, and cruel as she felt she was being toward this desperate and distracted man, she held to her advantage.

"Believe it or not," he answered bluntly, "I was on my way, with a rifle, to Steve Laramie's house on the night he was shot. What do you think of that? Are *you* going to believe me if I say I didn't shoot him?"

"But you *didn't* shoot him," she responded. "Did you?"

The look of distress that came into his face told her that she had roused, at least, some powerful emotion which had broken down his ability to keep that face a mask.

"No," he said wearily, "I didn't shoot Steve Laramie, because, when I got there, *he was already dead.*"

"Yes," said Mary Lee.

"You believe that?" he demanded incredulously.

"It would do you no good to tell me lies," she said. "It wouldn't even help you to hang."

"You wouldn't advise me to tell that to a jury, would you?" he drawled, with a suspicion of a quirk to his lips.

Mary Lee did not answer. She was thinking. One thing she was thinking was that this man had a sense of humor, grim and grisly as it might be, and there was hope for him.

"You found Steve Laramie already dead," she repeated, "and did not dare, of course, to report it—because you had gone to see him, a rifle in your hands."

"That's it," he said, nodding. "Nobody would have believed I didn't shoot him or that I didn't intend to shoot him, even if the rifle I had with me had not been fired—and couldn't be fired because it hadn't any firing pin. Can you beat that?" he finished.

"Whose rifle was it?" came her quick question.

"It belonged to the bohunk that got caught under the load of logs. I told him I wanted to take it to town to get the firing pin fixed so we could try for a deer in the woods."

"Where is it now, do you know?"

"I reckon it's out at camp, 'less some one stole it."

"You did not intend to shoot Steve Laramie," she charged swiftly, "because you knew the rifle could not be fired."

"I—I could have got it fixed," he said, seeming to withdraw suddenly from his mood of eager confidence.

"Not that late at night—and you didn't get it fixed," she shot at him. "You went to see Laramie with a rifle that could not be fired and—you found him dead. And the rifle that they found lying in the railroad yard was not the one you carried. It had been fired."

She rose as if satisfied and ready to go. He rose with her and his face bore a look of alarm.

"What are you going to do?" he demanded. "Wait! There is something

you haven't told me How can you be sure they won't get the man who left that rifle?"

"He is dead," she said simply, and turned and went rapidly toward the door.

Before she got to the door she stopped and turned and looked at him. He stood, staring, as still as a statue, his shoulders drooping, his hands hanging lax by his side. It was the attitude of a man utterly discouraged, beaten. Mary Lee went slowly back to him.

"You see," she said softly, "Jim found that life was not worth living. Now, Jim wouldn't want you to hang. Think how useless it would be! Why, even Ellie doesn't want you to hang."

"Ellie!" he exclaimed. "She doesn't know who I am."

"No," Mary admitted, "she doesn't—but she doesn't want even the stranger who is charged with shooting Laramie to hang. And I don't want you to hang. You are not going to hang."

Mary Lee's soul was in her eyes as she looked up at him, begging him to cling to life. The powerful, mysterious magic which Judge Thurman had invoked was working. In the dull eyes of Billy Knowles, alias Watts Lifeworth, there began to flicker a little, warm flame. He drew in a deep, shuddering breath.

"Mary Lee," he breathed, one of his hands coming up slowly, just touching her fingers, holding them as gently as if they were wax, when they crept into his and clung bravely, "Mary Lee, if my life *could* be worth anything to somebody else—I have bungled everything. I went to see Laramie to try to do something for my brother Jim. Jim had been there—ahead of me. I was too late. Don't you see that the least I could do was to try—to cover him? Don't you see?"

"It is going to mean a lot to me to win this case," said Mary Lee. "You *can* help me."

"Mary Lee," he said in a whisper, and his eyes were like lamps newly lighted, "I'll spend the rest of my life doing anything you think I ought to do."

"That is going to be a long, long time," Mary Lee said, smiling tremulously.

And it was.

Another story by Clay Perry will appear in a future issue.

WHEN VICTOR HERBERT WENT WRONG

SOL MINSTER, the Washington musician, was leader of the orchestra in the Washington theater in which Fritzi Scheff made her first appearance in Victor Herbert's opera, "Mademoiselle Modiste," in the fall of 1905.

"The company had a rehearsal the Sunday afternoon preceding the Monday evening performance," Minster related at a dinner in Washington; "and Victor Herbert was sitting far back in the theater, lending a critical ear to the musicians and the singers.

"One of the men singers was roaring triumphantly through a song when suddenly Herbert catapulted himself out of his seat with a yell of anguish and rushed down to the orchestra.

" 'Say, did I write such a rotten 'cello part as that?' he cried in German. 'It's terrible!'

"We turned the music over to him, and here he saw the proof of his own discomfiture. He, the greatest cellist of his time, had written a bum part for the 'cello. And he did not deny it. Instead, he called for a piece of music paper, and, while leaning the sheet on the orchestra rail, turned out as grand a 'cello part as was ever played in light opera."

A Case In Equity

By W. A. SHRYER

Justice Has Her Humor As Well As Her Equity. This Is a Case In Point. It Proves Pretty Well that He Who Seeks Equity Must Come With Clean Hands, also that His Legal Legs Must Stand Under Him.

THE doorway of the shabby, old-fashioned office of Weigle & Grim, hay and grain brokers, opened quickly. A hurrying mailman tossed a single letter on the scratched, ink-bespattered, flat-top desk, greeted the waiting occupants with a mumbled "Last delivery!" and slammed the door behind him.

The elder of the two waiting partners, a thin, nervous, hatchet-faced man with a hard look and shifting eye, turned on the light in the fly-specked globe above the table.

"Hardly worth waiting for, Grim," he muttered to his partner. "See who it's from."

Opening the flap of the letter with his blunt, fat thumb, the junior partner leaned back in a decrepit office chair that creaked protestingly and scanned the note through squinting, short-sighted eyes.

"Good thing we waited, I guess," he mumbled. "It's from old man Evans at Jayton, Texas. Says Billy Orton is up to his neck in wheat, with the market likely to blow him any minute. Advises us to get busy if he owes us anything. How does he stand on the books, Jay?"

"Owes us seven hundred and eighty-three dollars and sixty-four cents," snapped the senior partner, without hesitation. "And if Evans says Billy Orton is likely to blow, you can play his tip right on the nose to win. Whatcha think we better do?"

"Suppose we draw on him right away?" suggested Grim, with a certain tone of indecision.

"Draw your grandmother!" sneered Weigle disgustedly. "If you were up to your neck on margin, it's likely you'd pay any attention to a draft, ain't it now?"

"Well," complained his fat partner, "what shall we do, then?"

"Make out an itemized bill," grunted Weigle.

The itemized statement was quickly prepared, and the two hurried across the hall, pausing before a newly lettered door on which the legend, "Paul Appleby, Attorney and Counselor," showed clear and distinct against the bright light behind.

As the two entered, a businesslike youth arose briskly from a shining swivel chair, gazed over his large tortoise-shell glasses inquiringly, and spoke pleasantly to the elder of the partners.

"Mr. Weigle, I believe, and your partner, Mr. Grim," bowing easily to each. "I have noticed you coming out of your office. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Do you do collecting, young man?" Weigle inquired.

"I have been engaged in my present calling but seven months," smiled Mr. Appleby. "I guess that ought to answer your question."

"All right. Gimme that bill, Grim," snapped Weigle. "There's a guy down in Jayton, Texas, owes us seven hundred and eighty-three dollars and sixty-four cents, and we just got a tip he's about to bust. We want quick action and no monkey business. Whatcha you charge?"

"Regular ten per cent. If it's an emergency collection we'd better forward it at once to my representative there. Have you any special instructions?"

"Yep. Get the money. Sue, hang, or quarter 'im, but get the money before the bucket shops do."

"All right. I'll just prepare a power of attorney for my representative, authorizing him to sue, garnishee, or attach, and receipt for the money in your name," directed the young man briskly, reaching for a list of forwarding attorneys on the top of his desk. "Ah, here we are. Gerald Kinnane, Jayton, Texas."

Turning to his typewriter, the young man prepared the necessary form, secured the signatures of the two partners, affixed his own as notary public, stamped it with his notarial seal, and quickly wrote a letter to Mr. Gerald Kinnane, Jayton, Texas.

"I guess that's all, gentlemen," he instructed them. "If you'll excuse me now, I'll get this off by special delivery, and with good luck we ought to hear something definite within five days at the latest."

As subsequent developments proved, the expectations of the young attorney regarding the promptness of a reply were more than justified. They were substantiated, and even anticipated, by the receipt of a day letter by Weigle & Grim on the third day. Its contents were digested by the two partners with mixed feelings of satisfaction and regret, after which the telegram was taken by Mr. Weigle to the office of Mr. Appleby across the hall. The latter, having no interest in the case beyond the earning of his commission, read the message with unalloyed pleasure, for it was as follows:

WEIGLE & GRIM, *Chicago, Illinois.*

Paid Gerry Kinnane $783.64 this morning. Glad you sent personal authorization for him to receipt for you. Going to keep it as valuable souvenir. Just cancel my $1,200 order for next month's delivery. Made a killing and ordered twice as much from Alter & Gross. You better go jump in the Chicago River. Better than heart failure, and save you funeral expenses. WILLIAM S. ORTON.

"Good, good!" smiled Appleby. "We ought to hear from Kinnane with a check by day after to-morrow."

The expected remittance, however, failed to arrive within two days, nor did it materialize on the third or even the fourth. On the latter date Mr. Appleby was requested by Mr. Weigle to telegraph the attorney in Jayton, Texas, demanding a check and an explanation by return post. These instructions were followed to the letter, and three days thereafter a soiled envelope, generously margined with a mourning border and postmarked Jayton, Texas, was delivered in the late afternoon mail.

The communication contained in the funereal envelope was written in a cramped, female hand, and it was not surprising that it should perturb young Mr. Appleby considerably:

MR. PAUL APPLEBY, *Chicago, Illinois.*

DEER FRIEND: Your telegraph to my late husband, Gerald Kinnane, dec'd., has been handed to me and contents noted.

I seen Billy Orton and he says yes he give Gerry $783.64 the morning Buck Terry shot my poor deer husband in the Blue Light Saloon and held up the gang for all they had. The boys say Buck lifted a big roll off of Gerry, but no one guessed it was no $783.64 or the posse'd be out yet, instead of back the same day saying "nothin doing."

I'm awful sorry about that $783.64, but

Gerry didn't leave nothing but a desk, three chairs, and a note for $28.00. The collection took up by the boys didn't no more than bury him decent, though Billy Orton did kick in $50. I'm working now at the Busy Bee Rest & Café for $6 a week and meals, so you see I can't do nothing either.

The note for $28 was give to Gerry by Frank Atter. Gerry didn't have no luck with his case, and it'll be two years and a half before Frank is out again. However, I'm poor but honest, and if you say so I'll send on the note. Yours as ever

MAUD KINNANE.

The young attorney became very thoughtful as he read and reread this disconcerting report. He consulted the last stub in his bank book, after which he did considerable figuring on the back of a blotter and sighed heavily as he contemplated the result. As though combating a certain resolve, he stepped to his bookcase and carefully read a page or two from a volume of Illinois Reports.

Replacing the law book, he seated himself before his typewriter, and, addressing a note to Weigle & Grim, informed those gentlemen that he inclosed a report from Jayton, Texas, "in re their collection of seven hundred and eighty-three dollars and sixty-four cents vs. William S. Orton."

As Mr. Appleby entered his office bright and early the next morning, however, there appeared a marked change in demeanor. Although still thoughtful and preoccupied, there was nothing abject in his bearing. On the contrary, lines of determination and resolve showed unmistakably, and as he opened his desk and seated himself before it, there was the hint of a smile of anticipation for the interview soon to materialize.

His period of waiting for the latter left nothing to be desired on that score, as it was scarcely three minutes before his door was angrily banged open to admit the blustering figure of Mr. Weigle.

"Why all this report-by-mail bunk?" shouted the enraged grain broker. "What do you think we care about some one stealing your money? We intrusted a bill to you for collection, and its been paid. If you are getting too feeble to walk across the hall with a letter, take it from me I'm not afraid to walk across to your office to get our check. And I'm here to get it, or fork over!"

"It may facilitate matters," coolly replied Mr. Appleby, "if you will be seated. I mailed that report to you last night, as I desired to discuss with my wife ways and means of raising the money."

"Well," retorted the somewhat mollified client, "you've had your breathing space. Just write out your check."

"There isn't going to be any check," the lawyer calmly announced. "I have had occasion to reverse my initial resolve in that regard. Before leaving for home, I satisfied myself that no legal liability obtained, but I disregarded that entirely, as I viewed your loss from a purely ethical standpoint. You had intrusted a collection to me, and the man chosen to secure the money had collected it. That death and robbery prevented him from remitting hardly affected my duty to you in any way. My only problem then was that of securing the money."

"Well," returned Weigle ominously, "then why no check?"

"If you desire for the moment to grant my viewpoint, I wish to express a certain principle that it seems to me is quite pertinent, namely: He who seeks equity must come with clean hands. You are now seeking equity, and from certain unexpected intelligence it is my opinion you come with anything but clean hands."

"Cut out the *vox-populi* and *e-pluribus-unum* stuff and get down to cases. From where I sit it seems to me you are framing up to need a good handwashing yourself," sneered the broker.

"My wife's maiden name was Downey," calmly continued the attorney. "Her father's name is Elbert Downey. He lived near Delphi, Indiana. He is now without means of support and lives with us. Does his name happen to bring any association to your mind likely to suggest a possible question of equity?"

"Used to know a farmer by the name of Downey twenty years ago," admitted Weigle, with an air of positive suspicion stealing over his hard, crafty face. "But what in Hades could he have to do with your owing us seven hundred and eighty-three dollars and sixty-four cents, less ten per cent?"

"I shall enlighten you. My father-in-law was present last night when I advised my wife of the decision I had come to regarding the payment of this money. My wife agreed with me it was the honest thing to do, but her father asked me to listen to a certain experience he had suffered at the hands of Weigle & Grim. He felt it might be instrumental in dissuading me from what he characterized as a quixotic sacrifice."

"You can just cut out all that bunk. We never owed the old hick a nickel, and if he had had a leg to stand on he'd have sued us years ago."

"Just so. He didn't have a legal leg to stand on. As the ethical situation seems rather similar, however, I shall outline what he said. It appears that he came to Chicago and sold you an order of wheat, the total of which came to two thousand five hundred and eighty dollars. This wheat was sold you f. o. b. Delhi. The agreement was verbal, but perfectly understood. He returned to Delhi, and two weeks later shipped you the grain. He paid no attention to the wording of the bill of lading, but sent you a copy. Two days later, the freight train carrying your wheat caught fire just outside of South Chicago and burned to the trucks. About ten days later was the first of the month, when Mr. Downey received a bill for the freight. He then examined his bill of lading and discovered the error made by the freight agent. On taking it up with the latter, he learned of the fire that had destroyed the wheat, and immediately went to see you in Chicago."

"Sure he did," jeered Weigle. "Put up an awful yell for us to pay for the wheat, but we bought it f. o. b. Chicago. The bill of lading showed it. We also wrote him a letter confirming those terms and showed it to him."

"Yes," replied the young man. "He told me about that letter. You showed a *copy* dated two days after the fire, almost three weeks after the bargain was made. He never got any such letter, and of course you never mailed any such letter. You simply framed up on him after noticing the mistake in the bill of lading and learning of the fire."

"Well, even if the old liar was telling the truth, he had the same chance as we had to recover."

"No, he didn't, not for a minute. Your shipments over that road amounted to five hundred times as much as his, and your claim would have been paid in ten days. They stalled him off for five months, and then the road went into the hands of a receiver. By claiming the goods were his until delivered to you f. o. b. Chicago, you practically broke the poor old man. He at last received about four hundred dollars, but too late to do him any good. The loss had wiped him out, lock, stock, and barrel."

"That's a very nice little story, son," snapped Weigle, "but we'll just get back to the case at issue. I want that check."

