


THE GREAT CARLETON THEATER MYSTERY

TRUE
★
DETECTIVE
MAY
MYSTERIES

A MACFADDEN
25
CENTS
PUBLICATION

An illustration for a magazine cover. In the foreground, a man with wavy brown hair and a serious expression wears a brown trench coat. A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red headscarf, looks up at him with a concerned expression. Behind them, a man with wild, dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark coat and a striped shirt, is behind vertical bars, looking menacingly with his mouth open. The background is a dark, moody landscape with a blue and purple sky.

*Revelations
of a Vampire*

*The Riddle of the
Ancient Code*

*The Curious Case
of the Andrews Pearls*



~ a roar! a flash!

**two men dead ~
~ he escapes! ~**

**Who is he? ~
\$10,000.00
Reward**

Follow Him!

IMAGINE the keen thrill that would be yours following some case like this: The escaping desperado is a notorious international character with a long record. He's wanted in five countries. Rewards range from \$5000 to \$25000 for his capture. He loots a palatial mansion. Kills two men. Escapes. Disappears. Changes his entire appearance. Pulls a clever "dead" fake and is recorded as "Dead" on all police records. Dead to all records except ONE—the Inevitable Finger Print.

For ten years he deceives the world. Prospers. Becomes a social lion. And then—Bang!—the Finger Print Expert nabs him. Society is shocked. They can't believe that this social Prince is the famous Mr. "X" of criminal

fame 10 years ago. But finger prints do not lie. Never! The Finger Print Expert always wins. Glory, fame, rewards are always his.

Thrills! Rewards! Await YOU!

Imagine the thrill, mystery, glory, fame and reward that would be yours if you were this Finger Print Expert. You can make them yours if you will. You can learn the secrets of this great science at home in your spare time. Any man of ordinary ability who can read and write can become a Finger Print Expert in a short time at a small cost.

A brilliant career and a handsome income with world-wide opportunities awaits you. Act Now. Don't let the other fellow enjoy what is rightfully yours. Mail that coupon now and learn the great things that are in store for you.

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- State of Colorado
- State of Washington
- State of Michigan
- Duluth, Minn.
- Detroit, Mich.
- St. Paul, Minn.
- Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Lincoln, Nebr.
- Birmingham, Ala.
- Columbus, Ohio
- Havana, Cuba
- Calgary, Ala., Canada
- Pensacola, Fla.
- Houston, Texas
- New Haven, Conn.
- Great Falls, Mont.
- Galveston, Texas
- Albany County Penitentiary
- Albany, N. Y. (tiary)
- Waterloo, Iowa
- Wilkes Barre, Pa.
- El Paso, Texas
- Everett, Wash.
- Schenectady, N. Y.
- Alhambra, Calif.
- Livingston, Mont.
- Saginaw, Mich.
- Tampa, Fla.
- Fort Collins, Colo.
- Windsor, Ont., Can.
- Tulsa, Okla.
- Pueblo, Colo.
- Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Lorain County, Ohio
- Ogden, Utah
- Lansing, Mich.
- Gaineville, Texas
- Walla Walla, Wash.
- Indiana Reformatory
- Jeffersonville, Ind.
- St. Joseph, Mo.
- Mingo Junction, Ohio
- Okmulgee, Okla.
- Hazleton, Pa.

FREE Course in Secret Service

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 14-35 Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:—Without any obligation whatever, send me your new, fully illustrated Free book on Finger Prints and your offer of a FREE course in Secret Service Intelligence and the Free Professional Finger Print Outfit.

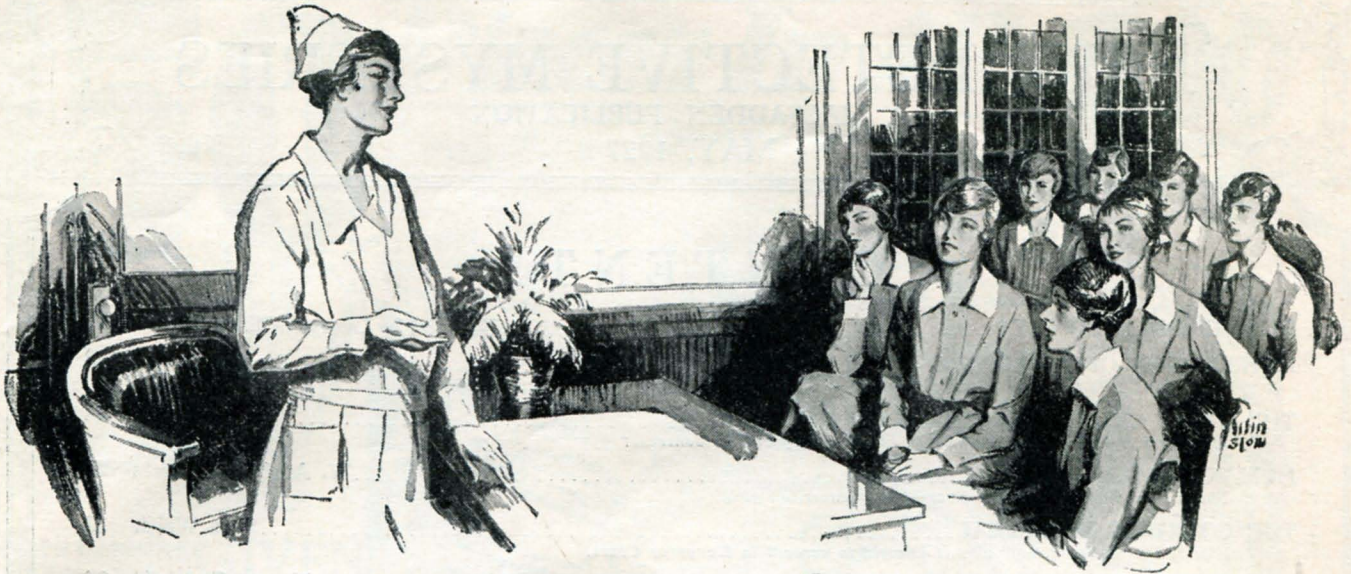
Name _____

Address _____

Age _____

If you mail us that coupon now you will get in on a special free offer we are making for a limited time of a professional finger print outfit free, and a Free Course in Secret Intelligence. No obligations. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose! Act NOW! Write for handsome FREE BOOK.

University of Applied Science
1920 Sunnyside Avenue, Dept. 14-35 Chicago



There is no mystery about the subject of feminine hygiene

... the facts are perfectly plain concerning poisonous antiseptics

STUDENT nurses quickly learn to look at facts in a frank, scientific way. The first thing is to *understand*; once the truth about a subject is known, what to do about it becomes much clearer and easier.

Feminine hygiene, like all other branches of hygiene, has in the last few years become a matter of course in the eyes of physicians, nurses and most women of enlightened families. The sole drawback has been the fact that the only genuine antiseptic-germicides available for the purpose are preparations which are caustic and poisonous.

Don't risk it

There is a *double danger* in the use of carbolic acid compounds. First, there is the danger to the woman who uses them, because the caustic nature of these compounds leads in many cases to a hardening

and deadening of the delicate membranes and even to a subsequent area of scar-tissue. Second, there is the danger of *accidental poisoning*, especially with little children in the house.

Zonite, extremely powerful — and no danger

Imagine, then, the relief among the well-informed when the discovery of Zonite was announced. Zonite is by all odds the most remarkable antiseptic-germicide ever developed.

Though a deadly enemy to disease-germs, it is harmless to human beings.

Dental surgeons are recommending Zonite widely for use in the mouth and are so using it in their own families. Think of a powerful *germicide* that can actually be held in the mouth in a pure, undiluted state.

it with another *non-poisonous* antiseptic, Zonite is more than forty times as effective as, for instance, peroxide of hydrogen. To compare it with a *poisonous* germicide, Zonite is far more powerful than any dilution of carbolic acid that can be applied safely to human tissue.

No wonder, then, that both physicians and women everywhere have welcomed Zonite as the solution of the problem of feminine hygiene.

2 important statements

Zonite is not a poison

Zonite does kill germs

And Zonite *is* powerful. To compare

Full information in this new booklet—free

In a few small pages our Women's Division has collected probably the most complete information obtainable anywhere on the subject of feminine hygiene. Be sure to send for a copy today of the NEW edition. If you want one for a friend, send for two. Use the coupon below.

14-B

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New York, N. Y.

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

Feminine Hygiene
 Use of Antiseptics in the Home
Please print name

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Address.....
City..... State.....
(In Canada: 165 Dufferin St., Toronto)

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Use Zonite Ointment for burns, scratches, sunburn, etc. Also as a powerful deodorant in the form of a vanishing cream.

Zonite

At all drugstores
In bottles
25c, 50c and \$1
Full directions in every package

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES

A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION

Vol. VII

MAY, 1927

No. 2

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Cover Design from a Photograph of Alice Terry, Paul Wegener and Ivan Petrovich, in "The Magician," a Metro-Goldwyn Picture

Featured in the June issue you will find:

WHY I TURNED CROOK, by a Girl Bandit

And why she turned against all crooks.

FOR THE WOMAN HE LOVED

A failure in life attempts to make good his failure by turning to crime.

TRAPPED BY BABY FINGERS

A pair of infant's hands succeeded in softening a heart that the police of a whole city failed to soften.

"AN EYE FOR AN EYE——"

The riddle of the man who couldn't sleep.

These and other stirring true detective stories make June TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES, one of the most appealing of the Spring magazines on the news-stands. Out May 15th. Order your copy in advance!

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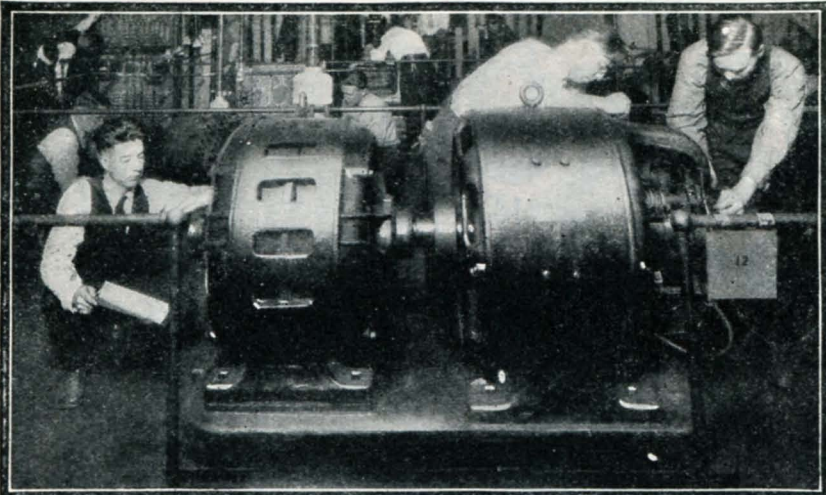
M. A. Wood, Secretary

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The pictures used in this magazine to illustrate the stories are of actual people, but are not intended to be a likeness of, nor to depict
the individuals named in such stories, unless such pictures are specifically labeled



A Glimpse Into the Coyne Electrical School

Those who see the great roaring shops of Coyne for the first time are amazed. Here are students from every State in the Union working on the greatest outlay of electrical apparatus ever assembled in any school... costing hundreds of thousands of dollars... real dynamos, huge motors, actual skeleton houses, complete power plants, transmitting stations, switchboards of all kinds... everything from doorbells to farm power systems. Here, with

this full-size machinery in full operation every day, Coyne students get years of experience in a few months. Here with two instructors to every 25 men, Coyne students learn by actually doing. Here—and nowhere else in the world—can you get such training!
The photograph above is one of 150 views in our catalog, a copy of which will be mailed free upon request. See coupon below.

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By Actual Work—in the Great Shops of Coyne

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That's why so many men are turning to ELECTRICITY, which offers unlimited rewards and opportunities—with ordinary salaries of \$50—\$75—\$100—and \$150 a week! Right now big electrical jobs are actually going begging! Electrical experts with 12 weeks of training are in demand—and the need is growing every day! The situation is one that spells O-P-P-O-R-T-U-N-I-T-Y in letters a foot high for the man who is wide-awake enough to see it!