"Well, you won't get it, as I told you before. I have decided to stand on my legal rights. It just happens that in this case they are not tinctured by any suspicion of fraud, either, which is more

than can be said of your stand under the conditions just discussed. My rights are clear, and I shall stand upon them. In receiving a claim for collection to be made in some other city than that in which I reside, it follows that the client is necessarily aware of the fact that it may have to be forwarded to some representative, and these circumstances put the client on notice of that condition. The law applicable is that of principle and agent, and not particularly that of attorney and client. I have only to show due diligence in the performance of my duty in forwarding the business. In this case you had more than constructive notice that the claim was to be forwarded, as you signed a power of attorney to the lawyer chosen by me. Moreover, that was a town of just three hundred and fourteen inhabitants, and Mr. Kinnane is the only man given in any forwarding list for that place. In fact, it was on your express order that it was sent to him by special delivery by me almost the moment the claim was placed in my hands."

"I guess we can get you," growled Weigle. "I'll see my lawyer at once. Takes a crook to catch a crook."

"There are two ways to take that remarked, Mr. Weigle," grinned Appleby, "neither of which is very complimentary to me, but in seeking your attorney just refer him to the case of Fay versus Strawn, Thirty-second Illinois, page two hundred and ninety-five. It is likely to hold both of you for a while. You needn't take the trouble to express the pleasure our acquaintance has afforded, as I dare say the pleasure's all mine. Good day to you."

PECULIAR

IN Missouri there is a town with a very peculiar name. The story goes that in the early days when the town was yet a settlement, the citizens decided that it was growing large enough to have a post office of its own. Accordingly, some one wrote to Washington, with a petition requesting that one be established. Washington, anxious to please, inquired in return what name would suit the people best, and the spokesman for the settlement replied that "the people are not particular so long as the name is peculiar." In a moment of genius, the post-office department named the place Peculiar, Missouri.

WHO WOULD BE PRESIDENT?

AN act of Congress provides definitely for the presidential succession, should the president die, resign, be removed or become unable to carry on his duties. The vice-president would succeed him. If that were impossible, because of death or any other reason, the secretary of State would become acting president, or, if that could not be, then the secretary of the treasury, and so on, in the following order: the secretary of war, the attorney-general, the postmaster general, the secretary of the navy, the secretary of the interior, the secretary of commerce, and the secretary of labor.

The LUCK of LICANIA

By FRED MacISAAC

In Five Parts—Part IV

The Story So Far:

Welden, New York banker, is established at his summer home at Marshton, Wellfleet, Cape Cod, with his wife, daughter Janice, son Bert, and the crown jewels of Licania, which had been forfeited to him when the country failed to pay a loan on time, and which he keeps, unbeknown to his household, in his vault. Crown Prince Vladimar is at Marshton with his American aid, Major Nedlew, posing respectively as a Basil Grantleigh and a Professor Bentley. They plan to "steal" back the jewels and repay the loan, which Welden has refused to accept. The prince, as Grantleigh, meets Janice, and they are strongly mutually attracted. Filpek, Crovak, and Hantz, Licanian revolutionary leaders, are in town seeking to assassinate the prince or obtain proof that the jewels are held by Welden, since the Licanian people regard the jewels superstitiously as the Luck of Licania and would overthrow the monarchy if they learned the jewels had been forfeited. Crovak is murdered because he recognized one of a super gang of crooks who have headquarters in near-by Provincetown, are after the jewels, and are planning a strong and heavily armed raid on Welden's house, which is guarded by a large squad of detectives. Janice recognizes Nedlew as her brother Will, who quarreled with his father years ago and left home. There is a love affair springing up between Will and Frances Whiting, Welden's secretary. Will goes to Provincetown to get disguises for himself and the prince as negro washerwomen, by means of which they hope to get hold of the jewels.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. WELDEN IS SOCIABLE.

MR. BASIL GRANTLEIGH, after a very careful toilet, left the hotel and walked briskly up the beach toward the Welden cottage a few minutes before five. He had observed that Miss Whiting had been forced to bathe alone and wondered what had caused Nedlew to be recreant. Visiting his friend's room, he found the bathing suit on the floor where the American had dropped it, and summoning the bell boy, he asked if that young college student knew where the professor had gone. He was informed that the professor had walked over to the village to send a telegram.

Partly satisfied, the prince read his French novel for an hour and a half and then began his preparations for the visit. He changed his costume entirely, fiddled for several minutes with his collection of neckties before he chose one which was most becoming, and finally was arrayed as much like a lily of the field as a dark, stalwart young man may be without transgressing the bounds of good taste.

The absence of Nedlew troubled him a little, but he concluded he was probably accumulating desirable information or spying upon the precious pair of Licanians in the village. In either case, Nedlew would be on guard when the prince left the cottage and began his journey back to the hotel. So he set off with a comparatively light heart.

He found Janice awaiting him on the Welden porch, and, to his surprise, Elisha Welden was present. Janice was still in sport clothes and more adorable than ever; on her face were no traces of the tears she had shed upon meeting her outcast brother. Welden rose from his chair and greeted Vladimar so affably that the girl threw him a grateful glance.

"I'm here to make amends for my lack of courtesy yesterday," smiled the banker.

"But, sir, you were most courteous," Grantleigh protested.

Welden shook his head. "I am afraid I was rather surly. My daughter took me to task for it last night. Worst talking to I ever received. I want to assure you that my attitude had nothing to do with you personally, Mr. Grantleigh. Because of certain business, I have rather discouraged visitors. I realize now I was very inconsiderate of my family in so doing."

"I am grateful that you have made an exception in my case, sir."

"Not at all. Janice, ring for cigars." To Vladimar: "You smoke, of course?"

"Not cigars, sir."

"Confound the old man!" the prince was thinking. "It's my last interview with Janice and he proposes to stay here and spoil it." He saw that Janice was not looking at her father with so much admiration now and he thrilled to assume that she wanted to be alone in his company, too.

Welden reseated himself and lit a cigar while Vladimar and Janice lighted cigarettes.

"What do you think of the United States, sir?" asked Welden.

"I have only seen New York and the country between that city and this resort, but I have been stunned by its grandeur."

"New York has become the capital of the world," Mr. Welden said proudly. "You would do well to settle here, sir. A man with your personality, if he possesses any business ability, would grow very prosperous in no time."

"No doubt, sir."

"Are you in business in England?"

To ask a Licanian aristocrat if he was in trade was a deadly insult. It used to be almost as great an insult to an English nobleman, but Grantleigh remembered that it was no longer so in England. He smiled.

"I am fortunate enough to have an income sufficient to obviate that necessity," he said.

"The European viewpoint," Welden said genially. "We don't consider work so much a necessity as a privilege. Now I inherited a good-sized fortune and could have spent the last forty years in idleness, but I couldn't live without labor. We are like that in America."

"I have always heard," said the prince, "that leisure is only to be enjoyed by those who have possessed it for several generations."

"I don't doubt it. We have no leisure class in America."

"You forget the tramps," laughed Janice.

"And they work harder than any of us, trying to be idle. Think over my suggestion, young man. If you ever should lose your income, come over here."

"I'll bear it in mind, sir."

"Did you ever in your travels happen to meet the chancellor of Licania," Welden astonished the guest by asking in the most casual manner.

"Why—why—I think I did meet him once at a reception."

"In Galeta?"

"Yes, in Galeta."

"I met him once myself. Bluff, narrow-minded old person. He came to New York to visit me on a financial matter. Apparently intelligent, but believes in the divine right of kings. Imagine that, after the World War!"

"I can imagine it," said Grantleigh, controlling his anger with difficulty. "I believe God bestows upon families which are born to rule a certain inborn prescience——"

"Ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Welden. "You don't allow your own king to exercise it."

"I believe King George of England has more influence than you imagine in America. In great emergencies his advice is always asked. His judgment was greatly relied upon during the World War."

"Father, you must remember that Mr. Grantleigh is an Englishman," said Janice hotly. "You cannot expect him to agree with your opinions."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Grantleigh. No offense. To get back to the chancellor. An intelligent man, as I have said, but with obsessions. For example, he believes that the crowns and scepter of Licania have a supernatural importance. He calls them the Luck of Licania and believes that his country will be destroyed if they are ever lost to her. You will agree with me that that is an idle superstition."

There was a curious look in his eyes as they met those of the visitor and he did not miss the heightened color of the supposed Englishman.

"I—I don't agree with you," said Grantleigh slowly. "I understand that these jewels have been in the hands of the Kings of Licania for many centuries and, while in their possession, despite the many changes in the map of Europe, that country has never lost her independence. If for centuries a whole nation believes that its luck is wrapped up in the crown jewels, their loss would cause such a destruction of national assurance that terrible things might well happen. I can understand the feeling of the chancellor."

"I was informed not long ago," conceded Welden, "that a revolution would break out instantly if the king permitted the jewels to pass out of his hands."

"I think it highly probable, sir," replied Grantleigh, who was restless because he was unable to comprehend the reason for this line of conversation.

"I have a very poor opinion of a king whose power rests upon a few pounds of gold and stones," said Welden.

The atmosphere was so tense that Janice felt it and interrupted:

"Surely, father, Mr. Grantleigh can-

not be interested in the affairs of a silly little country in east central Europe. He is an Englishman."

Welden smiled enigmatically and rose. "Well, if you young people will excuse me, I'll go and look over some papers. I'm sorry if I've bored you, Mr. Grantleigh."

"On the contrary," said the prince, who had been given time to suppress a hot reply. "Having visited Licania, I have been very much interested. I know something of the national reverence for the Luck. I can assure you, Mr. Welden, that if the people ever discovered that the ruler had sold the crown jewels and that they had left the country, there would be a terrific outburst which would overthrow the government, cause the loss of tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives, and set up a reign of terror. I should hate to have upon my soul the responsibility for such a thing."

Welden shrugged his big shoulders and walked toward the entrance to the left wing.

"If such a thing ever happens, a silly superstition is responsible," he stated coldly, and disappeared into the house.

The hands of Prince Vladimar were clenched tightly and his eyes were flaming. Janice watched him curiously.

"I know father must have offended you again," she said softly. "I am so sorry. He cannot get the viewpoint of Europeans. I think it is his principal weakness."

Grantleigh managed a smile. "And we find it equally difficult to understand the American. Tell me, Miss Welden, what would you think of a man who would condemn to death countless thousands and ruin a whole nation for the sake of these jewels we were talking about?"

"He would be an ogre, an inhuman monster!" she exclaimed. "There could not be such a creature."

"Unfortunately for humanity," said Vladimar, "there have always been such men."

"Well, fortunately we don't include them in our list of acquaintances," she said. "I think father likes you or he wouldn't have bothered to talk to you at all. And I invited you to tea and forgot all about it during father's attack of garrulousness. We'll have it now."

Her eyes, as she looked at him over her teacup, were exceedingly friendly, and they had their usual effect on him of driving from his mind everything except consciousness of her extreme desirability. She began to ask him eager questions about his home in England, questions which he answered with increasing difficulty. Janice, though the daughter of great wealth, had not yet been abroad. Mr. Welden was loath to lose the services of his wife and would not permit the girl to go without her mother, no matter how well chaperoned.

The tyrant did not appear again, and an hour slipped by as though it had been a minute. Reluctantly the prince rose and gravely offered his hand. She took it and colored violently at the warm pressure.

"All my life," he said earnestly, "I shall cherish the memory of our brief but delightful acquaintance."

"Oh, are you going away?" she asked in naïve dismay.

"Within a few days I must return to New York."

"But shall we—— You'll be on the beach in the morning?"

Vladimar had told Nedlew that this would be their last meeting, but he was unable to resist the appeal of her.

"Of course," he stated. "And may I hope for another swimming lesson?"

"I don't think you really need another, but we'll see. Eleven thirty, then."

The prince had proceeded only a few hundred yards down the beach when a man rose up from the dunes some dis-

tance inland, waved his hand, and moved along upon a parallel course. The disappearance of Nedlew that afternoon had slipped Vladimar's mind, but now he sighed with relief. The journey was made without incident and the pair ascended the steps of the hotel entrance together.

"What became of you?" the prince demanded.

"I've been over to Provincetown to make our arrangements. I've improved our prospects for escape, sir. There will be a flivver parked on the main road back of the Welden house, and two miles north on the moor an airplane will be waiting to carry us to Canada."

"Splendid, assuming we ever get away from the house. How did you arrange for the plane?"

"Saw a flyer heading for Provincetown and followed him down there. He turned out to be an exhibition man. He plans to make short flights with passengers during the summer. I promised him one thousand dollars and no questions asked."

"Very good work, Bill. I have just had a curious conversation with Mr. Welden. Come up to my room and I'll repeat it to you."

He related as accurately as he could remember the remarks of the banker, his ire rising as he repeated them. "Now why should he bring up such a subject with an Englishman?" he demanded. "What was I supposed to care about Licania? The whole thing looks rather funny to me."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LICANIANS RETREAT.

"WELDEN has a reputation of being taciturn," said Nedlew reflectively. "I can think of two explanations. One is that the matter is on his mind and conscience and he feels the need of justifying himself, even with strangers."

"That must be it."

"Or he knew he was talking to the Crown Prince of Licania."

"Absurd!"

"No. You forget that your two enemies called on him this morning. It's possible that they warned him you were here and plotting to get possession of your jewels. Suppose they suggested that he issue a pubic statement of ownership, and he refused. Isn't it likely they thought to spike your guns by informing him that you would probably try to take the Luck by force? They figure to win automatically if you don't get the jewels. And they may not be able to assassinate you. I suspect that the dead man was their fighting ace. Hantz is nothing but a politician, and Filpek, being a general and fifty years old, doesn't like the idea of hand-to-hand conflict very much."

"But if Welden knew who I was, why did he receive me in his house?"

"Curious to discover what you were like. I didn't think he had a sense of humor; but if he did know you and conducted the conversation on those lines, it indicates that he does possess one. And, who knows but he took advantage of the opportunity to explain his point of view so that you would realize he considered himself justified in holding onto the Luck of Licania."

"The old scoundrel!"

"No, he is not a scoundrel. Don't forget that he is legally in the right."

"Well, he's mad."

"On that subject, I grant you. You say he left you alone with Janice——"

"Miss Welden, please," said the prince sharply.

Nedlew grinned and bowed his head. "I beg her pardon. Miss Welden. It means you made a good impression on him. He would probably like you under other circumstances."

"Is there no other way than the plan you propose?"

"I wish to God there were!" sighed Nedlew. "I've cudgeled my brains in

vain. It's a forlorn hope but the only one possible. If we don't strike now we may not get another opportunity. Filpek is up to some scheme, you may be sure."

"Why didn't you go bathing with Miss Whiting, as you promised?" the prince asked.

"I—I heard the plane passing and I thought I had better start at once on its trail."

"Quite right, though your long absence alarmed me. If Welden does know who I am, he must hold me very cheaply."

"Oh, he has probably found out that you have only one person with you and he relies upon his force of watchmen. If it is true that he has identified you, it's going to make things difficult. He will set his sleuths upon our tracks. However, they'll probably quit work when they see us retire to-morrow night. From my conversation with their leader, I don't think they take their job too seriously. All they are afraid of are cranks."

Nedlew went downstairs, then, and sought for Frances Whiting, but she was not visible, probably dressing for dinner. He would have a lot of explaining to do to get back in her good graces, and he would be in wrong again early in the evening, when he had to slip away to keep his tryst with Janice. He should not have made the engagement with his little sister, but he was anxious not to be seen in her company at the moment and willing to agree to anything.

He strolled out on the porch and found John Deagon in a rocking-chair smoking a very bad cigar.

"Good evening, professor," said the ex-sergeant cheerfully. "Want to sit down and have a chat?"

"I don't mind. How's sleuthing?"

"Looking up a little. We've got a murder mystery on our hands, now, and a few other little things."

"Yes? Any notion who killed this German?"

"Beyond me. It only interests me as it affects Mr. Welden, see? It's Dave Murray's job to crack that nut. You met him, didn't you? The State detective."

"Called on me at breakfast. We had a pleasant talk."

"He told me you were O. K. Course I knew that already. Funny thing, this killing. I was in my quarters with several of my men when we heard the shots and we dashed out and hunted round but couldn't find anything. It was pitch dark. I tipped Murray off that an auto load of yeggmen had been seen passing through town a little while before by one of my men, and I take it for granted that one of them did it, but hanged if I know what for."

"Have they caught these fellows?"

"No. Murray went down to Provincetown but couldn't find a trace of them. One of the birds was Dirk Given, who's a box man. That interested me, because Welden has a big safe, though there's nothing in it."

"Why have a safe with nothing in it?"

"Well, you know these big business men. They have a lot of papers valuable to them but no use to crooks. There was something queer about these Germans being in Marshton. They left about an hour ago for New York."

"Oh, really? By train?"

"No, by motor. Say, I'd like you to give me a knockdown to this English friend of yours."

"I don't mind. But why?"

"Oh, no reason."

"I hope we are not under suspicion, Mr. Deagon."

Deagon's face was wooden. "Oh, no, I told you everything was O. K. How long you going to stay?"

"We're thinking of pulling up stakes in two or three days The food is bad and the beds are worse."

"Don't blame you. Come up to dinner with me and the boys some night. We have good grub."

"I'll accept that invitation," laughed Nedlew. "You'll pardon me, now, I want to talk to Miss Whiting."

The girl had just stepped out on the porch, saw Nedlew approaching, and greeted him coldly.

"I'm awfully sorry about this afternoon," he began.

"It was of no consequences. It happened that I had good company."

"I assure you that only something very important——"

"I know. You had to send a telegram. The bell boy told me he offered to take it for you." It was evident that she was piqued.

"Please believe me that it was most important. A very private message, and I couldn't trust it to other hands."

"Oh, well, in that case——" The sun came out in her face.

"Shall we sit down?"

"I don't mind. Hasn't it been a lovely day?"

"You're still angry. Let's talk about something important. Us."

"There's the dinner gong. I must go in early because I'm going over to Hyannis immediately afterward to a dance."

"Oh. I hoped——"

She smiled too sweetly. "I made the engagement after you went to send your telegram."

She was going with Bert. He didn't like that, but there was nothing he could say. And it prevented another misunderstanding because of his own engagement for the evening.

"I hope you will enjoy yourself."

"I shall. I love to dance and this is my first opportunity since I came to the cape. Do you dance, professor?"

"I can hop around. I'd like to dance with you."

"Well, perhaps we may some time. See you later."

"Still mad," he muttered when she had left him. "And she wouldn't have agreed to go to a dance with Bert if I hadn't walked out on the bathing date. Well, I think Frances can handle Master Bert, only—confound it!"

The supposed Basil Grantleigh appeared in search of Nedlew, and, at the same instant, Deagon, a few chairs away, made signs that the major was to keep his promise.

"Oh, Mr. Grantleigh," Nedlew said lightly. "Here is a gentleman who would like to make your acquaintance. Mr. John Deagon, chief of staff of Mr. Welden's small but efficient army. Just obeying a social impulse, I understand. Nothing in the way of business."

Grantleigh inspected the detective frostily. "Indeed. How do you do, Mr. Deagon? What can I do for you?"

"Why nothing at all, sir. I was just having a little chat with the professor and I said I'd like to know you, too."

"Can I be of any service?"

"Why, no, sir."

"Then I must ask you to excuse me. We are going to dinner." He bowed and turned away.

"You didn't have to be so haughty," reproached Nedlew. "He's a good-natured old cop. It's his business to meet everybody."

"I didn't intend to be rude, but the man didn't interest me. A stupid-looking fellow."

"I expect he knows his business, and I also expect he drifted down here because Welden told him to keep his eye on us. It convinced me that Filpek told Welden who you were."

"It's going to be inconvenient to have him shadowing us, isn't it?" said Vladimar.

Nedlew laughed. "Well, we're not going to do anything criminal until about two or three days after to-morrow morning."

"Just how great will be our danger?" asked Vladimar. "Will they shoot?"

"If they catch us breaking in, or if we refuse to halt, when ordered, they will shoot us without hesitation and a jury would acquit them for it."

"A thief's death for the Crown Prince of Licania," Vladimar said sadly.

"And I think it more than likely that we shall be shot," the major said. "I'll undertake the affair alone, if your highness doesn't think it seemly."

Prince Vladimar laughed shortly and clapped him on the back. "I accept your judgment that it is our only chance, and I'll see it through," he said.

As they were dining, Nedlew asked in a low tone:

"Do you think it likely that Filpek and Hantz would abandon the field at this stage of the game?"

"Most unlikely."

"Well, that seems to be what they have done. They left Marshton late this afternoon by auto for New York. Mr. Deagon just told me so."

"Really? Well, that is good news. It removes one source of danger."

"No, I don't think it's good news. They departed ostentatiously, so if another killing took place to-night they would not be questioned as they were in the Braun case. I think it means that we may expect visitors to-night."

"By St. Vitus!" exclaimed the prince, his eyes gleaming, "I hope so. If I can dispatch my country's worst enemies to-night, I don't care what happens to-morrow night."

"I don't think we can afford to kill them," Nedlew admonished, "even if the opportunity is given us. On the heels of the murder on the moor we would have too much to explain if this pair were found dead in our vicinity. You must remember that we are both under assumed names. We cannot stand much investigation. We might be arrested for the crime or locked up as essential witnesses. You'll have to postpone the pleasure, I'm afraid."

"But in self-defense——"

"There would be an investigation just the same. And the authorities might reason that these two were attempting to avenge their companion, which would cause us to be suspected of slaying this fellow Braun."

"I understand. What are we going to do?"

"Defend ourselves if attacked, but avoid killing."

"Easier to say than to do, but I agree with your line of reasoning."

"We'll watch in the dark, and if they put in an appearance, try to get the drop on them."

After dinner the prince and the American sat outside on the porch for a while. It was a mild, rather breathless night, moonless and starless. Attracted by the dim porch lights, a few mosquitoes began to reconnoiter noisily. The major was rather puzzled how to escape from his friend in time to keep his engagement with Janice, for Vladimar was in a sociable mood. From their vantage point they saw Bert Welden arrive and depart in a few minutes with Frances Whiting. Bert was in dinner clothes and the girl had some sort of shimmering cloak over a light dress. Their departure together was witnessed by most of the hotel guests and an excited whispering ran along the ranks of the rocking-chairs.

"The young cub seems to have cut in on you, Bill," observed Vladimar.

"She was annoyed," explained Nedlew, "because I failed to appear on the beach this afternoon after making an engagement in your hearing. My explanation was very lame, and she is still a trifle piqued."

"I don't think you have much to fear in that quarter. It seems impossible that such a sister could have such a brother."

"Oh, Bert will improve when he grows older," replied the major. For reasons of which the reader is aware,

criticism of any of the Weldens by an outsider irritated Major Nedlew. After all, that little beast Bert was his brother.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN INTERRUPTED TRYST.

HALF or three quarters of an hour passed, and the prince chatted in low tones and smoked one cigarette after another. He was rather nervous, as was to be expected. Nedlew thought of declaring that he would go for a stroll, but he knew that his friend would insist upon accompanying him. The problem was solved by the brazen attempt of a pair of wistful spinsters, who happened to be sitting a few feet away, to engage the young men—whom the women guests had decided were both very interesting persons—in conversation.

Prince Vladimar made polite rejoinders to a few pointless remarks and then announced his intention of reading in his room, said good night, and departed. Grateful for the interruption which had gotten rid of his difficulty, the alleged Professor Bentley discussed pedagogics, a subject upon which he knew nothing, for a little while, and then excused himself.

He passed through the lobby, went out the back way, and lurked on the back porch until he saw a woman coming down the roadway alone. He sauntered to the road, met Janice, and suggested walking back toward the Welden house.

"After what happened on the moor last night, Jan," he said, "I am nervous about your wandering about alone in the evening. If I had had a moment for consideration I would have vetoed this meeting."

She pressed his arm lovingly. "I would have passed it over your veto. I had to see you, Will. There is so much we have to say to each other."

"I know, dear. You're a wonderful sister. I've always loved you and I always shall."

"And from now on you'll write to me, won't you? You needn't be afraid your letters will be intercepted. Father has learned that I've grown up."

"That's a bargain. And I want to hear about you. I want to know about all your friends. Pretty soon you'll be falling in love and I'll have to investigate the fellow personally before you get my consent."

"Since I saw you it's happened, darling," she declared. "I have fallen in love and I want to talk to you about that."

"Since you saw me? But that was only a few hours—— Oh, Grantleigh went to tea at the house. You haven't fallen for him, after what I told you, Jan?"

"I—I couldn't help it. He is wonderful. Really, Will. He's your friend. You must know that he is amazing."

"But in a couple of days—— Are you sure, dear?"

"Positive. And I know that he is in love with me."

"Did he dare say——"

"He didn't say anything, but he didn't have to. A girl always knows, Will. We are in love with each other, so please tell me what you meant when you said he was not free."

The brother was unable to reply for a moment. A rush of indignation against Prince Vladimar, a welling of pity for his little sister choked him.

"Please tell me what you meant," she pleaded.

"The fact is that it's not possible for him to marry as he chooses. He must do as his family tells him. It's something he can't avoid."

"I see. He is poor and he can't afford to marry and they will pick out an heiress for him. Well, Will, aren't I a great heiress? I suppose father is going to leave me a lot of money."

"It's a question of more than money, dear. It's——"

"You will have the kindness, major, to lift both your hands above your head," said a voice in the Licanian tongue. The pressure of something hard against the small of his back caused Will to obey the command without hesitation.

The lights on the highroad were a hundred yards or more apart and they were in the deep shadows halfway between two of them at the moment. Without having to turn his head to peer at his captor, Will knew that it was either General Filpek or Mr. Hantz.

"Mademoiselle will refrain from uttering a sound or see her companion killed before her eyes," the unseen person continued, but in English.

"Don't be frightened, Janice," said her brother calmly. "This doesn't amount to anything."

"You will both have the kindness to accompany me to my car," said the man with the gun.

"Look here," replied Will, over his shoulder, "I know you have business with me, but let the young lady go. I will persuade her not to say anything about this little matter."

"The young lady is the daughter of Mr. Welden, is she not?" asked the Licanian.

"I am Janice Welden," replied the girl sharply. "And my father has at least twenty men whose business it is to protect us. I demand that you release this gentleman and myself or it will be the worst for you."

"I regret," said the man politely. "You will have to accompany us."

"Better come, Jan," Will advised. "I happen to know that this man and his friend are gentlemen, and you won't be injured in any way."

"Very well," she said quietly. She took her brother's arm and they retraced their steps toward the car, the red tail light of which gleamed only forty or fifty yards behind them. The major got a glimpse of his captor as they walked toward the distant arc light and recognized Filpek. He had supposed it was the general rather than the politician who had performed this stunt.

Hantz was driving a closed car. Filpek opened the sedan door and motioned to the rear seat. Will helped his sister to enter, and Filpek entered on their heels.

"Whatever is this all about?" asked Jan scornfully.

"You have fallen into a puddle of European politics; has she not, general?"

"Then you know me, major," said the general affably. "So much the better. Have the kindness to hand me any weapon you possess. Remember that I have you covered, and if there were shooting in this narrow interior the young lady might be hurt, which would be deplorable."

To the astonishment of Janice, her brother produced a pistol from his pocket and passed it over. Will Welden, outwardly, was unperturbed, but inwardly he was wildly alarmed. Why should they carry off Janice? Probably to prevent her from giving warning of his own capture. He thought he saw the object of the precious pair in carrying him off. They would tie him up and thrust him into some hole and then set upon the prince with the odds very much in their favor.

The automobile was moving rapidly south toward Chatham. The three in the back seat sat silent, each busy with the situation from his own standpoint. Janice wasn't much alarmed. Nothing had ever hurt her and she had heard her brother address the gunman as general and explain that it was some weird outcropping of European politics.

Her brother, if he had been alone, would have grappled with Filpek. He had little respect for the prowess of either of the Licanians, but the presence of Janice kept him in strict restraint. Perhaps they had counted on that when they took her along.

For some twenty minutes the car drove at high speed over the smooth pavement, then it turned into a narrow dirt side road, twisted and wound about, and came close to the bay as the riding lights of several pleasure boats indicated. The brakes were applied suddenly and the car came to a stop. They were in front of a small isolated cottage.

"We descend here, mademoiselle, if you please," said the general.

He opened the door and backed out, extended his hand to the girl, and then waited grimly for the descent of the man. Hantz opened the front door and stepped out. He thrust his face close to that of young Welden and leered at him vindictively.

"You thought by disposing of Crovak that you had tied our hands, Major Nedlew," he declared. "You see we are not resourceless, we others. We know what to do."

"Your error, Hantz, was in bringing Miss Welden along," Will retorted. "You'll have her father's pack at your heels in a few moments."

"I think not," said the general. "Please to enter, monsieur and mademoiselle."

"Are these people crazy, Will?" asked Janice loudly.

"I don't think they are very intelligent," he replied with a laugh which did not come from the heart.

"You will discover that we think very clearly," said Hantz. "The young lady is a beauty."

"If you want trouble, Hantz," Welden replied in Licanian, "just make another remark about this young woman."

"He is right, Hantz," declared the general. "We are busy with affairs of state. It is no time for personalities."

"What a funny language and whatever are they taking about?" demanded Janice.

"It's Licanian, Janice."

"That's curious. Father insisted upon talking about Licania to Mr. Grantleigh at tea."

Both Hantz and Filpek laughed at this, and then Hantz unlocked the door of the cottage, turned on the hall light, and all entered.

It was a small, cheaply furnished summer cottage, the sort which is rented to poor people by the week or month. Hantz entered the living room and lighted it and Filpek motioned to both to enter.

"Take a chair, Jan," suggested Will. "We may be here for a few minutes."

"By all means," invited Filpek with a bow. "Longer than you expect, Major Nedlew."

When Will and Janice were small they were wont to amuse themselves talking hog Latin, a jargon consisting, principally, of transposing syllables of English words. He doubted very much if the Licanians' knowledge of English would permit them to understand hog Latin, and, using the childish tongue, he said to his sister:

"Don't let them know I'm your brother. It's vital."

"What's that? What language is that?" demanded Hantz.

"You wouldn't understand it. It's Mohawk Indian. All Americans speak several Indian languages, as you know, of course."

"Indeed. Please confine yourselves to English in our presence."

"On condition that you explain to me in Licanian, so as not to alarm Miss Welden," he said in that language, "how the devil you expect to profit by this mad enterprise?"

Filpek, who was much more affable than the would-be president of Licania, nodded and smiled.

"I have no objection, now, to explain. You assume, no doubt, that we wish to assassinate his royal highness. Nothing was further from our thoughts."

"Your dead friend took a shot at him," the major said contemptuously.

"I assure you, major, that Crovak did it on his own initiative. He was a fool and paid for his folly. Was it you or his highness who laid him low?"

"Would you believe me if I told you that neither of us had a hand in it?"

"No," declared Hantz emphatically.

"Very well."

"We are intelligent men. We have no desire to be electrocuted by these Americans for murder," continued the general. "As a soldier and a gentleman I abhor assassination. Besides which, his highness will be eliminated politically in another way."

"Interesting, if true."

"What are you all jabbering about?" demanded Janice, who was so calm she was able to light and enjoy smoking a cigarette.

"I'll explain later. I'm finding out things," Will replied.

"To-day we called upon Mr. Welden," said the general, "and showed him how it was to his best interests to make a public statement of his ownership of the Luck."

"I take it he did not agree to do so."

"He very stupidly refused. Now, yesterday and this morning we saw on the beach Miss Welden, his only daughter, the apple of his eye. We made our plan——"

"So that's it! It won't work, general."

"We left Marshton very openly for New York," Filpek went on. "At Hyannis we decide to go by train and dismiss our car. We secure another car, come to Chatham and rent this remote cottage. We propose to-morrow to pass along the shore in a swift motor boat, pull Miss Welden from the water and make off with her. As there are no motor boats on the sea side of the cape, we shall escape without difficulty and then we shall notify Mr. Welden that if he wish his daughter returned he must announce his ownership of the Luck. His daughter is in peril. It costs him nothing to save her. We do not ask that he give us the jewels in return for the daughter. We are not blackguards.