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Let me make you a master electrician—the Coyne way. I've done it for thousands of others—farmers, laborers, factory men, and hundreds who haven't had more than 8th grade education! I can do it for you—and start you off on the road to independence and big earnings in just 90 days!

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Just give me a chance to tell you about the unlimited opportunity that awaits you. Let me send you this big book free, containing over 150 photographs and listing and telling you how you can qualify for the kind of jobs that pay \$75-\$200 a week. If you really want more money and a wonderful future, send for this book now! No obligation. Simply mail the coupon.

Mail This
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Coupon
To-day

\$100 a Week Jobs
are common in electricity. Our free employment bureau puts you in touch with openings to choose from. The following are only a few of the kind of positions you fit yourself for in the Great Shops of Coyne:

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- Armature Expert \$50 to \$100 a Week
- Power House Operator \$50 to \$75 a Week
- Auto Electrician \$60 to \$100 a Week
- Inventor, Unlimited Income
- Maintenance Engineer \$60 to \$100 a Week
- Service Station Owner \$200 a Week
- Radio Expert, \$75 to \$150 a Week
- Contractor, \$3,500 to \$15,000 a Year

FREE R. R. Fare When You Enroll
Right now I will allow your Railroad Fare from any point in the U. S. to Chicago—the world's Greatest Electrical center. Send coupon for details.

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No. M4C 2521

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\$100 DOWN
Clip the coupon below. Write your name and address plainly. Pin a dollar bill to it—mail at once. We will ship immediately—all three rugs on approval in one complete neat package. No trouble to lay. If satisfactory, just send a dollar a month.

Not just one rug, but three! Three Genuine Gold Seal Congoleum Art Rugs! The prettiest and most artistic Congoleum Rug pattern ever produced. A brand new pattern, never before shown—a pattern of exquisite style, perfect taste, lovely colorings.

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Guaranteed Genuine Gold Seal Congoleum Art Rugs! All three Art Rugs bear the famous Congoleum Art Rug Gold Seal—the famous Gold Seal that can't be placed on "seconds," or damaged goods, or imitations.

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Millions of homes are justly proud of their Congoleum floors. Heretofore they have paid a great deal more to obtain them. Homes that own Congoleum floors no longer know the back-breaking, heart-breaking drudgery of scrubbing floors.

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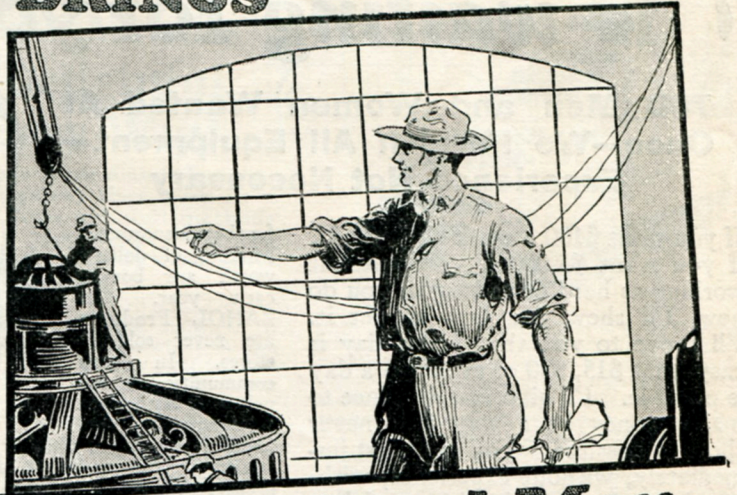
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"Cooke" TRAINING BRINGS

\$3,500 to \$10,000 a year to thousands



You want to make big money! You want to earn more than a mere \$20 or \$30 a week! Of course you do. Then get into Electricity, the field of big pay and bigger opportunities. *I'll train you at home*—in your spare time. You work just as you are working now—at your same old job. But you learn Electricity every day, in an easy, simple, unforgettable way—by doing.



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You Earn as You Learn

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That's what I'll agree to do in writing. And you're to be the judge and jury, all in one. If you're not satisfied you get your money back—every cent of it. And back of me stands the Chicago Engineering Works, a \$2,000,000 Illinois Corporation.

Nothing Like "Cooke" Training

Don't be satisfied with anything but "Cooke" Training, the Course with 10,000 boosters. There is nothing like it anywhere. It stands by itself—alone in this field. This is the training that big Electrical men are praising—the training that big Electrical companies select for their employees—the training that has put thousands of men into big-pay jobs.

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Don't wait a minute! Find out today why "The Cooke Trained Man is the Big-Pay Man" everywhere! Find out how Cooke Training will help you boost your pay! Mail the Coupon for my big books of proof, pictures and Pay-Raising FACTS. Do it NOW!

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Formerly known as

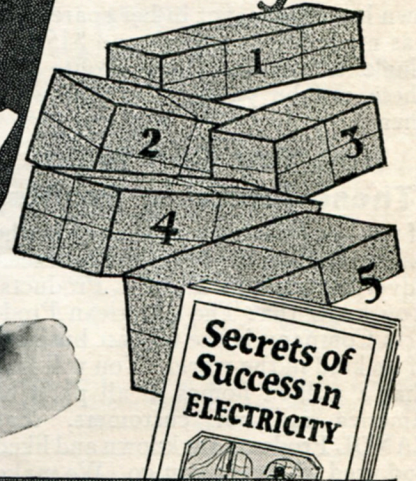
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Name

Address

City State



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"Dear Chief: When I enrolled with you was just a \$10 a week soda clerk. Long before I graduated I was a maintenance man at 150% more pay. Now my weekly earnings are around \$100." Ralph P. Crousore, Greencastle, Ind.



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\$100 a Week is waiting for you

700 Men and Women Wanted At Once—We Furnish All Equipment—Experience Not Necessary

If you want \$100 a week clear profit, if you want \$5,000 a year without working as hard or as long as you do now, I'll show you how to get it. I'll prove to you that \$10 a day is easy, that \$15, \$20 or even \$25 a day is possible. I'll give you a chance to make money in a way you never thought possible. You can start immediately, without experience, without investment and without delay. You can have the satisfaction of a big income. And besides your large cash earnings you can get a new Hudson Super-Six Coach FREE.

\$125 In One Week

I will give you the same offer I made to Christopher Vaughn whose earnings have reached \$125 in a week, and Frank M. Brown who formerly worked twelve hours a day for \$25 a week. He accepted my offer and was amazed to find that he could make \$27 in an eight-hour day. You can do like John Scotti who started without experience and made \$97 his second week, or Mrs. K. R. Roof who has two children and does her own housework, yet in her spare time has made \$50 in a week and \$15 in a single afternoon. Yes, profits like these can be yours. Do you want them?

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If you read the big magazines like the Saturday Evening Post, you have seen advertisements of ZANOL Products. You know that The American Products Company is the biggest business of its kind in the world. You will find that a million homes in all parts of America are our customers, that ZANOL Products are known and liked and used wherever you go. We make 350 wonderful products. The demand

for them is enormous. Millions of dollars' worth are bought each year. But ZANOL Products are never sold in stores. In each community we appoint an authorized representative who handles our dealings with our customers in that territory. You can be one of them. The rest is easy. We tell you what to do and you make a profit, a generous profit, on the business that comes from your territory. That's all there is to it.



Get Your Share of Two Million Dollars

This year our representatives will make two million dollars as their profit. You can have your share. You will be amazed at how easy it is—at how quickly the money rolls in. You will have the same opportunity as Henry Albers, who made as much as \$47 in a single day.

I Furnish Everything

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You will be given the same proposition that has brought thousands of dollars in cash to E. S. Shelly, of Pennsylvania; Mrs. Nona Kern, of Mississippi; Edgar Banville, of Massachusetts; and dozens of others. It has enabled G. C. Henry to make four times as much money as he ever did on a farm and G. A. Becker, of Iowa, to earn more than he did in 22 years in the grocery business.

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Just send me your name and I will give you all the details. I will show you how you can make \$100 a week and even in your spare time \$8 to \$10 a day for a few hours' work. It means thousands of dollars to you. And you are not risking a penny. You are not agreeing to pay anything. Don't wait until someone else gets in ahead of you. Write now.

THE AMERICAN PRODUCTS CO.
Albert Mills
 President and General Manager
 7276 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Mail This NOW

Albert Mills, Pres., American Products Co., 7276 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Sir: I want to know how I can earn \$100 a week as the ZANOL representative in my locality. Send me all the facts about your money-making proposition, without cost or obligation.

Name

Address

© A.P.Co. (Please Print or Write Plainly)

SENSATIONAL OFFER!
 Usual \$5.00 Value



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Size 16x20 In. Made from any size or style photograph, snap shot, group picture, etc., you send us. Only 98¢ each. **SENT ON APPROVAL** Look among your collection of pictures or through the family album. Select a treasured picture of baby, mother, dad, grandma, a dear friend, etc. Mail it to us, and in a few days we will send you an artistic, lifelike, enlarged reproduction at the amazingly low price of only 98¢ each. **SEND NO MONEY** When portrait arrives pay only 98¢ to the mailman, plus a few cents postage. If after examination of enlargement you are not thoroughly satisfied with this wonderful bargain, return it and your money will be refunded. We'll pay postage if you prefer to send \$1.00 with your order. Same price for full length, bust, group, pet animals, holiday snapshots, or for one or more persons alone out of group pictures; Send as many pictures as you like. We guarantee safe return of your original photos. **MAIL PHOTOS NOW!** FREE! — to introduce these gorgeous Enlargements we will include an exquisitely hand painted, colored miniature reproduction of photo you send. This miniature alone is easily worth the price of enlargement. **ACT QUICK!**
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RODGER WILSON Desk 101-R
STYLE-ARCH SHOE CO., Cincinnati, Ohio

Agents \$90 a Week

Just out. New complete line of waterproof, greaseproof, stainproof aprons for everyone, and 35 other money-making rubber specialties. Direct from Akron, the Rubber City. Year-round demand. Show samples. Get orders on the spot from homes, stores, factories, shops, etc. Big Profits. Best values. Mrs. Martin W. Va., made \$30 in one day. Joe Brand, Ohio, made \$10.43 in one hour. You can do it. **FREE Outfit** to workers. No experience needed. Make money at full or spare time. We show you how. Send name and address quick for exclusive territory and **Free Outfit Offer.** **WRITE TODAY.**
KRISTEE MFG. CO., 345-Bar St., Akron, O.

Thrill Your Friends! Like a real Automatic \$1.79

Be on your Guard! Beware of holding men and toughs. Carry a "Pioneer Automatic" and protect yourself. Looks just like a real Automatic. Lots of fun scaring your friends. Made of light weight metal. Pull the trigger -- and Zip! -- it's a cigarette case.
SEND NO MONEY! Postman only \$1.79 plus 21¢ postage on delivery. Satisfaction guaranteed.
SINCERE COMPANY
 24 East 21st St., N. Y. Dep. G 195

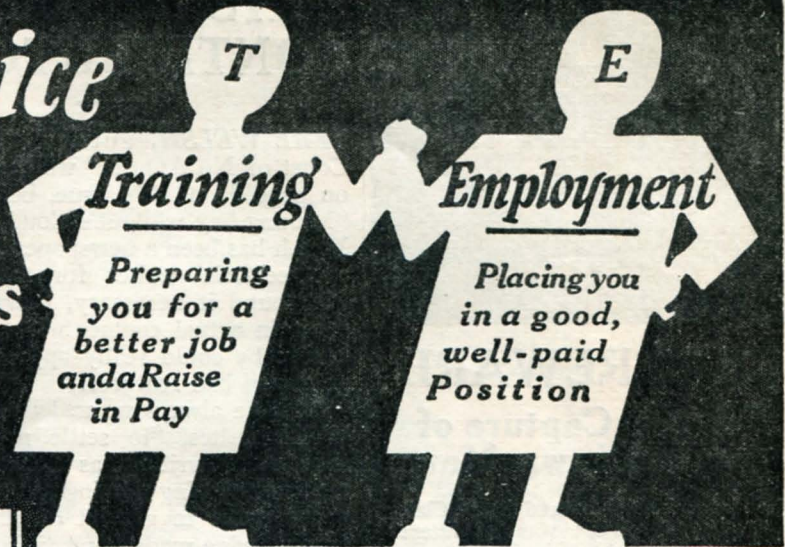
HUDSON SUPER-SIX COACH GIVEN!