"To-night we decide to ride through Marshton past the Welden place, purely a reconnaissance, and, to our astonishment, we recognize, in the road, Miss Welden in your company. Upon the spur of the moment I determine to capture you both. It is too good an opportunity to be lost, I feel. That is all, major."

"I shall go mad if you don't tell me what you are talking about," declared Janice. "It's most impolite to talk a foreign language in front of a lady who doesn't understand it."

"It seems they expect to hold you for ransom," Will informed her.

"Really? How thrilling! How much must father pay for my safe return?"

"Not a kopek, mademoiselle," the general assured her. "It is a matter of politics. He issues a statement which will have a great effect in my country but which costs him nothing."

"In that case, I am certain he will agree. He's really very fond of me, Will. I found that out last night."

"Why don't you try for the big prize?" Will asked the Licanians in their own language. "Force him to turn over to you the Luck of Licania."

"It is because we know human nature," said Hantz. "After all, we are strangers in a strange land, and this man could turn loose all the power of your police upon us. We know that he must be mad about the jewels to refuse to accept the offer made for them by the chancellor, and he might discover our retreat while holding us in parley. We have chosen the certain road. Anxiety for his daughter will cause him to agree at once to sign a little paper which will have the effect of turning our country over to us."

"And where do I come in?" asked Will. "I am not essential to this neat little plan."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE POLITE KIDNAPERS.

"YOU are the adviser of his royal highness," said General Filpek, "and probably the murderer of our esteemed associate, Crovak. You will be dealt with in our own way."

"How do you expect to communicate with Mr. Welden, may I ask?"

"You may ask but we shall not answer," replied Filpek. "Hantz, come outside; I want to talk to you. We shall be in the hall with the door open, major, and any movement on your part will draw a shot."

The Licanians stepped into the hall, and Janice, looking after them, laughed.

"They are certainly a gentlemanly pair of kidnapers. Tell me, what is this paper they want signed so badly they risk jail by carrying us both off?"

"Father has certain securities which the Licanian government should not have sold. If the people of that country learn that he has them, then they will revolt and these two gentlemen will be on top of the heap."

"Do you think father will oblige them?"

"I think it very probable, unless we find a way of escaping."

"Oh, let's!" she exclaimed. "It will be fun. They wouldn't really shoot at us."

"If I thought they were only fooling they never would have got us off the Marshton road."

He made a sign to her to be silent, in hope of overhearing the low-toned conference in the hall, but he could not distinguish words.

The major was much impressed at the resourcefulness and clear reasoning of the enemies of the crown prince. The trio, apparently, on a tip of some kind, had followed Vladimar and himself from Europe to Marshton and found themselves in a country whose customs and methods of procedure were mysterious to them. Crovak, boldly, had blazed away at the prince as soon as he sighted him, and that night had been found dead on the moor, which must have terrified the survivors.

Apparently they had decided to take no more chances and had given up hope of personally securing either the death of the prince or the possession of the Luck of Licania. They had reasoned like crafty politicians and decided that half a loaf was better than no bread. Hence their call upon the banker with what to them seemed a sound and reasonable proposition, but which, to their dismay, was refused.

The abduction of Janice had then appealed to them as their only hope of coercing Welden, and Will had to admire their intelligence in deciding upon their demands.

If they notified the banker that he must exchange the jewels for his daughter, Elisha Welden would yield only when convinced that he could not secure the release of Janice in any other way. Doubtless they knew that they could be traced without great difficulty. The chauffeur of the car which was dismissed at Hyannis would report they had decided to go by train. The railroad people would discover quickly that the Licanians had not taken the train, and then the owner of the car they had hired would be found, the car traced to Chatham, and the renting of the cottage discovered. Had they rented a power boat to carry on the abduction by sea, its owner would quickly be found.

The personalities of the two men were exotic to Cape Cod; every native who had set eyes on them would recognize their description and their trail would be broad. Welden would have his daughter back in no time, with the abductors safely in jail.

On the other hand, if the banker was notified that he could effect the release of Janice by following a course which would cost him nothing and which he

must realize was the best way to secure undisturbed possession of the Luck of Licania, it was quite possible he would agree. And this meant the defeat of the enterprise in which Vladimar and Nedlew had embarked, and the dethroning and possible massacre of the royal family of Licania.

The pair were gambling audaciously that Welden would yield without delay, and Will thought that they stood rather more than an even chance of being successful.

His disagreeable reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Hantz and Filpek.

"Major Nedlew," said Hantz. "You will come with me, please. I wish to ask you some questions. The general will keep Mademoiselle Welden company."

"And what happens if I refuse?"

"We are two to one."

Nedlew rose. "I'll only be a few moments, Janice. General Filpek, who had the distinction of being the commander in chief of the revolutionary army of Licania, will tell you, perhaps, how he lost the war."

"You are not in a position to be insulting, Major Nedlew," said the general indignantly. Will smiled and waved his hand reassuringly and went into the hall, where Hantz motioned to him to precede him into the kitchen.

The American seated himself and grinned impudently at his captor, who took a chair five feet distant and rested upon his knee his right hand, which held the major's automatic.

"We are curious to know," began Hantz, "how the crown prince proposes to get possession of the crown jewels."

"What crown jewels?"

"It is not the time to affect ignorance, sir."

"What makes you think that the crown jewels of Licania are in the hands of Mr. Welden?" Will demanded.

"For what other reason would the Crown Prince of Licania leave his country and visit this preposterous place?"

"The air is very salubrious. I told him about it in Galeta."

"Lying is absurd at this stage of the game. Mr. Welden, to-day, admitted to us that he has them."

"I am sure his highness will be glad to hear that."

"We are aware that the prince scraped acquaintance with the daughter under an assumed name, doubtless to obtain entrance into the house. It will profit him nothing, because we informed Mr. Welden of his identity."

"Indeed." Will had suspected as much and was glad to have his deduction proved correct.

"Whatever plan you have formed will be futile since we have forestalled you."

"So you think."

"So we know. We are in a much stronger position than his highness, since we do not need possession of the jewels, while nothing less will be helpful to him."

"Since there is no witness," said Will, "and you know so much, I admit that Welden has the crown jewels, but they are in the vaults of the Mammoth Bank in New York."

Hantz laughed scoffingly. "Which explains the presence of yourself and the prince in Marshton."

"I'll tell you our plan," Will offered, "in exchange for information from you. How did you know Welden had the jewels? Nobody except the king, the chancellor and the prince were aware of it. I only learned it when I left Licania with his highness. Welden has kept it a secret."

Hantz smiled with self-satisfaction. "Pure deduction, my friend. We knew of the loan which caused our defeat. We knew that the chancellor recently floated a great loan in Europe to pay it off, and we were aware that the money remains in the treasury. We knew no Yankee would make such a loan with-

out satisfactory security, and, in the condition of the royalists, when Welden came to their rescue, we were aware they had nothing to pawn of any value save the crown jewels. When Prince Vladimar secretly left Licania, our agents informed us, and our theory was strengthened when he took the German dirigible for America. His arrival in Marshton, where Welden spent his summers, convinced us."

"Then, at this minute, you are only guessing."

"A guess upon which we are willing to stake our lives and liberty."

"Very good. His highness came here to make Welden's acquaintance and try to convince him that it would be an act of generosity to overlook the failure of Licania to meet her loan on the day it was due. He hoped to show him that failure to produce the gems upon Coronation Day would bring about a new revolution in Licania and cause the loss of thousands of lives. It was hoped in Galeta that an appeal by the crown prince in person would be effective."

"Then why not introduce himself to this Yankee? Why get into his house as a presumptive Englishman?"

"He had intended to present himself as the crown prince, but he was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of the young lady and then he hoped he might win the esteem of Mr. Welden before taking off the mask."

"Then you did not propose to steal the jewels?"

"If they are in Marshton, which I doubt, they are in a massive safe and there is a small army of private detectives to protect them. Haven't you discovered that?"

"Yes. That is why we decided to modify our plans. Let the American newspapers publish a signed admission by Welden that he owns the Luck and we shall take possession of Licania."

The American congratulated himself and the prince silently that Hantz and Filpek were totally unfamiliar with American newspaper methods. He knew of several New York papers which would plant such a story on the front page with no other authority than a vague rumor. Luckily, the Licanians supposed that newspapers in America, as on the Continent of Europe, dared publish only what was officially confirmed.

"What are your intentions toward myself?" the major asked coolly.

"You will remain our prisoner until this affair is concluded."

"Supposing I try to escape?"

"I do not think you will be so foolish. Understand me, major: My friend and myself have no desire to get into trouble with the American police. We desire to land in Licania a few hours after the news of the abominable behavior of the royal family is announced. We must be there to take advantage, naturally.

"In the morning, Mr. Welden will receive a letter informing him that an announcement in the newspapers of his ownership of the crowns and scepter of Licania will automatically release his daughter. The letter will be posted from Plymouth, which is but an hour's journey by motor. The following day the newspapers will carry the announcement and you and Miss Welden will go where you please. The general and myself will depart immediately.

"For us everything is at stake. If you interfere, we shall shoot you without hesitation, put weights on your body, and sink it in Cape Cod Bay. Eventually it may be discovered, but by that time I shall be ruler of Licania. Do I make myself plain?"

"Oh, very," said Will ruefully. He was measuring the distance between Hantz and himself and estimated that the Licanian would have time to place at least six bullets in his body before he could grapple with him. If he could disarm Hantz quickly, he might catch

Filpek in the other room unaware, but the chances were the noise would bring the general to the rescue. Had he been alone with the Licanians he would have risked it, but the presence of Janice weakened him. The pair would kill him, if they had to, without doubt. Hantz's reasoning was excellent. For them everything was at stake, but their success meant ruin for Prince Vladimar. Will loved the prince, but his sister's welfare was more important. Better to let them win than have a hair on the head of Janice Welden harmed. He knew how his murder would overwhelm her and he had no intention of leaving her alone in the power of a pair of polished but unprincipled Continentals.

"If you will give me your word of honor not to interfere, not to attempt to escape, and not to encourage Miss Welden to try to escape, we shall accept it. You are a soldier and a man of your word," said Hantz.

"And if I refuse?"

"Then, most reluctantly, we shall be compelled to tie you hand and foot and put a gag in your mouth, and lock you in a room above. You must make your decision now."

CHAPTER XXVI.

DEATH IN THE DARK.

THE major hesitated, not that he proposed to accept parole but because he had a natural disinclination to say the word which would cause him to be trussed up; and while he hesitated there came an alarming interruption.

There was a tremendous crash like the dropping of a boiler full of broken glass. He heard the rush of feet from the front room and Herr Hantz in alarm leaped from his chair and turned his head toward the door. Without a second's premeditation, Will Welden leaped at the man—and found he had caught a Tartar.

The major was small but powerful and wiry; Hantz, although he was over middle age, was like a bull in his strength. Will caught him at a disadvantage, and crooked his left arm about the neck of the Licanian while he grasped the gun hand with his right and strove to wrest it away.

He was on the man's back, choking him, but Hantz bent forward and lifted the American's feet from the floor while he ripped out Slav oaths and endeavored to wrench free his hand with its deadly weapon.

As they strained and struggled and grunted and twisted they heard the house door wrenched open, screams from Janice Welden, and then a fusillade of pistol shots. Both antagonists were frantic to know what had happened, but to find out they must win the deadly conflict in which they were locked.

Hantz stepped back to the wall and tried to stun his antagonist by smashing him against it, but Will kept his head away from contact, tightened his grip on throat and pistol hand. Hantz then began to swing him, and Will clung like a bulldog, though his body swayed like a pendulum.

Hantz grasped the arm about his neck with his powerful left hand and partially freed himself. He was the stronger and he was scheduled to win the battle in another minute or two. But desperation gave Will inspiration; he bent his right knee and as Hantz stooped and swung him to the right, he kicked out with his right foot, struck the pistol and sent it flying across the room. Instantly he let go of neck and wrist and plunged for the weapon, Hantz diving after him. Will got his hand upon the gun, but Hantz immediately pinned it to the floor with his left, got his right upon the throat of the American, and squeezed it savagely.

"Let go, Hantz," said a sharp voice in the Licanian tongue. "Let go or I'll kill you."

Hantz looked up, swore furiously, and, releasing his opponent, slowly got upon his feet. As he rose, Will Welden could see who had entered in the nick of time, although the voice had already identified the rescuer. Prince Vladimar stood in the doorway, the automatic in his right hand covering the would-be president of Licania.

"Is Janice all right?" Will gasped. The battle had exhausted him.

"Miss Welden is safe," said the crown prince coldly. "Hantz, march out of here ahead of me. As for you, Major Nedlew, I never wish to see or exchange a word with you again." And leaving his friend petrified with astonishment, Vladimar turned his back to him and followed Hantz.

"Look here," called Welden. "What does this mean?"

"I am leaving you here to watch Hantz while I conduct Miss Welden to her home. Come on, Janice."

"Are you all right, Will?" the girl demanded. "Shall I go with Mr. Grantleigh?"

"All right, Jan," said the discomfited major. "I'll follow presently."

A couple of seconds later a motor started, and as Will reached the front door the car started away. The brother of Janice Welden stared after it and then turned his attention to Hantz, who had stepped out of doors and was bending over a still form lying on the ground where it had fallen from the steps.

Hantz stood up, and there was hell in the eyes which he turned on the major.

"The thrice damned Vladimar has killed General Filpek," he groaned. "He shot him through the heart. For that the Americans will hang him."

"Get into the house," snarled Welden. The events of the last few minutes, particularly the outrageous treatment meted out to him by the crown prince, had partially stupefied him, but he was rapidly regaining his senses.

He drove Hantz into the sitting room and saw the origin of the crash which had given him his opportunity to attack Hantz. A huge stone had been driven through one of the windows and lay on the floor surrounded by fragments of sash and broken glass. Responding to a natural impulse, General Filpek had rushed to the house door and opened it to ascertain the cause of the outrage. The prince was outside waiting for him, they had exchanged shots, and the rebel leader had been slain.

"Stay where you are," Will commanded Hantz, who had slumped into a chair and buried his face in his hands. He rushed outside again, got down on hands and knees, and felt around until he found the revolver of the dead man. This he took inside and examined it. Three chambers were emptied.

"For this Vladimar will go to your American electric chair," declared Hantz, looking up as he entered.

"It was a duel," the major replied—"a fair fight and no murder."

"Then why did he draw him outside?"

"Because if he had tried to enter, Filpek would have shot him down."

"Nevertheless I shall inform the police. He shall suffer for this, prince or no prince."

Will Welden went to the door. A few hundred yards away he saw lights appear in a cottage which had been dark when they had arrived.

"Do as you please, Hantz," he shouted. "The neighbors have heard the shots and somebody will be here soon. I'm leaving. You can make any charge you like, but you are much more likely to be accused of killing Filpek. You're here and the prince has gone. I'm making myself scarce immediately."

"Am I free to leave?" asked Hantz pitifully.

"Certainly. Come along with me if you like."

The Licanian needed no second invi-

tation and both men plunged down the dark lane side by side.

"We were like brothers," mourned Hantz. "But he and I rented the cottage together. I should be charged with killing him. I can do nothing for him and I must think for myself."

"And they have your description. You had better leave the country, if you can manage it. They will accuse you of both murders, in all probability."

"I am not a murderer. I am a patriot."

"Well, that's open to argument, but I don't want to see an innocent man convicted of a crime he didn't commit. What's this?"

They had come upon a small automobile with lights extinguished pulled up at the roadside. Vladimar had carried off Janice in the car in which the abductors had brought her and her brother to the cottage and which was parked a few yards from the door, and this was evidently the car which had brought him to Chatham and which he had abandoned.

"Pile in," commanded Welden. "You drive and I'll keep a gun on you. Don't stop for anybody and drive me to Marshton. Then you can take the car and go where you please. I suggest you head for Boston. It's the nearest big city."

There was no conversation as they drove. A hundred yards down the side road their lights fell upon three men cautiously making their way to the cottage from which the shots had been heard, and these scuttled to the roadside as Hantz sounded his horn and increased his speed.

The major had time for reflection during the drive to Marshton and devoted it to consideration of the astonishing apparition of Prince Vladimar and his inexplicable treatment of his friend and comrade. Will had last seen the prince when he left the porch of the hotel and announced his intention of going up to his chamber to read. Now how had he discovered the abduction of Janice and how had he trailed the kidnapers to their lair?

It seemed probable that he had not remained in his room but had slipped out by the back way and gone for a walk. In that case had he seen the meeting of his friend with Janice Welden, witnessed the abduction, procured a car and set after the machine bearing the Licanians and their captives. In that case—Will smiled with sudden understanding—the prince had misinterpreted the meeting with Janice.

Vladimar was wildly in love with Janice; the major was aware of that. He remembered how suspiciously his highness had demanded if his friend during his former sojourn at Marshton had been in love with Janice and his relief when told that she was a small girl at the time.

The prince had taken it for granted that the tryst was a lover's meeting, concluded that his companion was playing a double game and that Janice preferred the black-bearded man to himself. That would explain his attitude toward the supposed Major Nedlew, his determination never to speak to him again, his order to Nedlew to remain and guard Hantz while he carried off the girl. Well, doubtless Janice by this time would have explained that Major Nedlew was Will Welden with his last name spelled backward.

Vladimar, however, might remain justly resentful because the man he had trusted had not confided in him. And he might be skeptical that the son of Elisha Welden seriously proposed to aid him to rob his own father. He and the prince would have to have a thorough understanding before they could proceed with their enterprise.

The night's work had eliminated the menace of the Licanian revolution leaders. Two of the trio were dead and the third fully alive to the grave danger

he was in of being arrested and convicted of the murder of his two friends. Hantz could be depended upon to place as great a distance between himself and Marshton before morning as was possible.

"You can stop a quarter of a mile below the hotel," Will told Hantz. "When you get to Boston go to the landing field and try to get an airplane to take you to Canada. As there is an extradition arrangement between Canada and the United States, get back to Europe just as fast as you can. I'm sorry for you, Hantz, but you brought this on yourself by resorting to crime."

"I thank you for your advice," replied Hantz sourly. "I regret that I must be the scapegoat for the crown prince. I shall go to Licania, if possible, and tell the people the facts as I know them."

"Go as far as you like," said Will Welden cheerfully. "I hope you make a safe get-away."

He stepped out in the road and Hantz went whizzing off at top speed.

The alacrity with which Hantz had taken to flight was very fortunate for the crown prince and Will. The body of the unfortunate General Hugo Filpek in all probability had already been discovered, and if Hantz had remained at the cottage, his charges against Vladimar would have resulted in his arrest and forced him to reveal his identity, if Hantz, indeed, did not proclaim it.

The presence of Janice Welden would become known, his own identity as the disinherited son of Elisha Welden would have come out, and the prospect of securing the Luck of Licania would have gone a-glimmering.

Hantz, however, had assumed that all three would deny their presence and he would have no way of proving it. So far as the residents in the vicinity were aware, the two foreigners were alone in the cottage and they would assume that one had slain the other. Knowing nothing of American judicial processes and fearing them the more, Hantz dreaded conviction and decided that flight was the best policy. In his place, Will thought, he would have done the same, but the flight was practically an admission of guilt.

Will thought it doubtful that Hantz could evade capture for more than a day or two, but in another thirty-six hours, Will and Vladimar would either be in a plane headed for Canada with the Luck of Licania in their possession or their stroke would have failed, and what Hantz did and said would be of comparatively little consequence.

Torn and disheveled from his battle with Hantz, Will walked along the roadside until he reached the hotel and slipped in through the back door unseen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN UNGALLANT RESCUER.

WHILE Janice Welden had exhibited marvelous aplomb up to the moment when her brother accompanied Hantz into the back room of the cottage, she began to weaken when she found herself alone with the mustached and hard-eyed Licanian revolutionist, and the consequences should her father fail to accede immediately to the rather curious demand of her captors began to suggest themselves. These men were civil and sanguine at present; how would they behave if they learned that their coup had failed and her father's detectives were closing in upon them?

Would they revenge themselves upon herself and Will, and what form would their vengeance take? Janice read newspapers and knew that horrible things occasionally happened to people, and her jailers were natives of some dreadful east European country who might go in for atrocities.

Filpek sat on the opposite side of the room, smoking a cigarette. He seemed absorbed in his thoughts and

not in the least inclined to make conversation, which piqued her a little. Was he utterly unimpressionable? She stole furtive glances at him and discovered lines about his mouth indicating cruelty and implacability. Why didn't Will come back? What were they talking about in the other room? Her nerves grew tense, her fingers began to twitch, and without being aware of it she began to tap the floor with the toe of her right slipper. She felt herself slipping into panic.

And then came a terrific crash, and there bounced into the room a huge rock accompanied by splintered glass. Whereupon her self-control vanished completely, and she leaped to her feet and expressed her feelings in an ear-splitting scream followed by another and another. With an oath Filpek leaped to his feet, and, yielding to impulse, rushed for the front door, threw it open, and ran outside. There followed half a dozen pistol shots tearing apart the silence of the night as though they were explosions of shells from a great gun.

"Will, Will, oh, Will!" screamed Janice, wringing her hands in terror and gazing wild-eyed at the door through which Filpek had disappeared. A second, two seconds, and there appeared in the doorway the graceful figure and handsome face of Basil Grantleigh.

Incredulity gave place to rapture. She extended her arms toward her knight, her eyes betraying brazenly the place he held in her thoughts. All he had to do was to step into the room and take her in his arms and she would have sobbed out on his shoulder her love and gratitude. But Grantleigh bowed distantly and said in icelike tones:

"I trust no injury has befallen you, Miss Welden?"

"No, no, I'm all right. I—how can I say——" she stammered, aghast at his attitude.

"Pardon me a second. I have more work to do," he said, with another polite bow, and vanished. Now she was aware of the death grapple in the back room and rushed into the hallway, but Grantleigh had ended that by his armed presence. She heard him tell her brother to remain on guard, heard Will shout to her and answered, and then she followed Basil meekly and with a sense of deep disappointment out of the house.

He helped her into the sedan which had been used to convey herself and Will to this place, but indicated the back seat. He leaped into the driver's seat, started the engine, threw on the lights, and drove swiftly down the lane.

Although Janice had first encountered the Englishman when he was floundering helplessly in the surf, and had reversed the usual procedure by saving the man's life, she had never, for one second, doubted his dominance and his courage. His dignity had impresesd her, his charm had fascinated her, and she would have risked her life upon his heroic qualities, though no chance to test them was ever likely to arise.

In these tranquil days, most women have to take the audacity of their men on faith, and may live with them a lifetime without a test of their fighting qualities. But Grantleigh had come dramatically to the rescue, recklessly crashing into the place of her captivity, overpowering her captors and carrying her off in triumph. Infatuated with him already, she would have surrendered on a word, but Basil Grantleigh was not playing the game according to the rules laid down in all well regulated fiction.

His attitude seemed actually hostile; he was treating her as though she were culpable in some way. The least he could have done was to ask her to ride in the driver's seat, but, sternly, he had instructed her to get in behind, and she slumped against the cushions, her hurt gradually giving place to resentment.

She hadn't asked him to come to her

rescue. She had been in no great danger and her father would have effected her release in a few hours. If he hadn't come plunging into battle for love of her, what had he come for? Janice had not seen the body of Hugo Filpek lying on the ground outside the cottage and was not yet aware that death had resulted from the coming of the Englishman. She set her eyes upon the back of his head and admitted that it was splendidly shaped. But what was going on inside of it? Why didn't he say something? The silence grew painful. They were in the main road now and speeding north. Janice couldn't stand it any longer, so she said:

"Why did you throw that big stone through the window?"

Without glancing back, he replied: "I thought it might draw them out of the house, which would give me the advantage."

"I see. How did you know I had been captured and how did you find out where I had been taken?"

"If you don't mind," he said stiffly, "I don't care to discuss it."

"Oh," she sighed. More silence. After a minute or two, she leaned forward.

"I don't see why you came at all if you have to act like this. What have I done?"

"Your captors, Miss Welden, were my personal enemies. And I would do my best to aid any woman in distress."

"Oh," she sighed again. "Well, I owe you thanks, even if you had no urge to rescue me in particular."

"Don't mention it, please," he replied coldly.

Janice was now burning up. "Please stop the car and let me out!" she commanded imperiously. "I don't care to be any deeper in your debt. I shall have no difficulty in finding my way home from here."

"I consider it my duty to escort you to your residence."

"Upon my word!" she exclaimed. "You act as though I had committed some crime. I don't like your attitude, Mr. Grantleigh. I won't stand for it. I want to get out of this automobile."

"I regret that it is impossible." To emphasize his statement he increased the speed of the car.

"I—I think you are perfectly hateful!" she cried, a break in her voice. "I thought you were my friend. I was so overjoyed to see you, and now—now——" She began to sniffle.

The shoulders of the chauffeur wriggled uneasily. Janice observed this and permitted a sob to escape.

"Look here, I can't stand this!" he exclaimed. "Why should I consider you my friend? I admired you, I admit. I thought that at last I had found a girl with the honesty and sincerity of a man. And then I discover your duplicity, your lack of discretion, your—well, never mind."

Janice brightened. There was so much feeling in his tones that she realized he was not indifferent to her.

"Whatever are you talking about?" she demanded. "What duplicity? What lack of sincerity or discretion?"

"I am referring to your secret meeting in the dark with Major Nedlew."

She smothered a laugh which he thought was a sob. So that was it? Only that and nothing more. The poor darling was jealous.

"Oh, that!" she said. "Is that all?"

"All? All? Do you think nothing of making trysts on dark roads with men? Now, in my country, mademoiselle——"

"'Your country, mademoiselle'?" she repeated. "So you think I make a practice——"

"I saw you kissing him," he cried angrily.

"Why it was only——" She stopped. Will had expressly requested her not to tell his friend that he was her brother.

"So you were playing the spy," she charged.

"No. I happened to be walking and came upon you."

"And you saw those men hold us up?"

"Yes."

"I would have supposed that you would say that it served me right for my indiscretion and duplicity. Instead of which you risk your life to save me. That was very nice of you, Mr. Grantleigh."

He growled instead of making a reply and Janice smiled happily. Tomorrow she would get Will's permission to explain everything but she had no objections to Mr. Grantleigh's suffering a little for having the indecency to suspect her of a roadside flirtation. It was absolutely certain that he was madly in love with her and all was well with the world.

They were bearing down on Marshton and the journey was almost over. All these things had happened and it wasn't yet midnight. She leaned back and smiled in deep content.

"Is it possible that you have some explanation?" he asked rather pitifully.

She hugged herself. "I have done nothing which requires an explanation," she said with dignity.

"After all, there is no possible explanation of a kiss," he grumbled.

Janice giggled. "You'd be surprised. Will you let me out on the road at the back of the house. I'll slip in. The watchmen know me but they might stop you and ask embarrassing questions."

In a moment he stopped the car, leaped out, and opened the door for her.

"A thousand thanks, Mr. Grantleigh," she said gravely. "I shall never forget your courage and kindness."

"Must we part like this?" he sighed.

"I don't see what else we can do when you have such unworthy suspicions. If you wish to apologize tomorrow I shall be on the beach at eleven thirty."

"I shall not be there," he declared. "I do not think we shall ever meet again."

"Sleep on it," advised Janice lightly. "And give my regards to—er—Major Nedlew."

"At least I can have a reckoning with that scoundrel," he muttered.

Janice did not hear this or it would have alarmed her. She waved her hand and ran up the path toward her home in which many lights still burned.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PISTOLS FOR TWO.

VLADIMAR got into the car, turned it around, and remembered then that it was the automobile which had been used by Filpek and Hantz, and was the second car that he, Vladimar, had stolen that evening. The first was a machine which he had found unlocked in the rear of the hotel and which he had pressed into service. This he had abandoned some distance from the cottage lest the Licanians be alarmed by the sound of an approaching motor.

He drove it half the distance to the hotel, ran it off the road, turned off its lights and left it. Then minutes later he entered the hotel ascended to his room and saw a light through the transom of Major Nedlew. He frowned, hesitated, then knocked on the door. Nedlew opened it and smiled a welcome.

The prince entered with jaw set and eyes burning, and the smile of his companion faded as he met the hostile gaze.

"I gave you an order," snapped the prince. "What are you doing here?"

"I arranged the business to the best of my ability," said Nedlew quietly. "You see——"

Vladimar held up his hand. "It is of no consequence. There is a weightier matter. You have a weapon, so have I. Let us go down on the beach——"

"Are you suggesting a duel?" asked the astonished American.

"What is between us can only be settled in that way."

"And just what is that? I am under obligations to you for my life. Hantz was stronger and probably would have finished me. So I can't very well shoot your highness."

"I absolve that obligation. Come!"

"First I want to know why you wish to kill me?" Will said quietly.

"Because you are a lying, treacherous dog!"

The major grew pale.

"I insist that you be specific."

"I do not wish to draw a lady's name into this. Let us say I have insulted you."

He stepped forward and slapped his former friend sharply across the right cheek.

Nedlew grew red, stepped back, and then laughed. "The American answer to that is a right hook to the solar plexus. I shall not fight you, your highness. You know I am not a coward, and your anger is due to a misapprehension."

"Damn you!" the prince exploded. "I saw you kiss her."

"And because of jealousy you are willing to ruin your prospects of securing the Luck of Licania," Will said slowly.

Vladimar passed his hand across his brow wearily.

"I can't seem to think of anything. Anyway, you are a traitor; already my mission is a failure," he said bitterly.

"Well," said Nedlew, "I can understand your state of mind. I did kiss Janice. But what of it? She's my sister."

Vladimar started, stared and gasped: "What's that? What do you mean?"

"My real name is Will Welden. I am Janice's older brother. She recognized me this afternoon and insisted upon a meeting to-night. I was kicked out by my father years ago and couldn't go to the house. Now do you understand?"

The prince sank upon the edge of the bed and his bewilderment was almost ludicrous. "You are Welden's son? Then he's your father. And you are plotting with me to rob your father. What kind of a man are you?"

"Never mind that now. Are you satisfied that I have a right to kiss my sister?"

Vladimar suddenly beamed. "By St. Vitus, yes! Now I understand your objections to my attentions to her."

"Certainly."

"Damn you, why didn't you tell me?" the prince cried furiously. "I was unkind to her. I made her cry."

"Didn't she tell you? I supposed she would under the circumstances."

"She told me nothing."

"What a little trump she is!" exclaimed the brother. "So we won't take a stroll on the beach, eh?"

"No-o. Yet you have much to explain. I rejoice that my suspicions of Miss Welden were unfounded, but I have been deceived and betrayed by you. I have been depending upon a man who was working against me. Why, this plan to-morrow night is a trap!"

"Not at all. I am perfectly sincere."

"But your father——"

"I know it sounds queer. When you confided in me in the palace at Galeta, I understood at once my father's reason for holding your country to the letter of its contract. I knew that there was only one explanation—he was infatuated with the jewels. And I knew that you would go either alone or with other companions, if I refused to accompany you. Feeling as you did against him, I was aware that you would not hesitate to kill him or have him killed and that was something I could prevent if I accompanied you. Wait!" The prince was about to upbraid him.

"In his right mind my father would never be guilty of an act so iniquitous.

For his sake and for the honor of our family I felt that he must give up the gems which mean so much to Licania. And I had a particular grudge. Years ago he accused me of theft, wrongfully, and I had protested my innocence in vain to him. Then I told him that some day I would steal his dearest possession.

"I was convinced that the Luck of Licania was his dearest possession and also that he had no moral right to retain it. I thought that I would be keeping my word and doing him the greatest possible service if I helped you get it away from him, while protecting him from injury at the same time. Do you think now, I am a traitor?"

"And it is not stealing," said the prince. "We will return him his ten million dollars with interest and a bonus in exchange for what belongs to us. Forgive me, major. I seem to have been unfair to you in this as in the other matter."

"That's all right," Will muttered in embarrassment.

"And I apologize for my cowardly blow," added Vladimar. "But do you really intend to go through with our plan to-morrow night."

"Certainly."

"Though you may be shot as a thief in your own father's house?"