We help you in every way to make large profits and we offer to provide a brand-new Hudson Super-Six Coach without any expense to you whatever. Mail the coupon for details of the plan that will give you this high-grade closed car without expense and an income of \$100 a week.

A Twin Service

for
Ambitious Men



O. C. MILLER

Director Extension Work

A Million Dollar Institution Back of This GUARANTEE

Get this straight—the American School was chartered in 1897 as an educational institution, not for profit. So you will find the same standards of service here as in the best resident schools and colleges. Over 200 of the leading Engineers, Executives and Educators of the U. S. prepared the instruction we offer. Their standing vouches for its quality. This is available to you on terms of only a few dollars a month. Write for our souvenir book, "White Magic," given FREE in celebration of our 30th Anniversary.

Free Job Service

The American School is the first in the home-study field to recognize the need of guaranteeing its courses with a money-back contract, if the training fails to accomplish the benefits you expect. Thus all risk and doubt are eliminated—either the training will help you to a better job and a raise in pay or it will cost you nothing. To better carry out this important service, we maintain a National employment department which keeps in touch with the employers of Draftsmen all over the U. S. All this without extra charge to our students and graduates.

If You Are Now Earning \$40 a Week or Less —

I guarantee to prepare you for a fine Drafting position, right in your home, in your spare time; then I guarantee to help you find such a position paying at least 50% more than you earn today, within 60 days after you complete this training, or I will refund the small amount you pay for tuition. We make this agreement to prove this instruction will make you a real Draftsman. Back of this guarantee are the entire resources and reputation of this million dollar institution.

O. C. Miller

Go into Drafting!

Learn Drafting—how to make and read plans, and the doors of opportunity in all mechanical, building, and engineering lines swing open for you! There are more well-paid Drafting jobs open today than in any other one profession or trade. There's a variety, a fascination to Drafting that will grip you. No other work is so interesting, so well paid — no other field offers equal opportunities for quick promotion.

The Draftsman is the Boss of the Works!

Destroy blue-prints and plans, and the wheels of all Industry will stop until new ones can be made. Every move of every workman on the job is controlled by the Draftsman through his plans.

Railroads, public works, buildings of a hundred sorts, machinery, electricity, automobiles—all manufacturing and construction start on the Drafting table! That's the kind of work to get into, friend. Where you have the same chance as anybody else to make a quick success!

—to prove you can learn at home in spare time!

You'll be surprised how quickly you can learn Drafting by our new one-step-at-a-time method. We start you off doing actual Drafting room jobs from the very beginning. Before you know it, you are battling out professional plans like a veteran. Get the first three lessons—the coupon brings them. Do them. Test your ability to master Drafting at home. Without cost or obligation.

3 Drafting Lessons Actually FREE!



Professional Outfit GIVEN!

You will naturally expect the American School to give you the best kind of instruments and tools with the best kind of training. This outfit is good enough to use professionally after you finish your training. Mail coupon for description.

O. C. Miller, Director Extension Work



The American School

Dept. D-5264, Drexel Avenue and 58th Street, Chicago

O. C. Miller, Director Extension Work
American School, Dept. D-5264
Drexel Ave. and 58th St., Chicago

Your offer to send me 3 lessons free and facts about the opportunities in Drafting and about your course, looks good to me. It is understood I am not obligated in any way in making this request.

Name

Address

Occupation Age



\$2500 REWARD For the Capture of An Unknown Man

TWICE he had entered the St. Clair Mansion. What was he after? Who? What was in danger?

Berteau, the famous detective, had warned St. Clair that the mysterious marauder would come again. And now—a noise in the passage! The creak of an opening door. A shot in the dark! A capture!

Is this wounded stranger the mysterious intruder? Who could tell? Yet Berteau identified the man without hesitation and won the \$2500 reward.

How did he do it? Easy enough for the Finger Print Expert. He is the specialist, the leader, the cream of detectives. Every day's paper tells of their wonderful exploits in solving mysterious crimes and convicting dangerous criminals.

More Trained Men Needed

The demand for trained men by governments, states, cities, detective agencies, corporations, and private bureaus is becoming greater every day. Here is a real opportunity for YOU. Can you imagine a more fascinating line of work than this? Often life and death depend on finger print evidence—and big rewards go to the expert. Many experts earn regularly from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per year.

Learn at Home in Spare Time

And now you can learn the secrets of this science at home in your spare time. Any man with common school education and average ability can become a Finger Print Detective in surprisingly short time.

Free Course in Secret Service

For a limited time we are making a special offer of a **Professional Finger Print Outfit, absolutely Free, and Free Course in Secret Service Intelligence.** Mastery of these two kindred professions will open a brilliant career for you.

Write quickly for fully illustrated free book on Finger Prints which explains this wonderful training in detail. Don't wait until this offer has expired—mail the coupon now. You may never see this announcement again! You assume no obligation—you have everything to gain—and nothing to lose. Write at once—address

University of Applied Science
Dept. 12-45, 1920 Sunnyside Ave. Chicago, Ill.

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE
Dept. 12-45, 1920 Sunnyside Av., Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:—Without any obligation whatever send me your new, fully illustrated, FREE book on Finger Prints and your offer of a FREE course in Secret Service Intelligence and the FREE Professional Finger Print Outfit.

Name _____
Address _____
Age _____

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

PERE WELSH, author of "The Court of No Appeal," which appears on page 33 of this issue, believes in "Making hay while it's cloudy." Mr. Welsh has been a newspaper reporter and editorial writer for ten years. He found it necessary, however, to come in actual contact with jail life before he could really appreciate its good and bad features.

"I have always wanted time," Mr. Welsh writes, "to settle myself to short-story writing, as I have been too busy making a living at the newspaper game to give it a whirl. A kindly judge made it possible for me to apply myself. He gave me plenty of time. I have made the best of it."

During his confinement, Mr. Welsh has so far written eleven stories, one of them a thirty-five-thousand-word mystery novelette, the others of approximately five thousand words each. They are practically all based upon his experiences as a newspaper man, along with the actual happenings that have come to his notice while in jail, and constitute some queer turns in the wheel of fate.

Mr. Welsh says: "It never rains when it pours." This is evident in his particular case by the good use he is making of his time.

PAT KINSELLA of the New York Police Force, was born in Ireland, and was brought to this country at the age of six. He and his younger brother, Adam, received their shields on the same day in 1904. Pat early showed an aptitude for detective work. He made a specialty of knowing the haunts of female criminals and of tracing missing girls. The only wound he ever received in the course of duty was dealt him by a woman burglar, who put a bullet through his shoulder when he arrested her in a Park Avenue apartment. Pat is considered a regular terror by the "molls" of the underworld. He worked on the case of Celia Cooney, "the bobbed-haired bandit," three years ago. You will find a sensational story taken from his experience—"Human Cargo"—on page 29.

Don't fail to read:

THE MAN WITH TOO MANY WIVES

He married one and found he had several on his hands. It is one of the features of the June issue. On the news-stands May 15th.

Secret Process Makes Caps RAIN-PROOF



Amazing! Mysterious! Fabrics treated by secret process, look just like any other fine materials, but shed water like ducks' backs. Pour water on Taylor Cap and it runs off, leaving cap absolutely dry. Can be worn in severest rain storms without danger of cold or wet. Amazing feature appeals to every man instantly.

NOW Many Men Make \$10.00 a Day

This startling new cap idea is putting fortunes in pockets of Taylor representatives. Just making simple water-proof demonstration pays big money. We need more men everywhere. Do you want this chance? Write! Send no money. We supply selling equipment, and sample of water-proof material FREE. And also make it easy for you to get cap for yourself without cost. Address: TAYLOR CAP MANUFACTURERS, Desk V-2, Cincinnati, Ohio

Here's \$12.00 EVERY DAY

Part Time Work For Men or Women
30 yr. old firm now offers Exclusive Agencies, to honest, industrious men and women. Knitted Wear for all the Family at **Factory Prices**. You carry actual samples of Sweaters, Dresses, Scarfs, etc. Big Advance Commissions. We deliver, collect, and guarantee satisfaction. Over 25 dif. styles.



Selling Outfit FREE

We give you everything to start. No experience or cash needed. Can be handled with other lines. No competition. Marion Panko made \$14 a day, part time, while learning. Our National Advertising and selling help will enable you to take orders in 4 out of 5 homes. Territory limited so write quick!

GIVEN HIRSHEY KNITTING MILLS
SAMPLE GARMENT Dept. 12, Chicago, Ill.

BIG DRY GOODS SALE

20 Yds for only \$1.97
20 Yds New Dry Goods \$1.97
Not Remnants
No piece less than 5 yards.
Nowhere else can you buy such a bargain. 20 yards of standard dry goods such as gingham, percale, linene, chambray, voile and scrim—a great big bundle for only \$1.97. Each piece long enough to make a dress. No remnants. Each bundle different. 2 Bundles (40 yards) \$3.89.
SEND NO MONEY Write today. We deliver pay postman \$1.97 and few cents delivery charges. Your money back if not satisfied.

NORMAN ROBERTS CO Dept. 7-G-83 Chicago

Big Money

SELLING TIES Made by Many
Men's Ties, beautiful silk and wool ties in scores of live, snappy patterns—new designs, or new patented SNAP-ON Bows! Show samples we furnish. See how quick men will say "I'll take a dozen" when they glimpse the patterns and styles—and when you mention the sensational low factory prices. You collect big profits in advance.

Samples FREE to You. All you do is take orders. We show you how. You invest nothing to start. No experience necessary. Work spare time if you wish. Hundreds of men making biggest money of their lives with this line. You can too. Hurry! Send name and address today for complete line of samples. FREE! Nothing to pay. No obligation.

NASH Nawco Neckwear Co., Inc. Dept. 5A, Covington, Ky.

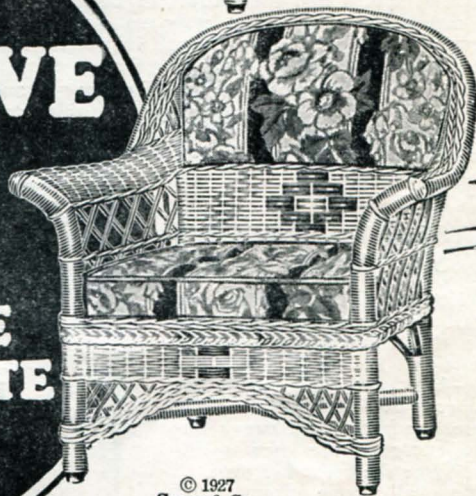
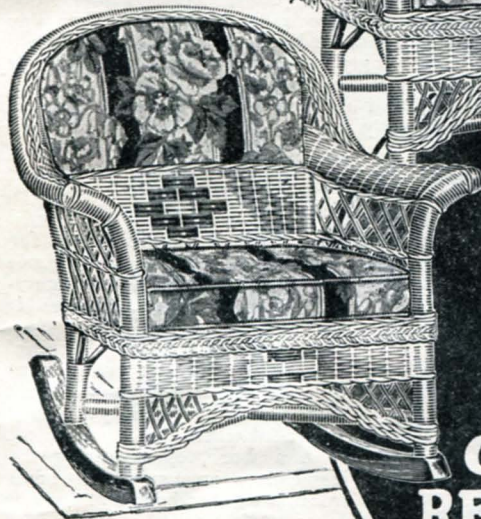
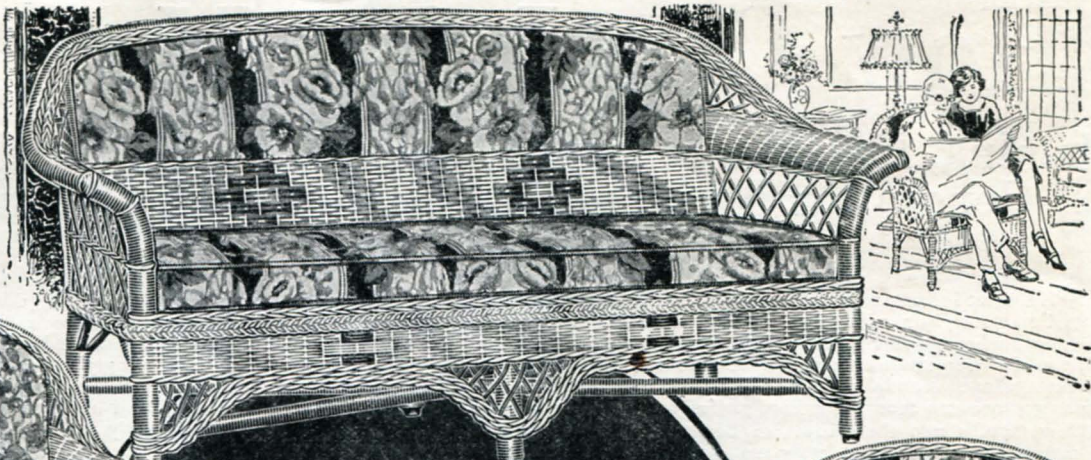
OPPORTUNITIES IN Traffic Management

Become a Traffic Expert
The opportunities in traffic management are limited only by the boundaries of the business world. The trained traffic man is in demand by transportation systems and by industrial organizations.