"I don't think we will be shot. I expect to get in and get out in safety, but we won't get the jewels unless we have extraordinary luck."

"My friend," cried the prince, "we shall get them! Since I have for an ally the son of the man who has wronged my country, I believe the Fates are with us. I really think that the Luck of Licania will work for us. I am sure Mr. Welden will take the jewels from the safe to-morrow morning of all days."

"And you realize, of course," said Will, "that your pursuit of Janice is hopeless? And you won't see her any more? I want your promise."

Vladimar's face worked with emotion, and then he thrust out his hand.

"I must promise. My heart will be broken, but I, too, am a man of honor."

"You are a great man and you'll be a great king, sir," said Will. "I'm proud to serve you. Will you satisfy my curiosity regarding your appearance in the nick of time to-night?"

"I wanted to be alone to think about Janice," the prince confessed. "I could not remain in my room, and, not wishing to argue against your objections to wandering about, I slipped out the back way and walked up the road.

"I saw you meet Janice and I followed you. You can imagine my fury. Then I saw Filpek capture you, and I slipped into the field when you entered his automobile."

"Why didn't you turn the tables on him at once?"

"I regret that such was my rage that I didn't care what happened to either of you for a moment. I hoped he would kill you, anyway. And I thought Janice was a faithless wench. But no sooner had the car started than I experienced a great revulsion of feeling and cursed myself for my folly. I rushed toward the hotel in your wake and in the road behind it I found an unlocked car into which I jumped and pursued you.

"Your car was a long way ahead, and I could not see its tail light most of the time nor was my machine capable of gaining on you. I followed you through several villages, gaining, as you had to slow down, but outside Chatham I lost you."

"That was where we took the side road."

"I went on into the village and then stopped and made inquiries. It was easy to describe the Licanians, and I thought the villagers might know where they were located, assuming they had planned this abduction and taken a house somewhere in the vicinity. I had no luck in the shops but in a garage

I found a man who had filled the gas tank of two persons who answered the description, and he told me how to reach the cottage which they had rented only a few hours before. You understand everything now. What happened after I left?"

The major explained how he had handled the situation, and the prince nodded approvingly.

"No doubt they will assume that Hantz killed his friend and thus we shall not be suspected."

"I'm not so sure," said the other thoughtfully. "You had to make those inquiries in the village, of course, but thereby you attracted attention to yourself. The murder took place a little while after you were directed to the cottage. However, if they don't get on our trail for a couple of days we are all right."

"They won't," the prince declared confidently. "I feel it in my bones that we are going to win. From the inception of this enterprise a kindly Providence has directed me. With the whole human race from whom to select a companion, I picked the son of the man from whom I must secure the treasure and found him with the strongest personal reasons for coming to my aid. Pursued by bitter enemies, one of them was removed by an unknown agency, the others unwittingly played into my hands, and all three are now eliminated. Fortune will not desert me now."

"Let us hope not," Will said. "I would like to know who did kill Crovak. I would prefer known to unknown opponents."

"What does it matter? Whoever killed the rascal could not have been aware of his or our purpose here. There is another reason why we cannot fail, major. I am sacrificing upon the altar of my country's welfare my own happiness. If we failed and my family were driven from the throne, I would be free to ask for the hand of your sister. I shall never love another woman, my friend. My only regret is that she may have come to love me and will be unhappy. I could not forgive myself that."

"Well," sighed the major, who was aware of the state of the heart of Janice, "if she has fallen in love with you, she is young enough to get over it. I suggest that we go to bed. We don't know when we shall have another night's sleep in prospect. And to-night we needn't stand watch."

The night passed as quietly as Will Welden anticipated and both old campaigners slept soundly and peacefully. They met at breakfast clear eyed and refreshed.

After breakfast they seated themselves on the porch and were deep in a discussion of the arrangements for the night when Dave Murray, the State detective, ascended the steps and approached them.

To be concluded in the next issue.

WITHOUT AN ENEMY

ONE of the driveways leading to the department of agriculture buildings in the national capital is lined on both sides with Japanese ginkgo trees. The ginkgo tree is the only species of plant life in the United States that is not obliged to put up a battle for its life against some sort of an enemy.

Doctor William A. Taylor, chief of the bureau of plant industry, made this statement recently to the House committee on appropriations. Every other kind of growing tree or shrub in this country, he said, is warred on by an insect or enemy of one sort or another.

There Are Two Ways to Be Successful at Selling and Wooing. One Is to Have Nerve. The Other Is to Have—Nerve. Gene Had Both.

GENE the JOKER

By ALEXANDER HULL

SAM FRAZER was a self-made man and, like most of that ilk, he was invariably glad to let every one know about it. It was one of his nearest friends who sponsored the statement that "Sam wouldn't be half so obnoxious if some one else had made him." And the other party to that conversation had replied: "Well—no! But anybody else certainly would have made him a lot different!" Sam's friend had said: "Yes, I suppose so. But I meant, just take him as he is—he wouldn't be so bad if he hadn't made himself." And the other man had replied: "Well—I suppose that's true." Then he had gone on more brightly: "I never did understand the type of man that's willing to shoulder the *awful* responsibility for himself. Me—I'm using all the alibis I can rake together for myself—environment, heredity, determinism, infant damnation and all the rest of 'em. And tickled plumb to death to be able to use 'em! Sam Frazer's got more nerve than I have!"

However, both of those men had petty grievances against Sam, who really did have a good deal to be proud of, even if he did admit it very freely. He had been born among the "ragtag and bobtail" section of humanity, of parents who hadn't the dignity even of the "bobtail"—you might more justly have called them tailless—and his youthful environment had been such that if he had

wanted to instance it as his excuse for murder, arson, thievery or a yellow streak, he could have gotten away with it in any sociological court in Christendom.

Sam Frazer had sloughed that origin and environment like an old skin. At the age of twelve his parents abandoned him and unquestionably winged their way for—one regrets to say—a worse world than this. But that was the sole boost Fate had given Sam Frazer upon his upward climb; all the rest—as exemplified in the big, well-equipped Frazer Motor Accessories plant, in his fine Prospect Avenue home, in his talented and lovely daughter, Fanny, and numerous other undeniable assets—he had obtained by his own grim determination and his acquisitive fingers.

His marriage to Fanny's mother, now deceased, a beautiful girl of most immaculate person and antecedents, had not brought him one penny; no one could accuse him of climbing upon her money. Now he was worth a good deal of money, quite outside the plant, and he had, which is after all much more important, about as comprehensive a knowledge of motors and motor accessories as any man living. So, really, he had a right to be proud of his fifty-five fine, fruitful years.

It wasn't so much his pride in being a self-made man that annoyed young Eugene Hazen, who had fallen heir simultaneously to a block of stock and a high-up job, next to the "Old Man" in fact, in the Frazer company. No; it was a lot of other things. First, Sam Frazer's anything but tacit assumption that a man who wasn't self-made, but was the product of good blood, good breeding, more or less wealth, and the best schooling—though it be only in liberal arts—that money can buy, was excess baggage, a handicap to the business, or an incompetent—according to Sam's humor at the moment of making the charge. Frazer's studied contempt for "college education" infuriated Gene to madness; biting back his bitterness a hundred times a day kept his tongue and lips in a state of chronic soreness. Then there was Frazer's repeated invitation to him to get in and show himself something more than a desk lizard; and his inconsistent and devilish blocking, by one means or another, every effort that Gene made to comply with that invitation. Something like that absurd stanza about staying away from the water till you've learned to swim!

"For the love of Mike," Gene demanded fervidly, "how does he expect me to do anything? On paper I'm second in authority here, and you might legitimately suppose I'd have, once in a while, the opportunity of showing some. No! He snatches every little shred of authority out from under my hands like a hungry harpy! I think he lies awake nights trying to think up means to keep me from getting the chance to show I'm alive and of some interest in and to the business. He does see to it, too! And then he bandies about the insulting insinuation that I'm not worth my salt!"

The next point of annoyance was sometimes referred to by Gene as a mild species of insanity, and other times as a virulent disease caused by the ravages of the "personality bug," a vicious little monster, like a boring jigger in its habits, that worked down into a man's brain and destroyed his judgment and his sense of proportion. Sam Frazer certainly had been bitten by it.

It gives one very remarkable symptoms in the presence of a prospective sale. You at once—if you have been bitten by it—assume something that closely resembles the preacher's pulpit manner. You put on the buoyant, springy step of twenty-seven, though you be, like Sam Frazer, all of fifty-five, and the high-lifted, painfully expanded, barrel chest of the professional wrestler posing for his picture in the *Police Gazette*. Your chin is well in;

your nose nobly forward like the prow of a dauntless ship. You step forward toward your man, with an eager, smiling, confident, soul-boring expression upon your face—no—that is not punning; it is literally the kind of "boring" one does with an auger!—intended to convince him that his inmost business thoughts and needs are but an open book to such a colossal personality as yours.

You extend your hand, offering the thirty-ninth variety of the seven hundred and three known and catalogued varieties of hand grip; it is known as the friendly-bluff-sincere. Its manly manipulation at once sends a hypnotic thrill through your victim. He instinctively realizes the superiority of your mind, and ergo of your factory product. You then back off just a trifle to give your "prospect" a full-length view of your person, radiating knowledge, power, prosperity and good will. At this point the victim is, theoretically, completely landed. It really would be necessary only to put a contract form and a pen in his hand. He would sign.

But you do not do that; it would savor too much of the autocrat. Besides, the form must be adhered to. You have convinced his physical man; now you enlighten his mind. You begin to speak to him, without the foolish form of polite preliminaries, which should be despised by important and busy men, in a firm, vibrant voice, that patently brooks no contradiction. You tell him all the things he ought to know; about his business, his customers, the higher spiritual ideals of manufacturing, and the other intimate things that depend upon these, his family, his future and his soul's welfare.

In short, you make an utter ass of yourself!

At any rate, that was Gene Hazen's notion of it. Gene's idea of salesmanship was different. First, he said, get your audience; second, explain as quickly and unassumingly as possible what you have to sell, and wherein it is better or cheaper or both than the product of rival manufacturers; third, offer a trial test.

It was his firm notion that this simple system would get orders about twice as fast as Sam Frazer's fandangly one. But it was merely his notion, because he had never been permitted to try it out. Sam had said he couldn't afford to have bungling amateurs messing up things they didn't understand. Gene had been on the job only a bit over six months and he was still in the learner's class. He never had made the claim that he knew as much about things as Sam. Nobody made that claim, not even Sam's four smart-aleck, patterned-after-Sam salesman. It would have been utterly absurd.

In spite of which, one regrets to say, Gene Hazen still retained a fixed belief that he could sell goods, a belief that was quite unreasonable in face of Sam's consistent discouragement.

All this, however, gives only a very distorted view of Sam Frazer. It divulges not his normality, but his abnormality, his peculiarities. In dealing with a man with many or marked peculiarities it is difficult to get anything of him down on paper but a caricature. You must therefore accept on faith the fact that Sam was, upon the whole, a pretty shrewd, hard-bitten, competent business man. Whether he would have done better without some of these crotchets—well, that was just the point at issue between him and his harassed second.

Gene expected that it would be three years before he mastered even the groundwork of the manufacturing end of the business, three arduous years. He hadn't any objection to that. In the case of the office management, a thing with which he was not unfamiliar, he felt, however, that six months had fitted him to take charge, even, if necessary. As to the selling end, pretty nearly

every subordinate living, probably, imagines he could lick his superior to a frazzle on that. Gene Hazen was no exception to the rule.

Last, and by all odds most important, there was Fanny Frazer.

Years before, when Gene was thirteen and Fanny ten, they had lived next door to each other. Then Gene had considered her a very objectionable little girl. Fifteen years, however, can be a marvelous fairy godmother, and just now Gene was quite ready to bear every odious thing about Sam, if Sam would be reasonable regarding Fanny.

The first six months that Gene had been in town he had not mentioned Fanny to Sam. That was because Fanny wasn't home. He hadn't seen her. On the day that she came back from her college graduation, however, Sam asked Gene out to dinner and Gene saw her.

There may or may not be such a thing as love at first sight. The following morning, though, Gene Hazen intimated that he would appreciate being invited for dinner that evening also. He thought it just as well, he said, that Sam should be getting accustomed to him in a family, as well as a business, way.

Sam Frazer pulled down the corners of his mouth, and surveyed him with grim amusement. "What are you driving at?" he inquired.

"An invitation to dinner," said Gene calmly.

"Yes," said Sam. "Well—you don't get it."

"Of course, if you were going out this evening——" began Gene.

"Not!" said Sam, who was right in his element.

"You understand it's for your own good entirely? I simply want to accustom you and your daughter to my little personal peculiarities, so that you'll find me easier to live with later on."

"If that's all, don't bother," said Sam blandly. "There's no need."

"Oh, it's no bother," responded Gene.

"No bother to whom?" inquired Sam pertinently. So pertinently that the young man found nothing but an abashed "Oh" in reply. At least, Sam thought it was abashed. As a matter of fact, Sam was rather proud of his sharp and ingenious tongue, which he warranted to hold its own in almost any little excursion into persiflage of this sort.

So he was a little surprised that evening when, coming into his drawing-room about five minutes before seven, he found his delectable Fanny entertaining most charmingly a young man in full evening dress. Sam didn't mind the full dress. He wasn't that sort of a self-made man. He wore it himself. But he minded quite a lot who the young man was. It was Gene Hazen.

He cleared his throat, preparatory to saying something devastating, and heard Fanny taking words right out of his mouth—the wrong words, however.

"Isn't this nice!" she was saying.

Sam cleared his throat again. And again she got in ahead of him.

"And here's father, on time to the minute! Good father! And dinner is just ready."

And she put one arm through her father's tightly, and the other through Gene Hazen's lightly, and marched them abreast through the big doorways of the library and hall into the dining room.

Sam Frazer wasn't without a sense of humor. He saw the joke was on him, so he accepted it with the best of grace.

When it was all over and Gene Hazen had gone cheerfully upon his way, Fanny, leaning over her father's chair, and rumpling his yet abundant hair, said:

"How did you happen to invite him again to-night, father?"

"I didn't."

"You *didn't!* Why—how awfully *queer!*" There was a little silence. Then: "You're sure you didn't?"

"Oh, yes. I'm sure," said Sam firmly.

There was another silence. Then, "How awfully *queer!*" said Fanny again. Sam looked at her. Her cheeks were very pink. Neither of them said anything more.

The next evening Sam and his daughter were themselves invited out for dinner. On the morning following, it just occurred to Sam that a little "josh" would round off the incident nicely. He leaned over Gene's desk and said sardonically:

"I hope our being out last evening didn't upset any of your plans?"

Gene Hazen grinned amiably. "Not at all, thank you," he replied.

"I'm glad," responded Sam, and retired to his sanctum in high delight. A joke was a joke and it was all over now, but nevertheless it had been pretty good while it lasted. Now and then through the day he chuckled to himself, apparently over nothing.

The affair wore a different face when he came into his drawing-room again that evening and found his daughter chatting sociably with a young man in full evening dress. It was Gene Hazen.

And later, when Gene had again gone cheerfully upon his lonely bachelor way, Sam said:

"How did you happen to invite him again so soon?"

"Invite him? I?" said Fanny innocently. "I didn't."

"I thought not," said Sam.

"He doesn't seem to require much inviting, does he?" inquired Fanny, smiling faintly. "He must be awfully fond of you, father."

"It's a one-sided affection then," said Sam promptly. "I'm not so fond of him."

"Why," said Fanny, intent upon one of her rings, "I thought he seemed rather nice. What's the matter with him?"

"For one thing," said Sam, "he went to college."

Fanny laughed. "How absurd you are, father! I went to college, too, didn't I?"

"You're a girl. That's different," said Sam.

"You know," said Fanny curiously, "this is interesting. I've heard it put the other way round lots of times. Lots of people don't believe in college for girls—old-fashioned people, of course. But boys——"

"Well," said Sam flatly, "it spoils them. They come out with the big head, an insatiable appetite for loafing, expensive habits, and the idea that a game of golf is just as important as a—well, as a job."

Fanny nodded disappointedly. "Old stuff, father! I thought maybe you had something new. Of course, if that's all you meant, I've heard it a hundred times before."