Three Detroit Firms Pay Their Traffic Managers Over \$20,000 a Year
Prepare for this growing, profitable profession at home in your spare time under supervision of traffic experts. Low cost; easy terms. Thru the LaSalle Problem Method you learn by doing.

Valuable 64-page booklet free. Send for it NOW. **This Book FREE!** LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 588-T, Chicago

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SPEAR
SALES**



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1/3
ON THIS FINE
REED FIBRE SUITE**

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Sending for this suite on approval places you under no more obligation to buy than calling at our store to look at it.

30 Days' FREE Trial

A Year to Pay

The new furniture fashion—the Reed Fibre Suite . . . beautiful, colorful, serviceable—as bright and cheerful as a ray of sunshine in your home. Regular \$60 value—only \$39.95 at this great sale—an actual cash saving of 1/3.

No need to pay cash. Just \$1 with order—that's all. Use for thirty days FREE—take a year to pay. Your money back if you are not satisfied, or if you change your mind, or if you can buy for less anywhere else.

How can we make such a sensational offer, you may ask? Here is the answer! We designed this suite ourselves—cut corners on costs, without cutting quality or sacrificing beauty. Then we went to a big factory—told them that we would take so many thousands of suites if they met our price. They did. Big production on one style made it possible to make the price unusually low—Result: you get this suite below dealers' prices—yes, actually below the price in any store, anywhere!

Your Money Back If You Can Buy for Less

This suite fits in anywhere—living room, bed room or sun parlor. Comfortable beyond your dreams of comfort. Just about the loveliest suite you have ever seen. Light in weight—yet remarkably strong and serviceable. Wind and weather have no effect on it. And as colorful as a rainbow—cushions of floral cretonne—glossy, ebony black and rich lacquer-red diamond decorations—the reed fibre finished in rich Baronial Brown—deep luxurious upholstery.

All 3 pieces have semi-roll arms, apron fronts, neatly bound and braided edges. Cretonne covering is floral design of rich rose, tan, blue, grey and green against wide black stripes on a background of deep warm tan.

Settee measures 56 in. wide overall, seat 20 in. deep, back 20 in. high from seat. The thickly padded, removable cushion seat rests on a spring seat support containing 18 coil springs. Rocker and chair 28 in. wide over all. The seats 18 in. by 19 in. and backs 20 in. high from seat. Six coil springs support the well padded removable seat cushions.

The suite is made of smooth, round, durable, hand-woven reed fibre, well braced hardwood frames.



Send for Big FREE Book



This book is filled from cover to cover with household treasures—bargains all of them—all sold on easy payments—sent on 30 days FREE trial—every purchase backed by a gold bond guarantee. There are wonderful bargains in furniture, rugs, curtains, stoves and everything for the home. Sent to you without obligation to buy. Mail coupon today.

Use this Reed Fibre Suite in your home for 30 days. If you are not completely satisfied, return it and we will refund your first payment and all transportation charges.

Order No. WA 970, sale price \$39.95. Terms: \$1 with order, \$3 monthly.

Nathaniel Spear
President

SPEAR & CO., Dept. M-807, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Send me at once the Reed Fibre Suite as described above. Enclosed is \$1 first payment. It is understood that, if at the end of the 30 days trial I am satisfied, I will send you \$3 monthly. Order No. WA 970, Price \$39.95. Title remains with you until paid in full.

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Send shipment to _____
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Home Furnishers to the People of America for 35 Years

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Dept. M-807

"How Can I Get Married?"

Flaming, Revealing Story of Modern Life Among the Younger Generation Answers the Question Every Normal Girl Asks Herself

THE most important event in any girl's life is her wedding. Consciously or subconsciously she looks forward to the time when she shall be a happy wife, adoring and adored. But how few ever attain that goal! A glance at the newspapers with their tales of scandal, inconstancy and divorce tells the story. Almost any one can marry but how pitifully few marry happily.

A few months ago there came to Bernarr Macfadden's desk the manuscript of a true story so amazingly revealing, so poignantly interesting that he was impressed as he has seldom been impressed by any story.

As he read its pages he felt that if every girl and woman could read it, it would do more than any other thing to help solve the greatest problem that ever arises in a woman's life—"How can I get married—happily, successfully, permanently?"

THE STORY OF THE LOVE LIVES OF SEVEN GIRLS

Written by a young matron whose name cannot be divulged, it is the intimate story of the love lives of seven American girls—her own and six other members of her social circle whose every thought, every impulse, every act she knew as intimately as she knew her own.

They all came from good families. They were all average, modern girls. They all had the same impulses, good and bad, that other girls have. Each counted upon getting married in due time, just as every normal girl counts on getting married. Each went about her search for a husband in her own way. To each the way she chose seemed to her, at the time, the best.

Yet, today, a very few years later, Inez is dead, a suicide—Flora is in an insane asylum—Olive, also, is dead after a period of helpless invalidism—Masie is unhappily married, miserable, disillusioned, scorned by the man she loved—Rose, Blanche and Molly are happy wives of splendid men.

Why did the marriage hopes of four out of seven girls go on the rocks?

Why did only three girls out of seven realize their dreams of married bliss?

Why could not all seven have contracted happy marriages as did Molly, Blanche and Rose?

Molly knows now that they all could have married happily if they had known then the facts about life, and the world and men which they later learned by terrible experience.

She knows that because they had never been properly informed, some among the seven made practically every mistake it is possible for a girl to make.

As she looks back over her girlhood she realizes that she made grievous mistakes herself and that it is only by chance that she escaped so easily; that had Fate not been kind she, too, might occupy an early grave as do Inez and Olive, or like Masie be enduring a living hell.

And because she believes that if every girl knew the things she knows the number of happy marriages would be increased many fold, Molly has bared her own life and the lives of six other girls, violated what in a lesser cause might be considered sacred confidences in writing "How Can I Get Married?" which is, perhaps, the most amazing story ever published, so that you and thousands of other girls may learn the real truth about marriage and the terrible mistakes that can be made in the search for and choice of a life mate.

Do not feel that "How Can I Get Married?" is a book filled with platitudes and advice. There is not a platitude nor a line of direct advice in its nearly three hundred pages. It is a story pure and simple, an amazingly revealing story of modern life among the younger generation, a story shot with the smiles and tears, with the tragedies, and happiness of these girls whom you come to know as thoroughly as though they were your own intimate friends.

YOU CAN PROFIT BY THE MISTAKES THEY MADE

As you read the series of events that result in ruined lives for Inez, Flora, Olive and Masie you will understand the inevitability of the dreadful results that followed.

As you observe Rose, Blanche, and Molly strive for and eventually attain gloriously happy marriage you will see clearly why they succeeded where the others failed.

In a word, by acquiring the tremendous amount of first-hand information her book contains you can avoid the mistakes they made, and apply to yourself the principles that brought success and lifelong happiness to some of them.

FIRST EDITION NOW READY

So deeply was Mr. Macfadden impressed with the power of Molly's marvelous story to enormously increase happy marriage that he made immediate arrangements for its publication. The first edition is now ready for the countless thousands of girls and women into whose lives its coming will be such a blessing. If you are a young woman of marriageable age, if you are already married without having acquired the happiness you expected, entirely aside from its flaming interest as a story, can you afford to let pass this opportunity to secure the information that may mean the difference between happiness and misery?

Priced at only \$2.97, it looks as though the entire first edition will be snapped up within a few days. Therefore do not delay. A coupon is provided below for your convenience. Sign it, enclose \$2.97 or indicate if you wish sent C. O. D. Mail today. Orders will be filled in the order in which they are received.

MAILED UNDER PLAIN WRAPPER

Because he realizes that many women and girls hesitate to admit their interest in marriage, Mr. Macfadden has issued instructions that all copies of "How Can I Get Married?" be shipped under plain wrapper.

Macfadden Publications, Inc.
Dept. T. D. 5, 1926 Broadway, New York City.

Enclosed find \$2.97 for which please send me postpaid a copy of the new book entitled, "How Can I Get Married?" It is understood that it is to be forwarded under plain cover.

Name.....

Address.....

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

(If it is more convenient you can have shipment made C. O. D. You pay postman \$2.97, plus postage, when he delivers the book at your door.)
Canadian and foreign orders, cash in advance.

Read These Chapter Heads

I Think About Marriage
They Didn't Tell Me
"Shame on You!"
What Is "Romance"?
"Oh, What a Romeo!"
Why Marry at All?
I Think I Am in Love!
"Private" Lessons in a
Girls' School
No, That Wasn't Love
So That's "Petting!"
"My Bad, Bad Sheik!"
"You've Got to Be a
'Good Indian!'"
Lo! the Poor "Good
Indian!"
Am I Fit to Marry?
That "Sex Appeal"
Bunk!
Sexual Suicide!
I'm in Love Again—
Perhaps!
"December and May"
House Parties and Souse
Parties
A Life Ruined

Sports and "Sports"
"It's Time You Were
Married!"
Mother Says, "Be Shy"
Aunt Says, "Go After
'Em!"
What is a "He" Man?
Beyond the Altar
Lies—?
The Man I Love!
I am Scorned!
Engaged—On the
Rebound!
What Sort of a Man Is
He?
"And the Woman Still
Pursues Him"
Grandma Says, "Be
Yourself!"
I Learn the Great
Secret!
My Own True Love at
Last!
I Say "Yes" and "I
Will"
What I Think of
Marriage

NEW KIND OF TIRES

DOUBLE MILEAGE
Mellinger Melenium Cured
15,000 mile tires—shock
proof—handsomest most durable tires made, Cord
and Balloons. New process prevents rubber rot.
Amazing guarantee. Sensational low prices.

AGENTS 4000 car owners in your territory—
\$200,000 business awaiting you.
Cash profits, no expense, collection, delivery, adjustment.
Garman, Mich., makes \$48.50 in 2 days; Vernal, Miss.,
sells 25 tires first week. Hundreds double their income
first few weeks in spare time.

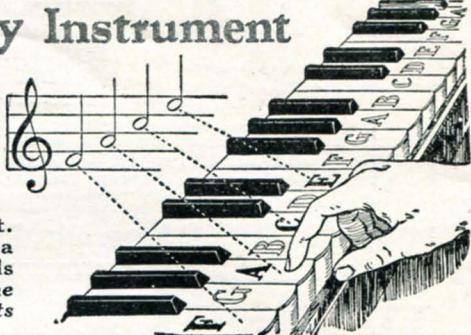
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and tires for yourself if you
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In a Few Months
This Delightful
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Quickest because natural and pleasant.
Grateful students say they learn in a
fraction of the time old, dull methods
required. You play direct from the
notes. And the cost is only a few cents
a lesson.

LEARNING music is no longer difficult. If
you can read the alphabet, you can
now quickly learn to play your favorite
instrument! A delightful new method has made
it positively easy to become a capable per-
former within a comparatively few months.
And the cost is only a fraction of what people
used to spend on the old, slow methods!

You don't need a private teacher, this new
way. You study at home, in the privacy of
your own room, with no one to interrupt or
embarrass you. Practice a lot or a little, as you
like—and enjoy every minute of it!

U. S. School course is largely due to a newly
perfected method that makes reading and play-
ing music almost as simple as reading aloud
from a book. You simply can't go wrong. First,
you are told how a thing is done, then a picture
shows you how, then you do it yourself and
hear it. No private teacher could make it any
clearer. The lessons come to you by mail at
regular intervals. They consist of complete
printed instructions, diagrams, all the music you
need, and music paper for writing out test exer-
cises. And if anything comes up which is not
entirely plain, you can write to your instructor
and get a full, prompt, personal reply!

You Needn't Know a Thing About Music to Take This Pleasant, Rapid Course

Even if you don't know one
note from another, you can easily
grasp each lesson of this course.
The things you must know are
presented in such a concise,
graphic way, that even a child
can understand them—yet not a
minute is lost on unnecessary de-
tails. You instantly "get" the
real meaning of musical notation,
time, automatic finger control
and harmony.

The lessons are delightfully
human. You like them. Even
scale practice, the old bugaboo,
is reduced to a minimum and made interesting!
And almost before you realize your progress,
you begin playing real tunes and melodies!

**Learn to Play by
Note**

Piano	'Cello
Organ	Harmony & Composition
Violin	Sight Singing
Drums and Traps	Ukulele
Plectrum	Guitar
Banjo	Hawaiian Steel Guitar
5 String Banjo	Harp
Tenor Banjo	Cornet
Mandolin	Piccolo
Clarinet	Trombone
Flute	Saxophone
Voice and Speech Culture	Automatic Finger Control
Piano Accordion	

No Tricks or Stunts—You Learn from "Regular" Music

Yes, the new way teaches you to play from
notes, just like the best musicians do. There
are no trick "numbers," no "memory stunts."
When you finish the U. S. School of Music
course, you can pick up any piece of regular
printed music and understand it! Think
what that means. You'll be able to read
music, popular and classic, and play it from
the notes. You'll acquire a life-long ability to
please your friends, amuse yourself, and, if
you like, make money.

The Surest Way to Be Popular

If you play, you are always in demand. Many
invitations come to you. Amateur or-
chestras offer you wonderful after-
noons and evenings. And you meet
the kind of people you have always
wanted to know.

PROOF!

"I am making excellent
progress on the 'cello—and
owe it all to your easy les-
sons."—George C. Lauer,
Belfast, Maine.

"I am now on my 12th
lesson and can already play
simple pieces. I knew nothing
about music when I
started."—Ethel Harnish-
feger, Fort Wayne, Ind.

"I have completed only
20 lessons and can play
almost any kind of music I
wish. My friends are as-
tonished. I now play at
church and Sunday School."
—Turner B. Blake, Harris-
burg, Ill.

"Your lessons are the
easiest way I know of learn-
ing to play. I am delighted
with them."—Mary P. Wil-
iams, Gest, Texas.

Never before
have you had such
a chance as this to
become a musician
—a really good
player on your
chosen instrument
— without the
drudging and ex-
pense that were
such drawbacks be-
fore.
The amazing
success of stu-
dents who take the

Whether you take up piano, violin, 'cello,
organ, saxophone, or any other in-
strument, you find that every single thing
you need to know is explained in
detail. And the explanation is always
practical. Little theory—plenty of ac-
complishment. That's why students
of this course get ahead twice as fast
—three times as fast—as those who
study old-time plodding methods!
Read some of the letters on this
page and see for yourself. They
don't guarantee that every one can
become a good player in three or four
months; but they are written by
people who didn't know any more
about playing when they started the
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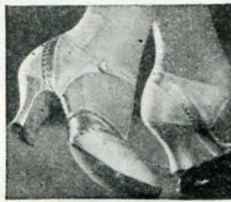
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are caused by the weakening of a vital set of muscles, says Orthopedic Science



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Test it 10 days, if not amazed and delighted your money returned. Go to druggist, shoe store or chiropodist. If they can't supply you use coupon below and pay postman. Send for free book on foot and leg troubles.

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Stops Falling Hair—Ends Dandruff—Makes Hair Grow

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26 Pcs. SILVER SERVICE

26 Piece Silver Set

A silver service that will give you years of satisfaction. A pleasing pattern and popular polished finish. Each piece heavily silver plated on nickel silver base. Set consists of 6 knives, 6 forks, 6 dessert spoons, 6 teaspoons, 1 sugar shell, 1 butter knife. Packed in convenient flannel roll as illustrated.



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"Instantaneous Personal Magnetism," just completed after fifty years of research and study, is now off the press and ready for you. Edmund Shaftesbury, founder of this interesting system, devoted a lifetime to it. Such men and women as Queen Victoria, Cardinal Gibbons, Lord Beaconsfield, Gladstone, Henry Ward Beecher were among his friends and pupils.

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It not only tells exactly how to accomplish these things—it tells how to accomplish many of them without delay—*instantly!* How to develop your mental, passional and personal magnetism!

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"I am indebted to Shaftesbury for all that I am in this world."

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"I would not give up what Shaftesbury has taught me for \$100,000."

Does Crime Ever Pay?

By George William Wilder

MOST of us want more than we have of this world's goods. Most of us want more fame, more power, more prestige than is our lot. Yet most of us are content to fight along "playing cricket." Sometimes one of us steps 'over the line—and commits an act that raises again a vital question: Does crime ever pay?

Consider the case of Marion Meyers.

Nineteen years old, at an age when life with all its possibilities stretched before her—attractive—enjoying good health—Marion Meyers was enrolled in the University of South Dakota. She was taking the regular course in the department of arts and science. Ambition stirred her to make the most of her opportunities.

In her classes were daughters of wealthy parents—and girls earning their way through, as was Marion.

The struggle became too great. Marion could not raise the money to pay for her second semester. Work as she would, connive as she would, she lacked \$24 of the amount she needed.

She weighed in the balance her opportunities for training herself to battle with life, and the silver-tongued voice of temptation that suggested a way out. She succumbed.

Going to a garage, she stole some tools. From the plant of a metal company she took an electric drill. With these, she was ready for her objective—the vault of the First National Bank at Vermillion, South Dakota. Through a rear window of the bank, she made her entrance. Before the vault door she deposited her tools, took off her hat and coat, and prepared for the one task that was to give her her chance in life. The striking of a clock electrified the terror in her heart and she fled, leaving her hat and the stolen tools. Not far away, panic left her and she returned to get her hat—to go on with the job.

It was too late.

A watchman at the bank, discovering the tools, notified the police. When Marion Meyers got back to the scene of her proposed crime, she was taken into custody by upholders of the law.

Suppose Marion Meyers' attempt at theft had carried through successfully? Suppose she had completed her education, had become a great artist, a great scientist, a great social leader. Would her crime have been justified? Would it have paid?

Does crime *ever* pay?

Youthful Beauty can be Yours

by JEANNETTE DE CORDER
Specialiste en Beauté

AN amazing improvement in your looks is the immediate result of this special twin treatment for beauty.

So perfectly do the shades of these twin toilettries—Pompeian Beauty Powder and Pompeian Bloom—accord with the tints and tones of the natural skin, that their combined use gives fresh, youthful beauty—*instantly*.

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Madame: I enclose 10c (a dime, coin preferred)
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*Youthful Beauty
—instantly*

Pompeian

Beauty Powder and Bloom



"And when you get up in the game, there's no danger at all of the police butting in on you"

REVELATIONS of a *V A M P I R E*

There's many a man who could have saved a fortune, and many a woman whose home need not have been wrecked—if this sensational human document had been placed in their hands before the fatal crash came

I MIGHT as well say at the outset that I am an illegitimate member of society. Men, those of the nighthawk variety that frequent Broadway's famous cabarets, call me clever; others call me dangerous; and still others shun me as if I were a venomous serpent; but the latter are in the minority.

I am one of the few women who can keep a secret, but that is my profession. I get paid for it. If I were to tell publicly all that I knew, a short millennium would arrive for

By "MARGARET"

the newspapers. Undoubtedly they would be able within a short time to run flaring headlines as to how Mr. So-and-So of Who's Who prestige was being sued for divorce by his wife on charges of infidelity.

I don't work. My life is an endless régime of pleasure and gaiety. Yet my yearly income is about \$100,000, besides presents in jewelry, expensive clothes, furs, entertainments, motor cars, and so on. I live in a lavishly furnished

apartment in one of New York's most exclusive hotels. I have a maid, a Japanese butler, and a closed car with a chauffeur. Of clothes I always have more than I can wear; I am always among the first to sport the newest Paris creations on Fifth Avenue. Everything is paid for with men's money—money that I have no legal right to.

I was born in a small town in Idaho. My girlhood was far from being a happy one. My father was a ne'er-do-well, a square peg in a round hole. Being a distant scion of a good and once wealthy family, he never permitted ordinary manual labor to insult him, so to speak. The only things that he was proficient in were drinking, smoking, swearing, and fault finding; he ran our home like a reformatory.

My mother—poor dear! When I visualize her, it still brings a lump into my throat. With her elegant beauty, she was one of the town's belles when she was a girl.

"Just wait until she gets the glad rags on"

And when my father married her, he promised her everything that money could buy; but about all that she got was disillusionment and a lot of hard work that sent her to an early grave.

Our home was always one of poverty. There were four of us children, two boys and two girls. One of my brothers was the oldest, I was next. With father considering work a vice, we always had no more than enough to eat to keep from starving. I remember that in the wintertime we ate only twice a day. Mother always worked, taking in washing, to get money with which to buy us food. Often

my brother and I called for washing before we went to school in the morning, and again delivered it after school. But father never seemed to appreciate what mother did; simply, he was at war with his destiny, so to speak. Most of the time he was quarreling with mother about money, and about his incessant debaucheries.

By the time I was fifteen I had developed into a reckless, devil-may-care rowdy. I was constantly in scraps with the boys in school, always coming out second best. And at this age, for a trivial offense with a boy of my own age, I was expelled from school. Mother didn't even scold me much, for I came in mighty handy to help her with the washings.

Having inherited a goodly portion of my mother's beauty, the dolling-up habit became an obsession with me at an early age. The few clothes that I did have to wear, I was always



fixing and arranging this way and that way so they'd give me a good show-off. Particularly did I dally with my hair, piling it high on

my head and using the curling iron for additional effects tending to make me look bizarrely pretty.

The straw that broke the proverbial camel's back in my case came two years later, when I was seventeen. Mother died. Vividly I still remember her laying in a cheap little coffin in the parlor the day of the funeral. Her face was pale and worn, yet it could not rob her of all of the beauty that

had always been hers. Her hands resembled bird's claws; they were red, rough, and emaciated from the hard work that she had done.

Strange, but somehow I felt it in me that I would never be able to get along with father or even tolerate him after mother was gone. So then and there I made up my mind to run away from home. Chicago became my goal—why, I don't know even to-day. It was with mother's wedding dowry that I accomplished it. Upon her marriage to father, her folks had given her seventy-five dollars. She never had told my father about it, but had kept it carefully hidden away. The day before she died she told me where she had hidden it. When we came home from the funeral, I secretly searched for it, and when I found it and fingered the precious green paper, my ecstasy knew no bounds. Now it was Chicago for me! If I had not had that money, it is extremely doubtful whether I would have attempted to run away or made a success of my get-away, as I did.

I slept with my sister upstairs, and being afraid that she would waken while I was getting ready, I carefully rolled my few spare clothes and other things that I held dear into a bundle. This I did during the day. We didn't own a suitcase. Then I wrote a note. All I wrote was:

Good-by. Please don't look for me, because I am going far away, and you will never find me, anyway.

MARGARET.

So far as I know, they followed the instructions to the letter.

That night, when I thought that they were all sound asleep I got up, dressed quickly, put the note on the bureau, and then I slipped quietly downstairs, with my bundle of worldly goods, and out of the house. I vividly remember the beauty and loveliness of that eventful night. It was spring-time—May. The sky was brilliantly bespangled with stars. The still air, only casually disturbed by soft breezes, was perfumed with the fragrance of bursting buds.