"Well, it's true!" said Sam emphatically.

"Is it?" asked Fanny politely. "You know—I should have said that Mr. Hazen wasn't like that at all? I should have said he took business rather seriously. He talked as if he actually liked working hard. He was telling me how he put in his evenings studying up on your different accessories to——"

"He needs to," said Sam.

"And," pursued Fanny, "he certainly hasn't the big head. You couldn't have helped realizing that if you'd heard him telling me what a *vast* and *remarkable* knowledge of the business *you* had. He supposed more than any other living being, he said. He spoke so nicely about you."

Sam wasn't softened much by that. It was a pretty obvious thing for a man to say under the circumstances. Even Gene Hazen might be expected to think of it.

The next morning he remarked seriously:

"I wasn't figuring on boarding you."

"I wish to the dickens you would figure on it, then," said Gene affably. "It's

darned good board. And the associations are so fine, too. Think about it, won't you?"

"A joke is a joke," said Sam heavily, "even when it's on me. And enough is enough, too. Don't do it again, please."

"All right. I won't," said Gene. "I wouldn't have, anyway. Miss—er—Fanny told me last night I mustn't do it again—at least, not without letting her know beforehand. The cook didn't always, she said, cook up enough for five, and she and the housemaid had to go on short rations as a result of my enormous appetite, and they threatened to give notice if it happened again. So I—I'm only coming evenings for a while."

Then with a changed manner, he went on: "See here, Mr. Frazer. Let's cut out joking for a minute. Your daughter—well, you can see I—I'm in love with her. I want to marry her."

Sam said nothing.

"What have you against me? Anything? Except that it's sudden? I know it's that—with me. But with—er—Fanny—well, maybe it won't be so sudden after all."

"Maybe not," said Sam.

"I've money enough. I can support her. My record—you can go into that any time you want. You knew my father and my mother. What is there against me?"

"Well," said Sam, "just those things you've mentioned. You've always had everything handed you on a silver platter You've never proved yourself. I don t know what kind of metal you are—or how you'd ring if you got a good hard knock."

"You do know! You know what the Hazen blood is. You know——"

That, of course, was striking at the heart of Sam's most cherished belief, that there wasn't anything in such things. Look at his own case!

"I tell you," said Gene, "it's only that you're peeved with me about these fool little disagreements we've been having! They don't amount to anything. I'd just as soon admit I was wrong, only I wasn't, and there's nothing to be gained by blinking the facts. If I admitted you were right—I'd be admitting your whole argument—that I'm no good—incompetent! But if I were to prove to you that *I'm* right——"

"I'd be glad," cut in Sam virtuously. "Don't be fanatical in that notion of yours that I'm picking on you. Nothing would please me more than for you to——"

"Then if I do," said Gene, "you——"

"What do you take me for?" demanded Sam. "The stage version of the tyrannical father? All that would have to lie finally with Fanny, anyway."

He didn't see fit to go on to say there was the virtue of necessity in this, but he had a secret notion there was. He vividly remembered Fanny saying the night before: "Well—I like him—rather. And I shouldn't be surprised if I should come to like him quite a lot more!" Coming from Fanny, that meant something!

To be truthful, he knew that Gene was right as to his reasons. It had aggravated him to think that a young man who knew as little as Gene Hazen did about the Frazer accessories, should venture to question his methods. He did want to get even. That had in a measure inspired his past attitude, and it was at the root of his present, as well. And he was just enough ashamed of it to take, ostensibly, the course of noninterference.

"Then you—if I make good, in some way, in the business, you won't object?"

"Not in the least," agreed Sam

"Then give me a chance to show you! Let me get out of the office! Anybody can do what I'm doing there—it's only a question of precedent and routine. I've been studying the factory

end right along—I expect I'll still be ten years from now, but if——"

"It would take that long—at least," said Sam meanly.

"Well, I don't care if it takes twenty!" cried Gene heatedly. "I'm willing. But let me work at the selling end, too. I know I——"

It was the old cry, that Sam had always denied.

"All right," he said unexpectedly. "Come with me."

He went into the warehouse and into the corner of the stock room and brought out a curiously shaped piece of metal, which he put on the floor before Gene.

"Now," he said genially, "go ahead. You're going to sell me this."

Gene looked at it, cleared his throat, flushed scarlet, and stammered: "Well—I——"

"In short," said Sam grimly, *"what—is—it?"*

"Why—oh, hang it all!" said Gene desperately. "You're not fair! Before I'd ever try to sell it, I'd find out what it was! You know that!"

"I'm very sorry," said Sam, with the greatest satisfaction, "but that's the one solitary rule of the company that's ironclad. Nobody can sell our fixtures that doesn't know them—and know all about them. All that's necessary for you to do is to convince me that you *do* understand them, and within five minutes after that you can start on your selling campaign."

And he went out. Gene sat there angrily eying the metal contraption. Finally he lifted it and carried it to the factory manager's office.

"What's this?" he inquired gloomily.

"That? That's a white elephant," said Haynes.

"A what?"

"A white elephant," Haynes laughed. "That's Mr. Frazer's own little invention that he's been trying for the last two years to get on the market."

"What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing. It's a darned good thing. I'll tell you—attachment for the Graybell machine—releases pressure—saves power. Oh, it's good, all right. You know the Wade-Harrison people?"

Gene did, of course. It was the biggest concern of its kind in the world.

"They control about eighty-two per cent of the companies in their line. And the other eighteen per cent—well, they're like sheep. The first question they ask is: 'Does the Wade-Harrison use 'em?' And the second is: 'Why not?' That's where you are. The Old Man has got two dinky little jerk-water companies inveigled into using it—that's all."

"But why doesn't the Wade-Harrison crowd——"

"Good night I don't know. Ask the boss. *He* always goes to see them. It's his pet. He won't trust it to anybody else, and he can't seem to get a look-in himself. Goes over there once about every six weeks, and comes back every time in one hell of a temper. It's a standing joke with us—on the quiet, of course."

"And it will work?"

"It sure will!"

"What do we sell it for?"

Haynes told him.

Presently Gene carried it out with him. And then he sat down in the stock room and communed somewhat bitterly with himself. After some time his mind got round to the attachment again. What the dickens was a Graybell machine? And how did they fit this thing to one? It occurred to him that his next best move would be to get acquainted with it. He would take it back to Haynes and see if he would demonstrate it for him.

But Haynes was gone. He didn't like to bother any one else. He decided to wait till morning. If it was so good—and it must be, he thought, if Sam Frazer backed it personally—why wouldn't the Wade-Harrison people install it? They weren't fools. Surely

they would know. Surely they could see, even if Sam Frazer did have the idiotic mannerisms of——

Suddenly his expression grew intent, but no longer gloomy. He whistled softly to himself. When he went out a moment later he had Sam Frazer's pet invention with him. It wasn't very heavy; didn't weigh more than eighteen pounds.

He took a cross-town car, then an interurban, and two hours later presented himself at the Wade-Harrison Plant Number One. The office was a tremendous and horribly busy place, but after a moment some one, coming up behind him, said:

"Can I do something for you?"

He wheeled quickly with an explanation. "Bat Harrison!"

"Gene Hazen! Lord, man, I'm glad to see you! Can you believe it's been three years? Where have you been since commencement?"

Gene told him.

"Gad, I'm glad to see you So you're living in town now? Bully! Say, we'll get together—muy pronto! To-night! What do you say?"

"Make it to-morrow, will you?"

"Sure So you're holding down a job? Always thought you'd be a literary man. Stuff you did for the college paper, you know. What time do you knock off? I'll drop around for you in my car. Got a darned nice li'l' car, Gene. Gee, I'm glad you hunted me up!"

"I'll be truthful, Bat. I didn't. I wasn't even dead sure you were this Harrison. I really came on business—only I hope to the dickens you won't think I'm using old college ties to——"

"Rats!" said Bat. "Don't be silly. What do you want?"

"To see your father. Maybe you'd do as well. I've got something here——"

Bat gave it a glance. "Nix. It's the dad you see! I don't know beans 'bout things like that. Tell you the plain, unvarnished truth, I'm only a sort of glorified office boy round here. Sometimes I'm not even sure of the 'glorified.'"

"Will he have time to see me?"

"Will he?" said Bat. "Now you just watch me and see!"

And seizing Gene by the arm he propelled him rapidly through three swinging gates and four doors, and shoved him into a large, restful, well-furnished room. All about the wall hung nice but not obvious etchings, half a dozen of them. The bookcase held books, plainly not of a business order—— Great Scott, there were Latin and Greek ones among them! His eyes went farther. It was a remarkable room; the room, obviously, of a scholar and a gentleman. As an office, the kind to make Sam Frazer, for instance, bristle with hostility.

"Not office at all," said Bat, evidently reading his mind. "Kind of a private den of the governor. Office beyond there."

He pushed a button as he spoke. The door across the room opened and Harrison, the elder, entered, smiling.

"The fellow that ran up the big score on State three years ago," said Bat, grinning. "Also the shark that wrote that paper on Plautus that you were so daft about in the *Jack o' Lantern.*"

Mr. Harrison advanced with a cordial hand. "Let me see—ah, yes! Hazen must be your name! Yes. Nick Hazen—let me see—that would be your uncle, wouldn't it? Nick and I were on the same crew—ninety-three that was. I'm glad to meet you."

"Now, nix on the merry reminiscences, dad!" admonished Bat. "He's here to talk cold, hard-headed business. Coming out for dinner to-morrow evening, though. You can rag him 'bout old Plautus and good old Alpine then. Meantime, excuse me if I do a fade-away. I'm a busy man, earning my li'l' ole fifty per—month, you understand!"

And with a grimace Bat departed.

Harrison motioned to a chair. "What is it?" he asked.

"I feel—you're so kind—as if I were here rather under false pretenses. But —well, I'll tell you. I'm in business, Mr. Harrison, with the Frazer Motor Accessories Company. To be frank, I have an interest in it. And we have something that—I might as well be honest. I don't know a thing about it. But at the plant they tell me you ought to be using it—that it would save you money. But they tell me you won't. I want to know if you aren't willing to give it at least a test?"

"Let's see it."

Gene unfastened the burlap in which it was wrapped.

"What will it do?"

Gene shook his head. "I'm an utterly green hand, Mr. Harrison. I'm studying like the very dickens, but I've a lot to learn still. This is one of those things. I don't know what it will do. They tell me it will work, and I'm inclined to believe them. I don't ask you to believe them, however. I just want you to try it out—and see."

Harrison looked at him oddly. "Tell me something," he said. "How in the world did you happen to get tied up with an opinionated, overbearing, boorish ass like Frazer? And having got tied up with him—how do you stand him? You don't have to answer, though."

Gene laughed. "I'd just as soon. I don't stand him very well, Mr. Harrison, I'll have to admit that. But he knows his business down to rock bottom. And a lot of that boorishness, I believe, is just a mannerism due to some infernal theory he's working on. I inherited a block of stock in the company. And it's a good business and—if his prejudice against college-bred men ever breaks—I can learn it mighty well under him. And there's just one other thing. Have you seen his daughter by any chance?"

"Oh," said Mr. Harrison, smiling and raising his eyebrows thoughtfully. "That puts another face on the matter." Then he went on. "There's no use in my trying this out. I've already had it tested. It will work.

"Now, I'm going to be absolutely frank with you. If that pompous, overbearing Frazer has insulted me once—without ever meaning to, I suppose—he's insulted me fifty times. At first I swore I wouldn't buy anything under heaven from him—not even my life if he had it to sell. But after a while my good sense came to the fore. I decided I'd let him cool his heels in my office just as many times as he had insulted me and my intelligence. I was generous with him. I rated it at fifteen times. At his sixteenth trip, I said, I'd give him a contract. And this is the sixteenth. I'd have done it to-day even if Frazer himself had come—providing he didn't insult me again.

"We'll install them all through our fifteen plants as soon as practicable. But I'm mighty glad to give you the contract instead of him.

"It's silly, Mr. Hazen, to let yourself be motivated by prejudices like that; it's like the old saw, 'biting your nose off to spite your face.' But——"

"There have been times—before I met Miss Frazer, of course—when I would have gladly cut his throat," said Gene, grinning.

Harrison laughed. "Do you know—he comes in here swelling like a turkey cock, asininely important, and even gives me unsolicited instructions upon running the business. Actually! About once every six weeks, I think. And I believe that each time I enjoyed turning him down, it cost me from two to three thousand dollars to do it. At the same time, it was immensely stimulating to me to know that it was costing him a good deal more."

He rang a bell. A clerk came in. "Get me two contract blanks—number three, please. And ask Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Frayme to come in at once."

Twenty minutes later Gene Hazen

left the Wade-Harrison plant with the contract in his pocket.

He was no fool. It had been luck—blind, incredible luck! Nothing more! Oh, yes. A little more. Sam Frazer's besotted addiction to the masterful-personality method of salesmanship had had a little to do with it. How he would rub that in on Sam!

Slow, there! Just wait a moment. Would he? No, he would not! It would be a cheap and easy revenge, but would it get him anywhere? Sam Frazer wouldn't change his branding of "fool"; he'd simply enlarge it to "lucky fool."

A little mystery, on the other hand? Suppose Sam never did learn how he had come to put it over? Suppose every time Sam asked him, he told him a different tale? Suppose he kept the truth a gorgeous, impenetrable secret? Sam Frazer might be just exactly the sort of man to admire what he didn't quite understand. By Jove, he'd do it! A fresh cock-and-bull story every time Sam referred to it!

Meantime—oh, yes!

He stopped at the first drug store and called a number on the telephone. It wasn't the number of the Frazer Motor Accessories Company, either. He came out smiling happily, and hopped nimbly onto the running board of the open interurban car.

Fifteen minutes before closing time he arrived in the office. Sam hadn't gone. The door of his private office was slightly ajar. Upon Gene's entrance to the main office, he looked up and glowered. Accusation was writ plainly upon his face. Sam Frazer never had been the sort of man to approve of doing something else in business hours.

Gene took the paper from his pocket and nabbed an office boy.

"Scoot in to Mr. Frazer with this," he said. *"And don't shut the door!"*

Then he sat down to watch Sam examine the paper.

Sam looked at it and passed his hand before his eyes, as if to brush away something that couldn't have been there. He looked again, gulped three or four times visibly, and then settled down to studying it. And in the merciless light of four windows, Gene Hazen watched the strawberry red flood his face. Finally Sam raised his eyes and looked at him. In that interchange of glances there were volumes of meaning, and at least the closing chapter of one of them dealt exhaustively with surrender.

Sam got up and came out.

"I was thinking just now," he said, as casually as he was able under the distressing circumstances, "that it would be real nice for Fanny and—er—me, if you could slip out this evening for dinner. Nothing formal, you know. Just a little——" he caught himself. He had almost by a slip of the tongue, said "family." "Just a little friendly party for us three."

So Sam Frazer, even if you hadn't suspected it, was a mighty good sport.

"Thanks," said Gene. "I was going to. I was talking to Fanny on the phone just a little while ago, and she said I'd better come."

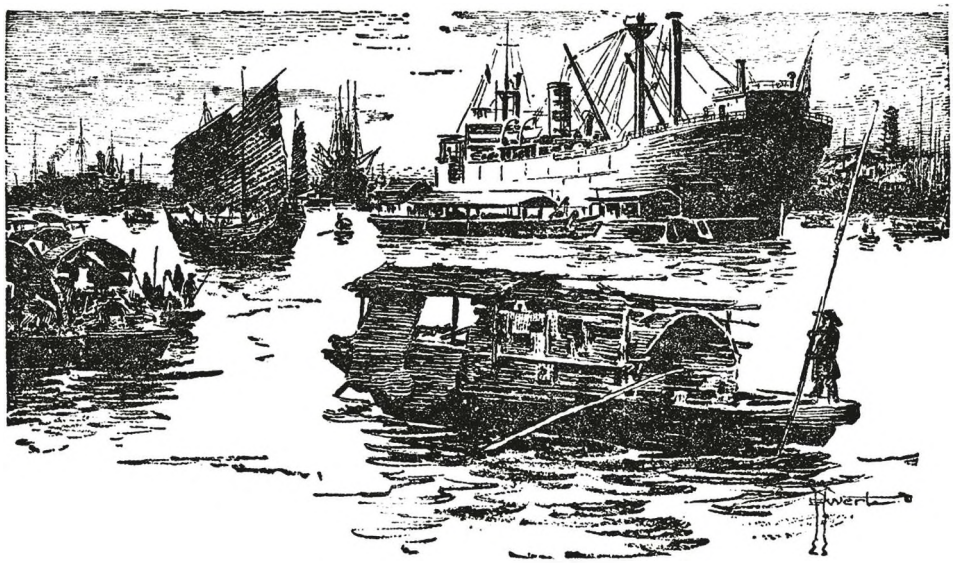
"Oh," said Sam feebly. And then he inquired: "Gene—er—Gene, my boy, how did you do it?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said Gene airily. "Mrs. Harrison, senior, you know, has a fine canary. There isn't any other canary just exactly like it. You see, it's a purple canary, and——"

When anybody asks Sam Frazer now how he likes his son-in-law, he always says:

"He'd be all right, darn him, if he wasn't such a joker!"

And perhaps it's only fair he should take that derogatory attitude. Because it was Gene Hazen who had sponsored the statement in the first paragraph of this story that: "Sam wouldn't be half so obnoxious if some one else had made him!"



If You Ask Me

By C. Wiles Hallock

IF ye mind for to mention places
A man can never forget,
Have ye been where the Blue Nile races,
Or cruised in the Tonkin yet?
Take the land of the Malabarber—
Take Karnak at night—— But, say,
Did ye ever see Shanghai harbor
At dawn of a summer day?

Did ye ever see night mist skippin'
Abaft o' the half-moon girth
Of a shore where there's miles of shippin'
From every old port on earth?
At the verge of a crescent arbor
A slope like a terraced lawn—
Did ye ever see Shanghai harbor
From seaward, at summer dawn?

Oh, there's schooners and skiffs and liners;
There's packets and sampan fleets;
Oh, there's cruisers and brigantiners
And junks with their yellow sheets.
Take the isles of the Zanzibarber—
Socotra—or Shirabad——
Did ye ever see Shanghai harbor?
Ye haven't seen nothin', lad!

The POPULAR CLUB

Every reader of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE, man or woman, qualifies as a lover of good stories and as a good fellow, and is therefore automatically and entirely without obligation elected a member of THE POPULAR CLUB.

WHAT'S nicer than getting an unexpected and pleasant letter from the other side of the world? Here's one we received not long ago from Mr. Wilfrid Dixon, of St. Kilda, Dunedin, New Zealand, and it makes us feel that we'd like to have a look at this here now New Zealand:

Having been a constant and appreciative reader of THE POPULAR for over twenty years, what's the matter with enrolling myself as a member of THE POPULAR Club?

This letter comes as a far cry—from a little speck on the map called New Zealand. Though probably not known to many of your readers, it is a wonderful little country. For concentrated scenic wonders, no place in the world offers as much as this little island, a sportsman's paradise. There are the majestic, snow-clad peaks with their glaciers, and winter sports; the placid cliff-bound fiordland, the volcanic wonders of Rotorua, and the deep-sea fishing in the sunny Bay of Islands—all in an area less than any one of the forty-eight United States.

It has often struck me that some of your writers, like Fred MacIsaac, Bertrand Sinclair, or Robert McBlair—all of whom can wield a shrewd pen—would find great copy here.

Fishing? Yes. You can hook a six-hundred-pound swordfish or mako shark any old time in the season. There is deer stalking in plenty, and there are chamois, waipiti, and red deer galore—big fellows, too, at that. If I had the gift of your writers, I could tell of some glorious days among the rainbows and quinnat—days which will live in memory until the last call comes.

Man, it's a great gift, this telling a yarn on paper; that's why I am wild if my POPULAR misses a mail. I do look forward to the stuff by these fellows I spoke of.

Glad to answer any inquiries from your side of the world.

MAKING BOOKS.

By Millard A. Adams.
(Tulsa, Oklahoma.)

One of a series of sketches by POPULAR readers on their hobbies. They must not be more than three hundred words long, and will, if accepted, be paid for at our regular rates.

MY hobby is books. It is one of the most fascinating hobbies in all the world. The happiest and most peaceful hours of my uneventful life have been spent among my books. To me a book is not just so much paper and

print; it is a prize, a priceless jewel, a real companion and an unending source of pleasure, comfort, knowledge. I don't possess any rare or expensive books. Being one of the class who have to depend on common labor for beans, potatoes, and bread, I can't afford them. But how I love books!

My library consists mostly of books of my own making. Here is where the fun comes in. Let me tell you about it. You see, I gather magazines from friends and neighbors and then rip them apart. I place the serial parts together, thus making the story complete. I also keep the novelettes and shorts that appeal to me. When I have collected a sufficient number of stories by a certain author to make a book, I then sew them together with strong cord and bind them with cardboard and cloth. With the aid of scissors and paste, stiff cardboard, paper and cloth, and a skill at manipulating same, many attractive and worth-while books can be made. My magazine books are bound with green cloth, and each has a picture from some magazine pasted on the front, with the title "Western Novels" or "Detective Novels," et cetera, depending, of course, upon the type of fiction inside. Just imagine having six or eight novels by Buck in one volume! Or MacIsaac, or Coolidge! Don't tell me that a hobby like mine is foolish or a waste of time. Because it isn't.

ALAS, THE POOR STOKER!

A Thought That Came to a Very Traveled, Very *Popular* Author as a Result of His Most Recent Ocean Voyage.

ALONG with the old square-rigger an exceedingly picturesque character is soon to vanish from the seven seas, the same being the brawny, hairy-chested stoker. The stoker, what with his rigorous life and the hell hole he worked in, has been a wonderful help to story writers and playwrights, as well as a great commercial asset to speakeasies in New York and San Francisco and pubs in Liverpool and Singapore.

But oil burners and motor ships are rapidly replacing the coal-burning steamers, and the engine and firerooms of a liner have come to be rather agreeable places to be in. The revolution in methods of ocean propulsion was brought home to me during a recent voyage upon the new electrically driven *Virginia,* upon the occasion of a visit to the machinery.

I found the chief engineer—Scotch, of course—lolling in a big armchair in his roomy cabin on the boat deck. He pressed an electric button and summoned an assistant engineer to guide me through the engine and firerooms. As the height of the boat deck above the floor of the ship upon which the engines repose was about the height of a nine-story building, I did not look forward to climbing ninety feet down greasy ladders with any enthusiasm, so imagine my delighted astonishment when the assistant ushered me into an elevator which dropped us to the bottom in a few seconds.

The air away down there was pure and sweet, and the temperature only a few degrees above that on deck. The great steam turbines were boxed in. They didn't make the show of the old reciprocating engines, and the boilers were equally unobtrusive. This ship possesses enormous steam engines, burning oil; but the steam, instead of turning the crankshaft directly, is applied to generate electricity, which turns two eighty-ton flywheels welded to the end of the propeller shafts—flywheels which rotate so smoothly that the familiar engine throb or vibration is entirely absent.

In the fireroom were two anæmic persons sitting on stools, technically fire-

men or stokers, but replacing the ancient brawn with a reasonable amount of brains. All they have to do is to peer at the oil burners occasionally to make sure they are operating properly. On an old-fashioned ship of this size, a gang of at least twenty men would have been shoveling coal into the maw of the furnaces at a temperature of at least one hundred and forty degrees.

I glanced at the thermometer and saw that it did register as high as one hundred and eighteen degrees there in the fireroom, but a strong current of air forced through the place made it seem twenty degrees lower.

How the deuce is an author to wax pathetic about a job like that?

Fortunately there are only two or three of these electrically driven liners afloat, and a score or so of motor ships. And although the oil burners are very numerous—only a limited number of passenger liners still burn coal—there remains for us writing men a multitude of freighters and tramps where the old conditions linger. In another ten years or so, however, we'll definitely have to stop weeping about the poor stoker.

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

FROM Mr. George H. Vorbach, of Kearny, New Jersey, comes a suggestion we are going to keep in mind. Mr. Vorbach's letter:

I would like to add my voice to the ever-increasing number of those who are praising THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. THE POPULAR Club and A Chat With You are regular numbers with me.

I began reading your mag about 1912 and have been an almost regular reader ever since. I can find no other mag which comes up to your standard. I wonder why you do not have any more stories of railroad construction, which some years ago you had quite often.

Outside of "Red," which I certainly enjoyed very much, it seems you have had no stories of construction in quite some time. I hope to find one on your list soon.

SOUND THE CYMBALS!

PRAISE unqualified is ours from Mr. Ralph T. Coffey, of Belmont, Massachusetts, who writes as follows:

Down through the years I have wandered with THE POPULAR MAGAZINE as an interesting and ever-present companion.

Years ago, when reading the letters of the old-timers in the back pages, I wondered how long it would be before I would add to your burdens the trial of reading my lines of commendation. Your policy of selecting stories is a splendid one. The constant recurrence of work by some of your authors through all these years reflects their greatness, too.

You are still hitting hard. This last issue is as fine as that first one—read while playing hookey from high school.

THE TWINS.

In form and feature, face and limb,
  I grew so like my brother
That folks got taking me for him,
  And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
  It reached a fearful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
  Yet not a soul knew which.

One day, to make the matter worse,
  Before our names were fixed,
As we were being washed by nurse,
  We got completely mixed;
And thus, you see, by fate's decree,
  Or rather nurse's whim,
My brother John got christened me,
  And I got christened him.

This fatal likeness even dogged
  My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogged,
  For John turned out a fool.
I put this question, fruitlessly,
  To every one I knew,
"What *would* you do, if you were me,
  To prove that you were *you*?"

Our close resemblance turned the tide
  Of my domestic life,
For somehow my intended bride
  Became my brother's wife.
In fact, year after year the same
  Absurd mistakes went on,
And when I died the neighbors came
  And buried brother John.

HENRY SAMBROOKE LEIGH (1837-1883).

A Chat With You

IN the movies you have often watched them flash on the screen brief scenes from coming pictures to give you an idea of what treats are in store for you. We're going to try a little experiment here this time and give you flashes from Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson's new novel, "The Monastery of the Blue Death," which will appear in our next issue.

The story starts romantically in Paris and leads to Mongolia, where the most eye-popping adventures take place. The time is just after the armistice, the hero is Captain Douglas Stewart, cavalry, American army, and the girl is Baroness Elsa von Saxenberg, a Swedish noblewoman.

* * * *

NOW we swing into our first imaginary picture on the screen, with Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson as our word photographer and colorist:

He saw her as soon as he came into the ballroom. The Swedish Legation in Paris was ablaze with lights that night, so soon after the armistice, and a constant line of cars moved up slowly, depositing officers and diplomats of every nationality, accompanied by beautiful women glittering with jewels and swathed in furs. . . . It was a bewildering mass of color, blues and reds and greens, the gold and silver of the officers' uniforms set off the pastel shades of the women's gowns—charming women, expensive and luxurious creatures, looking to the manner born, each and every one of them.

* * * *

THE scene changes, and the tall, daring American officer and Baroness Elsa are in a Parisian taxicab:

They were approaching the Pont Alexander, that great stone bridge across the Seine . . . with the great golden dome of Napoleon's tomb gleaming brightly in the last rays of the setting sun.

And this blends into:

"I thought we would go up to the Eiffel Tower and look over Paris at sunset," he informed her. . . . They drew up before that monolith of steel girders and went up as high as the elevator would take them . . . until. leaning over the rail, they saw all of Paris spread out at their feet, its outline softened by the golden purple haze. "Now," he said, turning to her quietly, "I have brought you here to ask you to marry me. And I might state that here we stay until you say yes!"

* * * *

THE Eiffel Tower fades away, and we are in the Paon Royale, where:

The violins were sobbing forth the infinite yearning and haunting melancholy of Toselli's "Serenata." . . . The orchestra swung into a restless melody. They rose . . . floated down the length of the room . . . seemed the spirit of the dance itself. . . . Love and wine and music—they were all there——

But love and wine and music soon give way to the trumpeting summons of adventure—an insistent call that propels these two across two continents to a forbidden interior part of Mongolia, where an amazing cult of Oriental desert monks guard a secret hoard of rare sapphires.

* * * *

WE are in a temple room, luminous with an unearthly blue radiance, precursor of the Blue Death:

"We'll face it together," she said courageously. His arms stole about her. There was a step at the door. They watched as the door slowly opened, disclosing the rifles of the huge men clad in scarlet silk. They en-

tered. . . . They were now out on the floor of the temple.

"It might interest you," said the pale-faced, long-haired man in English, "to know that your last moments on earth will be lighted up by the sacred color of the Blue God." . . . As he finished speaking there came an inhuman howl . . . a howl so blood-curdling in its malignant hatred that it chilled the hearts of the people waiting there.

* * * *

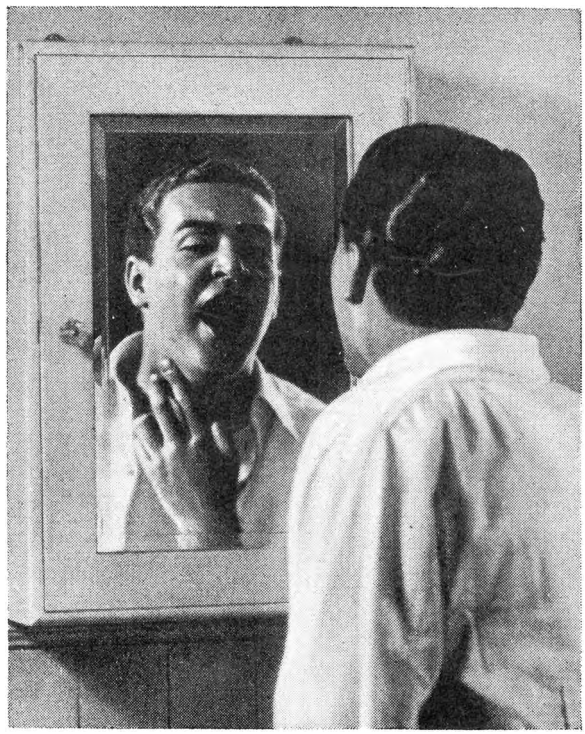
OUR "screen" changes again, and now comes an announcement of A. M. Chisholm's rib-tickling two-part story, "The Ingenious Mr. Wood." His other famous character, Mr. Palmer, was genial. Mr. Wood, as it happens, is ingenious, and when we say ingenious, we mean *ingenious!* You're going to like that one. Mr. Chisholm knows humor from the front to the back.

Karl W. Detzer and Richard Howells Watkins, who need no introduction since they are known and read from coast to coast, have written two splendid, strong stories for that number. And a writer new to THE POPULAR, but not new to the reading public, will be there —Walter McLeod, who was a major during the World War and numbers among his rare experiences several exciting years in wartime Mesopotamia.

Concluding this experiment, we ought to say something like, "Leave your name and address at the box office and we will forward our program to you." Instead of that, however, we say: "Write frequently to us about your preferences in this magazine, and we will continue to do our best to give you the kind of stories you want."

Curtain!

"I'll *whip* that sore throat *tonight*"



Never ignore sore throat or a chill; they may be a warning that you will be in for a severe cold, "flu," grippe, or bronchitis.

At the first symptom of trouble begin to gargle with full strength Listerine, the safe antiseptic. Used full strength it kills germs in 15 seconds.

The moment it enters the mouth it attacks disease-producing germs that cause trouble and thus aids nature in maintaining health. Listerine used full strength, though safe and pleasant, kills even the Staphylococcus Aureus (pus) and Bacillus Typhosus (typhoid) germs in counts ranging to 200,000,000. We could not make this statement unless prepared to prove it to the medical profession and U. S. Government.

For your protection make a habit of gargling with it systematically.

Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

The *Safe* Antiseptic LISTERINE

Kills* 200,000,000 *germs in* 15 *seconds


I do prefer
because
LUCKY STRIKE
CIGARETTE
Toasting removes
dangerous irritants
that cause
throat irritation and
coughing
LUCKY STRIKE
"IT'S TOASTED"
CIGARETTES