Already I was a little worldly wise, as will be apparent presently. The train left at one o'clock. For fear that I would meet someone who'd recognize me, I didn't take the street in my route to the station. Instead, I cut across vacant lots, through dark alleys, and over fences, the latter sending me on my way with two rents in my skirt; nor did I go into the depot, but waited near by in a dark place until the train pulled up. I did not buy a ticket, but paid the conductor on the train so that I could not be traced by my ticket.

I admit that I was pretty much frightened when I got off in Chicago the next morning. For some time, with my bundle of clothes beside me, I sat in the station. At intervals I got up and walked to the entrance and stared spell-bound at the mad rush of the traffic. Having never seen

anything like it before, I was fairly dazed. Far from me to try and venture across the street; instinctively I felt that I would be mangled under those innumerable wheels before I got halfway across.

I don't know how long I would have stayed in that station, had not a very friendly lady presently engaged me in conversation. When I had communicated my plight to her, she told me a little about the city and referred me to a boarding-house that was kept by a distant kin of hers. But not until she had given me a most accurate description of her friend's place and promised to take me across the



"Glad rags?" I didn't know what the words meant until—

street, was I willing to stir from my stronghold, the station. So the lady led me to the curb, then across the street, and then she put me on a street-car with instructions to the conductor where to let me off.

I found the boarding-house all right. Board and room cost seven dollars a week. I paid two weeks in advance.

The first week at the boarding-house, the future looked pretty black to me. At times I was honestly sorry that I had

left home. I was now frightened by the thought of what would happen to me when my money gave out.

The first day I stayed in my room. But on the second I ventured forth and uptown, just to look at the traffic and get used to the ways of Greater Chicago. The thought that I would have to get a job of some kind was constantly on my mind. The third day I again went uptown as before, but this time I spent the time walking about and looking in the windows of the various shops, offices, and so forth for "Help Wanted" signs. I saw a number of them, but of course I was much

sauntered forth on my job-conquering quest, full of confidence.

Of course, not having taken a careful mental note of the streets the previous day, I found only two of the dozen or more places that I had seen the signs in the day before; but I found others.

A damper was soon put on my arrogant spirits. Who wanted to hire an ignorant, uneducated, and awkward brat like me? Of the many people that I interviewed, both male and female, all looked not so much at my physiognomy as they did at my clothes, a thing that gave me



"My husband! Good heavens! What shall I do? If he finds you here—"

too timid to go in and inquire, but I made up my mind that I would do so the next day—in other words, seek the prey one day and conquer it on the next.

So the next day, after spending a whole hour before the mirror preening myself up to look like a peacock in the way of fixing my hair and seeing that my garb set right, I

secret pride; anyway, I was a clever dresser, I thought to myself. I went into one building where they wanted a bookkeeper, or a secretary, I have forgotten which. Why

I went into such a place and applied for work, I don't know. Now I blush every time I think of my unsophistication. The only logical explanation that I can think of is that I had a natural aversion for everything in which washing anything was concerned, such as restaurant or housework—about the only thing I was fitted for then—because I had had more than my share of it at home; and as for the higher and finer work, I thought that I could learn it. I recall going into one office where the man in charge, after giving my clothes a critical once-over, asked me to recite the letters of the alphabet as they followed each other. I tried my darndest: "A, B, C, D, E, . . . G, H, F, K, L, . . ." and I was in a nervous jumble. The man had a hearty laugh at my expense; and with his guffaws ringing in my ears I made a hasty exodus.

THEN, one day, when I was just about desperate, I met Laura. She roomed at my boarding-place. Here's where I first got into bad company, but from that day I formed a friendship with Laura that was to last for life. My spirits sank decidedly when the sophisticated, red-haired Laura told me peremptorily that there was no work in my line for an uneducated Jane as I was in Chicago; but just the same she could get me a good paying job in her line. She told me that she was a daily-grister. Of course I didn't know what a daily-grister was.

weeks or even months, as the occasion demands; and in this way she gets her grounds for a charge of infidelity. And for these services on her part the professional "other woman" commands a salary ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 a week. Thus, if she has a mind inclined to thrift, she can easily lay money aside for "rainy" days, because during this time she gets all her amusements, eats, and so on gratis from her daddy. But it rarely happens that she has to look around or pay for her main necessities, because, once popular, she finds that there are always men to be found who are willing to stake her to high-priced dinners, clothes, and jewelry for the privilege of having her to "step out" with.

Third, and last, is the pensioner. This is the top pinnacle of the game, and we are then considered the aristocrats of the profession; we are as good as retired on a salary or "pension." In other words, the indiscretions of some of our affairs with men have reached the point where the stigma of them will remain with the perpetrator for the rest of his natural life, and for secrecy he must pay "hush" money, sums all the way from \$100 to \$5,000 a month, whereas exposure would mean ruin, both domestically and financially.

TO get back to my story, I confess that I was pretty much shocked when Laura told me what her "job" meant, I had already heard about reform schools, prisons, and the

"AT 7.15 I drew off my clothes. And my friend kept his word. There was a knock on my door. I opened it cautiously, and there he stood. He was reluctant to come in when he saw——"

Figuratively speaking, there are three types of vamps. There is the daily-grister, the high-baller, and the pensioner. The grister is the lowest type. She takes whatever she can get, from working the well-known badger game on the pious old deacon from Twin Oakes, Missouri (who is only human under the skin, and so is set on having a little "step-out" with a pretty lady once in his life), to telling a hard-luck story to the unwary boobs from the country who come to see the sights of the big town, and acting as a professional divorce co-respondent if she has the "looks" and the spunk. But this "part" is rare for her type. It comes mostly in the high-baller's line.

WHEN the vamp has advanced to the high-baller's class, she is considered lucky by the lesser lights; she is through with the hardest, roughest, and most dangerous part of the game. While a high-baller's earnings may not be large at times, she generally has a steady income. She has managed to "carry on" with men—sugar daddies, as they are known professionally—next to those in the Who's Who class, and has managed to get them into compromising positions for which they are compelled to pay her "hush" money, presents in jewelry, clothes, and take her to theaters and other places of amusement—eats included, naturally.

Among other things, she is not infrequently in demand as a professional divorce co-respondent. In New York a woman cannot get a divorce unless it is for infidelity on the part of her husband. If a woman's husband is only cruel, non-supporting, or merely deserts her, she cannot obtain a divorce from him on those grounds. So what does she do—and often her hubby, if he is favorably inclined to getting rid of her, is a party to this scheme—but hire a high-baller to live with her husband in an apartment for a number of

like. But when I told Laura of my fears, she just sat back and laughed at me.

"No, dearie," she said; then: "It ain't quite that bad. If you use your noodle a little, there's no danger of getting in 'dutch' with the cops. And listen, dearie," she said emphatically, "you've got the looks. Chances are two to one you won't stay down very long. And when you get up in the game, there's no danger at all of the police butting in on you."

"Looks!" The word struck me forcefully. So all it required was beauty. One could easily rise to the top, and then there'd be no danger of the law interfering. And I was pretty.

I mulled this over with no small amount of pride and egotism as Laura went on to tell that she had already been a low-type vamp for five years, and the only reason why she had not made a success in the way of advancement was because she did not have what the men called beauty. Her biggest bane, she thought, was her fiery red hair.

She told me that at one time she had sacrificed two hundred dollars to a singing and dancing school to learn those arts, so that she could find employment in the better class cabarets patronized by Chicago's rich men; but all the managers had turned her down with the laconic explanation that, while she might have the goods otherwise, she simply didn't have the looks.

THEN she explained how, when one was pretty and popular, wealthy men would be more than glad to pay for the privilege of being in a good-looking girl's company. After that I was willing to listen to Laura.

For fully a week, then, I became Laura's devout pupil while she initiated me into the arts (*Continued on page 76*)

The Great Carleton

*While footlights blazed, while that vast audience
an assassin's bullet, fired from the wings, cut her*

Dale was gazing directly into the chalked face of the more agile of the clown acrobats



By JOHN FERETTI, City Detective,

"All right. I can get a flash at her and still be on duty by nine."

Again I rested my elbows beside Mac's on the railing at the rear of the orchestra chairs. My companion, an inspector for the Fire Department, meeting me on Broadway, had coaxed me into the Carleton to see this particular vaudeville act. His duties compelled him to visit the theaters in the Furious Forties nightly. When he became enthusiastic concerning a performer, I knew she—or he—must be way above the average. I was certain to get a good look at the girl he was boosting, for we were only fifteen rows from the stage. The Carleton is little more than a bandbox of an affair, though it books only the cream of the varieties and caters to those who will pay well for their entertainment.

My eyes again sought the stage. To the accompaniment of a crashing jazz melody, two chalk-faced clowns in grotesque costumes—the "Lazari Brothers," according to the stage cards—were completing a clever acrobatic turn, the smaller of them performing neat, double summersaults from the shoulders of his stockier companion.

As they disappeared, following an encore bow, the orchestra ceased playing, the border and footlights were dimmed, and a spotlight in the balcony flashed a great circle upon the plush curtains which hid the greater portion of the stage. Then, slowly, as the plaintive notes from a marvelously well played violin percolated through the hushed auditorium, the drapes were drawn aside, revealing the musician, a handsome youth all in black, at one side of the stage. At the rear, in the very center, stood a cabinet, also curtained. Suddenly a brilliant light from directly above it, shone down.

The curtains parted, revealing a slip of a girl, blonde, pretty, and as dainty as a bit of Dresden. Dressed in ballet costume, she stood with her hands above her head, poised upon her toes at the top of the tiny stairway leading to the stage; then she turned slowly toward the front.

"What was that, Mac?" I asked. The music of the violin had sunk to a mere whisper of melody, and I thought I caught a low, dull sound from behind the footlights.

But he had no time to answer. The dancer's face suddenly was contorted in agony. For an instant she stiffened, then slumped, pitching head first down the stairs. With a cry the musician dropped his violin, rushed to his partner, and partly lifted her. I noted the dancer's body was inert, her eyes closed. And I saw something more.

A crimson stain showed upon her breast and bodice! The girl had been injured seriously. My guess was she had been shot. Anyway, it was up to me to learn the truth. As I ran to a side aisle and made for the stage, I noted

"I MUST be going, Mac," I said, looking at my watch. "My trick begins at nine, and it's almost that now. Got an assignment to look over the cabarets to see if any 'wanted' crooks are parked there."

"Oh, wait just five minutes, Jack. That dancing team I brought you in to see, Gene and Dale, is on next. I tell you, the girl is the prettiest and cleverest dancer in town."

Theater MYSTERY

held its breath watching Gene, premiere danseuse, down. Who would want to kill her? Why?

as told to GRANT LINCOLN

the dropping curtains were shutting out the performers and stage hands who had rushed from the wings, and sensed that the orchestra was playing furiously to drown the cries from the frightened audience, most of whom were upon their feet.

But through my brain one thought kept pounding. The weapon from which the shot had been fired had been equipped with a silencer. Only the theater's splendid acoustics had enabled me to hear the significant dull snap when the revolver was discharged.

Crashing through the door to the rear of the boxes, I rounded the big electrical switchboard and headed for the stage. In the shadows between two wings of

of scared-faced and chattering performers and men of the stage crew, who were carrying the dancer away toward one side. The violinist—the white cuffs



scenery I stumbled and fell upon one knee, over a table heaped with costumes. As a stage-hand standing near helped me to my feet, I saw that the litter upon the table was the grotesque costumes with which the acrobatic clowns had made frequent changes during their act.

Once on the stage proper, I found myself facing a crowd

**"Damn you, Lazari,
you killed her—Gene,
my wife."**

of his costume were stained with blood—followed, supported by two husky "grips."

"What in hell do you want?" came in a rasping tone from

behind me. I whirled to face a big man whose red, agonized face dripped perspiration.

"You the manager?"

"Yes."

"I'm a detective, Police Headquarters. Was out in front. I'll take charge here. Send somebody for the cop on post. Don't let anyone else leave by the rear door."

"All right. Here you, Steve," to the man who had helped me in the wings and followed close, probably because he had recognized me as a stranger and wanted to make certain I had a right there, "go and bring a policeman. Pat, see the doorman lets nobody out. Now, Gus," to another assistant, "for God's sake go out there and quiet those people. I can't. Tell 'em it's nothing; Gene just fainted. Damn it, who's the next act? Snap into it. Get right on."

I PAID no further heed to him, but pushed my way to the rear of the stage, where the girl had been placed on a couch. The light from the diminutive "greenroom" shone full upon her and those near. Her partner, stunned and dazed, crouched at her side, alternately patting and breathing upon her hands, as if to coax back the life which a glance told me had gone forever.

Just then a man in evening clothes was pushed forward by the manager. "I'm a doctor," he said. The violinist rose dully and stepped aside. The physician's work was completed in seconds. "I'm sorry. I can't help." He took a scarf from the shoulders of a woman performer and placed it across the face of the dead dancer. Her partner heard. He lowered his chin upon his chest and moaned. His hands clenched. But he did not speak. As the doctor turned away, I drew him aside. "I'm Detective Feretti. Please speak low."

"I understand. She died instantly. A shot from a revolver. It must have been fired from the wings. The shot went straight. She must have stooped forward to go down the steps. It struck her above the left breast and reached her heart or very near it. But I didn't hear a report."

"I was in front and didn't hear a real report either. Please do me a favor, Doctor. Telephone to Inspector Sullivan, at Headquarters, and tell him about this. Say I'll report in a few minutes. Ask him to send a couple of finger-print men, and to notify the Medical Examiner's office."

He flashed me a searching glance, then shut his lips hard as if to hold back a question. "I'll do it at once. I'll use the telephone in the front office."

AS he turned to leave the stage. I focused my attention on the violinist, still standing dumb and motionless, surrounded by fellow players and some of the stage-hands. I sensed that the cries out front had ceased, that some one was speaking from the stage, and that a team of wide-eyed, trembling girls stood in the wings, ready to carry on with the show.

All this had taken place in a very few minutes. But to me it seemed ages. This was my first murder case since being regularly assigned to the Detective Bureau, and I was desperately anxious to begin questioning; to try to learn something which would give support to a theory I held concerning the murder, a suspicion which did not dovetail with what the doctor just had said. Circumstances had forced a brief delay, but it was just as well. I wanted official help, some one I could depend upon to let none get away before being questioned.

At that moment two men in uniform, whom I knew, pushed their way through the little knot about the couch.

"There'll be more of the boys in a minute, Feretti," said one.

"All right, Rooney. You stick with me. Scatter this crowd till we see where we're at. Gans, you take the stage door and let nobody out unless I say the word."

As the latter hurried away, the violinist appeared suddenly to regain his senses. His head snapped up. His hands clenched, and his eyes, which seemed fairly to burn with hate, moved slowly over those about him, seeking some one. Then he halted. I looked in the same direction. Dale was gazing directly into the chalked face of the more agile of the clown acrobats.

"Damn you, Lazari, you killed her—Gene, my wife. You couldn't get her, so you shot her, you dirty, sneaking rat!"

Like a flash he hurled himself upon the other, who had begun to back away when the violinist's eyes first focused upon him. The two crashed to the planks in a struggling mass. Rooney and I tore them apart, but not until Dale's fingers had reached the acrobat's throat. With bulging eyes

and protruding tongue he slunk behind the policeman, while several stage-hands and I were forced to use our utmost strength to hold our man and force him into the greenroom.

"Bring that fellow in here, Rooney." Assisted by some of the performers, the frightened and trembling clown was dragged inside. I beckoned his brother to follow, then kicked the door shut.

"What's your name?"

"Lazari—Joe Lazari. This is my brother, Mike. He was in the wings with me. He can tell you I didn't do it."

"Shut up! Now, Dale, calm yourself. Tell me why you charged this man with the shooting."

"Because he did it. He's been trying to take my wife from me for months. She had no use for him. When we were playing the same bills on the Western wheel, I beat him up because he wouldn't let her alone. It was no use. He just wouldn't behave. Finally she got so nervous she couldn't work right, so we canceled and came back East."

"But I wouldn't harm her," Lazari interrupted, his tone a whine. "I loved her so much—" Rooney clapped a hand over his mouth and shook him into silence.

"A month ago," Dale continued, keeping his eyes from the accused, "our agent managed to get us bookings on this circuit. We gave our first New York show last week at the Casino Palace. Gene—" He paused for a moment and tried to brush away the tears which streamed from his eyes. "The act went so big the Carleton sent for us. I didn't know the Lazaris were in the city; not until rehearsal Sunday. They'd been booked to fill in for an act that had gone sick. When I saw them on the stage I was ready to cancel, just to get rid of Joe.

"BUT—well, I couldn't afford to. By leaving the Western wheel we lost a lot of time. We needed the work. I warned him to keep away from my wife. He only laughed. Then I went to the dressing-room, but—my wife hadn't arrived yet. She came in pretty soon, though, white and trembling, almost ready to faint. I guessed, of course, she'd seen Joe. But she wouldn't say so, or much of anything. I suggested that we quit, and she refused, saying we needed the money. I guess what she was most afraid of was that I'd have another fight with him. By and by she got her nerve back, and we decided to do our very best all week, knowing the prestige of making good at the Carleton would

"THIS mutt is trying to shield his brother . . . Joe Lazari's had a revolver in his dressing room all week . . . He said he'd get Dale if he ever hit him again."

"The clown suddenly dropped to his knees and—"



"Joe grabbed her and tried to kiss her. She slapped his face, jerked away, and——"

get us more bookings on the big time. She promised not to worry about Lazari, but I kept close to her and saw that he kept his distance—until to-night."

"Yes, I kept away." The clown pushed before me, waving his arms excitedly. "To-night my brother and I just stayed in the wings to watch the act. He can tell you. All week I didn't even speak to her——"

"You're a liar!" The words came from a stocky stage-hand, who stepped before the clown, shaking his fist. "Now, Mr. Detective, get me. I was in the wings when these Lazaris came off, ready to help them carry their costumes to their dressing-room. Dale was across stage, waiting for his cue. Gene started to push past us toward the cabinet.

when this Joe grabbed her and tried to kiss her. She slapped his face, jerked away and——"

I stepped between the clown, who suddenly appeared as if about to collapse, and Dale, who hunched himself for a spring.

"Is that true?" I shouted, grasping Lazari by both shoulders and shaking him until his teeth rattled.

"Yes—yes—only I couldn't help it. She was so close—I loved her so much, and—— But I wouldn't have hurt her, even a hair. I'd rather have killed myself."

"What did you do with the gun?" I asked, giving him another shake. Taking advantage of the stress under which he labored, I hoped to surprise him into committing himself before he could recover his wits.

He tried to speak, but words seemed to stick in his throat. He looked about at the frowning faces and wrung his hands.

"He didn't have a weapon. He didn't have any kind of a revolver." It was the brother speaking. "I was right beside him, all the time. We only——"

"So you're going to lie, too?" Another performer, in dancing costume and make-up, pushed himself before me. "This mudd is trying to shield his brother. I know, and so do a lot of the other acts, that Joe Lazari's had a revolver in his dressing-room all week; ever since Dale called him on Sunday and warned him not to speak to his wife. Ask the others—a German M a u s e r, thirty-two calibre, seven chambers. I saw it. He said he'd get Dale if ever he hit him again.

The clown suddenly dropped to his knees and threw his

arms about my legs. "Please, Mister, please!" His voice was but a hoarse whisper. "Don't arrest me. I didn't do it, so help me! I have a pistol, yes. But it is in my dressing-room——"

"You're a liar," I said, trying to shake him off. I'd have felt better about him if he'd shown fight—anything but this whine and cringe. "You had the gun with you so you could shoot Dale if he struck you. And when his wife slapped you, you lost your head and killed her."

"No, no——" His denial died away in a moan.

"I'll show you!" screamed the brother. "It is in the dressing-room, in the drawer. I'll get it."

"Like hell you will," I bellowed, leaping upon him and hurling him half-way across the room. "I'll see where the gun is. Rooney, keep things quiet until I get back. Sit down, Dale. Things are breaking right for you in this investigation. You can afford to wait."

AS Rooney nodded and I passed out, closing the door behind me, I noted that Joe Lazari had collapsed. He sat huddled upon the floor, his head in his hands, sobbing and trembling.

"Learned anything?" asked the manager, who stood near the wings. Apparently he had regained a measure of calm and was on the alert to put over the remainder of the show without further annoying the audience. They "outside" would not actually learn that they had witnessed a murder until they read the following morning's papers.

"Can't say yet. I may need your help."

"I'll go the limit. Anything to get the rat who killed little Gene. But I'd like to have some of those performers before long."

possessed sufficient circumstantial proof to convict him before any jury.

The drawer of the dressing-table, a long affair with double mirrors, before which both brothers had put on their make-up, was half open. I expected nothing there, but drew it wide, using my knuckle so as to leave no print. It contained only cosmetics and the like. Dropping into a chair, I drew out my precious parcel, placed it upon my lap, rolled back the handkerchief, and looked at it closely. Then I gave a low whistle.

The silencer had not been pushed fully into place. Evidently Lazari had adjusted it in a hurry, or was not thoroughly familiar with the contrivance. And the imperfect adjustment, together with the theater's fine acoustics, explained the full reason why I had been able to catch the dull sound when the bullet was sent on its journey of death.

HOLDING the barrel with my handkerchief, I tilted the weapon. One cartridge only had been discharged. If the autopsy showed the bullet in the dancer's body was the same as those still in the gun—I was convinced it would—and if the finger-prints upon the stock proved to be Joe's, it would be as good as over with him.

"THERE'S not a finger-print like the one on the gun and the paper. Somehow, one fellow's missing, though I guess he don't amount to——"

"Which one got away?" I cried angrily, turning to the manager.

"I'm sorry, but it's——"

"Call out any of 'em you want except the clowns. Tell Rooney I said so. But send them back as soon as they've done their work. I'm going to Lazari's dressing-room. Which is it?"

"Number five—aisle over there, and turn to your left."

AS I circled about several pieces of furniture and other props which had been placed behind the wings preparatory to being used on the stage, I noted again the table upon which still were piled the grotesque costumes of the Lazari brothers. It had been drawn from the wings and pushed partly behind some long strips of scenery stacked against the wall. That table had a new significance for me now.

If Joe Lazari had shot from the wings, he'd had precious little time to dispose of his weapon before he was surrounded by "grips" and performers who had rushed upon the stage. Perhaps——

I glanced about. No one was near me, and none seemed to be watching. Stepping to the table, I began examining the garments, wigs, and so forth, dropping them one by one upon the floor. I lifted a velvet jacket. It seemed unusually heavy. My heart jumped a beat. I turned it inside out, slowly, and—a revolver, with a silencer attached, slipped out and fell upon the things beneath.

The find made me catch my breath. In seconds I had wrapped the weapon in my handkerchief so as not to spoil any finger-prints upon it, and had placed it carefully in my inside pocket. Then I heaped the clothing back upon the table and all but ran to the room numbered five. Once inside and the door closed, I laughed. Apparently a convincing link in the chain of evidence against Joe Lazari had been forged. I had him where I wanted him—already

Rewrapping the pistol and replacing it in my pocket, I began looking about, thinking possibly I would find the box of cartridges from which the weapon had been loaded. I didn't. But, upon the floor near the door, I picked up a bit of white paper rolled into a ball. Using only my nails, I opened and spread it out. It was about two by three inches and showed several straight creases. More important, there were three distinct and greasy finger-prints upon it. Instantly I figured the paper had contained a powder. And the next thought was that the powder had been dope. I wondered if Lazari had nerved himself with a sniff of cocaine before going out to kill the girl.

I was turning this query over in my mind when I again noted the greasy prints. Then a flash of doubt swept over me. Would an acrobat, to whom a single slip might mean serious injury, permit grease to remain upon his hands? I couldn't believe it. Always such performers kept a box of resin on the stage with which they wiped their hands frequently to remove perspiration. I returned to the dressing-table. White chalk was spilled on all sides. In many places there were finger-prints, but all clean and white. There also was rouge and cold-cream, but no dark-colored grease. I stooped and examined the knobs of the drawer. One of these bore a dark grease print, similar to those on the paper.

ONCE again doubt returned to plague me. I recalled my original suspicion, which the finding of the revolver had pushed temporarily from my mind. Folding the paper carefully, I placed it in my wallet. I hoped a few grains of the drug still clung to it. Then I examined every piece of clothing in the room. I found no more powders. If Lazari had brought dope with him, he probably had carried but a single "shot."

(Continued on page 85)

By Detective PAT KINSELLA
as told to W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS



"I take you to see some girls," said Andrade. "If we do business, your boss pay me a commission, yes?"

HUMAN CARGO

AS a member of the Headquarters Squad charged with the tracing of missing persons, I have centered my efforts at women's hotels, residential clubs for working girls, and the various shelters and homes, so called, maintained by philanthropists. I keep an eye on them, even when I am not on a case. Experience has taught me that fugitive girls prefer to hide out among their own sex, and on the other hand the proportion of disappearances from such places is very high.

"Pretty American girls who can dance—he is willing to pay high"

So it was something more than a coincidence that I witnessed the start of the crime that put me on the trail of one of the most desperate brutes I have ever had to combat.

A Thursday evening when I was off duty, I conducted some private business in Union Square, New York, and then turned into West Sixteenth Street. My idea was to say "hello" to the janitor of the Hannah Bradford Home for Girls, a few doors from the Square, and ask whether any of the new boarders struck him as being queer. Before I quite reached the Home, how-

ever, a girl came hurrying down the front steps. I noticed that she wore a light coat with a little brown fur at the neck and sleeves, and a close-fitting brown velvet toque, on the side of which glittered a decorative brooch of some sort. I could not distinguish her face. She was carrying nothing but a handbag.

The girl turned toward Fifth Avenue. I followed her, on general principles, but she was walking very fast and I had no excuse for overtaking her. Half way down the block, there was a small private car standing at the curb. Its

might have value as a clue. It struck me then that I had not seen any license plate. The light illuminating it had doubtless been temporarily switched off. The ruse is a common one. At the corner I failed to find a policeman on duty, and the pedestrians I questioned denied that they had heard the scream, or noticed a speeding car with a smashed window.

Nevertheless, I knew that there was something wrong, that the girl I had observed coming down the steps of the Hannah Bradford Home had been in distress and had called for help when she had given the piercing scream I had heard coming from the interior of the car. Hurriedly retracing my steps



"I hope these ladies will excuse——" I began softly. I never finished the sentence

door was swinging open, and the girl had no sooner reached it than she fairly tumbled in. I was then barely three yards behind. The car lurched forward, and immediately piled up a speed that was in excess of the legal limit. But it was still well on the near side of the crossing when I heard a single piercing feminine scream from the interior. The crashing of glass reached my ears. The car seemed to slow down a bit, but this was merely that it might navigate the corner with greater safety. It swung out into Fifth Avenue, steered north and was lost to view in a moment.

Fragments of glass from the broken window of the car lay in the roadway. I put a piece in my pocket, hoping it

to the Home, I asked to see the superintendent, and got her to identify the girl from my vague description of her appearance as being one Natalie Goddard. My interest in her, I declared, was official, but friendly. I did not mention what I had seen, for until I am certain there has been foul play it is against my principles to tie up a girl's name with any shady happening.

"If Miss Goddard doesn't sleep here to-night, phone directly to me, that's all," I said.

About nine o'clock in the morning, sure enough, the Home had me on the wire. Natalie Goddard had disobeyed the rules by sleeping out. That was the way the woman superintendent put it. But I knew that we had to do with a

kidnapping affair, and I stated it frankly the minute I was back in the dingy house on Sixteenth Street.

"She took the first step herself. You saw her deserting this safe shelter and entering the car," the superintendent wailed. "But we're accustomed here to ingratitude. What can you expect of girls whose bad lives——"

"Never mind about that," I interrupted. Sermonizing in the face of a tragedy which demands quick action has always made me tired. "Just give me the facts about Miss Goddard. How well do you know her?"

"She came to us four weeks ago. Said she was from a Western city, and had had to run away because of a terrible scandal. We encourage applicants to tell us the whole truth about themselves. Otherwise, we don't feel we can help them as we should."

"What was the scandal?" I asked impatiently.

"She was involved with a local banker in a violation of the Mann Act," the woman replied, lowering her voice. "They crossed the state line into Indiana and registered at a hotel as man and wife. The banker was sentenced to four years of penal servitude, and the life of poor, unfortunate Miss Goddard was ruined. The publicity of the trial, more than anything else, turned her family against her. You know how it is!"

"Yes, I know," I muttered. Right then some-

she had done typewriting as a substitute since coming to New York. I also looked over the few belongings she had left behind her. She had slept in a dormitory, and her trunk standing beside her bed had been her only dressing-table. In the top tray I found toilet articles, photographs of relatives, and a few letters. The last named were unimportant, with the exception of one short note in a foreign handwriting. It was undated and signed with a single initial, "T." The paper had been torn from a cheap writing-pad, but the envelope was of good quality and of a peculiar style—square instead of oblong, light in weight, blue-gray outside and lined with purple tissue-paper. It had not passed through the

The girls' faces as they looked mechanically in my direction, all bore a singularly dazed expression

thing clicked in my brain—a memory which gave me a lead on the case, and which will be set forth at the proper time.

From the superintendent I obtained some routine information, such as the girl's home address and a physical description of her, the name of a firm for which

mail, so there was no post-mark. The note read:

Would be charmed if you would dine with me this evening at the B. grill, about seven o'clock. I kiss your hand.

The interest of this case rests upon the startling things that happened, rather than upon any difficulty I had in analyzing and following up the early clues. So I shall give my deductions briefly.

The man who had abducted Natalie Goddard was a foreigner and was almost certainly a Spaniard, I thought. The phrase, "I kiss your hand," is an every-day, flowery salutation in Spanish. He—always assuming that the author of



the letter and the kidnapper were one and the same person—had taken Natalie to some place quite near the Hannah Bradford Home. Had his destination been distant, he would not have overpowered her so soon after she had willingly entered his car, for either the binding or the forcible drugging of a person is a ticklish performance and is not risked until the last moment. The man did not necessarily live on the premises where Natalie was held a prisoner. I guessed him to be a white-slaver, and it was likely he operated from a hotel where he was careful to bear a good character.

THERE are two main Spanish quarters in New York, one around Fourteenth Street and one up-town. My quarry had had his letter delivered by a messenger, so it had probably been sent from a near-by down-town address. I knew of a Spanish hotel in Fifteenth Street called the Hispanic. I visited it, and immediately noticed that the writing-tables for the convenience of guests were furnished with square, foreign-style envelopes like the one Natalie's correspondent had used. On looking over the register, I found the name of Tomas Andrade inscribed six weeks back in the handwriting of the letter to Natalie.

So much for the man. My lead on the girl—the point that

Concerning Natalie Goddard and others like her who had disappeared, I formed the theory that some man—this Tomas Andrade, perhaps—was specializing in women who had suffered under the Mann Act. He could keep track of them through court records and newspaper publicity. Once they were in New York, they would be easy to approach, because they regarded themselves as lost creatures, anyway. He gained their confidence, kidnapped them and probably smuggled them out of the country, to pass the rest of their lives in South American dens of vice.

The affair was too urgent to leave me time to set elaborate traps, or go in for fancy research work. An abducted girl must be saved promptly, or she might just as well be dead.

I took a room at the Hispanic Hotel, and about six o'clock the desk clerk, with whom I had made friends, pointed out Andrade to me in the lobby. He told me he was a Cuban. The man was short and dark, but handsome after the style made popular by Rudolph Valentino. He was powerfully built. His clothes were exceptionally smart.

That evening I shadowed Andrade. It was a maddeningly fruitless job. He dined by himself at a good restaurant, went on to a Greenwich Village cabaret, where he remained for hours, but did not appear to pay special attention to any

“THE girl turned toward Fifth Avenue . . . Half way down the block, there was a small private car standing near the curb. Its door was swinging open, and the girl had no sooner reached it than she fairly tumbled in. I was then barely three yards behind. The car lurched forward, and immediately——”

destroyed the faint hope I might have had that her adventure did not involve a crime—was simply this:

Of seven recent cases of women reported to the Department as missing, the five who had vanished most mysteriously and completely had all been partners in Mann Act scandals. All had come to New York from smaller cities, all had sunk rapidly in the social scale after their arrival here, all were said to have drifted into loose intimacies with foreigners.

I sensed a variation of the white slaver's approach to his victims, which depended for success upon a state of mind created by our own courts. It is not for me, as a detective, to condemn any Federal law. But I'll go as far as to say that the Mann Act avails itself of a technicality to provide penalties for a moral offence that in most circumstances is not punishable. A man and a woman may live together in concubinage within the borders of New York, or Kansas, or Oregon, or any other state, and the Federal Government cannot touch them. But, under the Mann Act, if the same couple should so much as step across the line from one state into another, they can be arrested and the man indicted for “transporting a woman for immoral purposes.” The fact that the woman may have taken the trip of her own free will makes no difference. Congress has the power to regulate interstate travel, and it has enacted that unmarried persons must not travel between states as man and wife.

I AM aware that the law was aimed chiefly at the traffic in prostitutes, but it punishes the man who has no mercenary motive on the same basis as it does the white slaver. And it smirches the woman with a public disgrace from which it is very difficult for her to rally. I leave it to our good people to figure out whether, in this instance, the punishment equitably fits the crime for all sinners caught in the net.

of the girls, returned to his hotel at 1 A. M. and went to bed.

So the next day I forced matters by making his acquaintance. I had seen his breakfast being taken up to his room at noon. Half an hour later I knocked at his door, and, on being told to enter, I did so coolly and announced myself as a salesman of the only tribe that is sure of being received with good-fellowship. I said I was a bootlegger.

“WHAT have you got?” asked Andrade, who was still in bed, his body raised upon one elbow.

I took a chair near him. “How about some first-rate bacardi rum?” I asked.

“Bacardi?—no. I have it already,” he replied shortly.

“Your accent should have warned me you'd have brought a supply of that brand North with you,” I chuckled.

He gave me a piercing glance. “To know the accent? You must have been in Cuba, eh?”

“Sure.” As a matter of fact, I had spent three weeks in Havana, where I had been sent to bring back a defaulting bank cashier. “Could you use some Scotch, or cordials?”

He shook his head. “You make much money out of the liquor business?”

“I do not,” I answered. “It is just a side-line. My chief job is to represent a Cuban gentleman, Señor Pedro Garcia, who is about to open a dancing casino near the Prado in Havana.”

“That is interesting. And what do you do for Señor Garcia in New York?”

Here I took a long chance:

“I am trying to find some suitable talent for him,” I said. “Pretty American girls who can dance a little, and who won't be too strict in their behavior. He is willing to pay high.”

(Continued on page 82)

The Court of NO APPEAL

*Woe to him who is tried and found guilty
in Kangaroo Court*

By PERE WELSH

I AM Southern born. In my travels as a newspaper man through every state in the Union, and all but two of the foreign countries, I have always heard and have reiterated the echo of the grand old South's hospitality.

But never have I so fully appreciated the real significance of its "open-your-arms-and-take-him-in" attitude as when I found myself at odds with the law in a large, aristocratic Dixie town which I will call Midland, although, of course, that isn't its name, as I would not care to give it here. The chief of police "opened his arms," and after a cursory hearing in the city court, the sheriff at the county jail "took me in."

It was thus I discovered the Court of No Appeal.

As I entered the cell tier of the county jail there was a perceptible stir among the sixteen prisoners gathered in groups of four or five along the runway upon which the doors of the cells opened.

Some were playing cards, some reading, others writing or chatting, or lying idly gazing into space.

The cry of "Fresh fish!" caused me to recall that it was not Friday, but I was soon to learn that I was the "fish," though just at that particular moment I did not feel supremely fresh.

A rather friendly looking, pleasant-voiced fat man with a bald head, greeted me with a "Hello, brother," and informed me that I was wanted in court.

"Court!" I said; "waddayamean court? That's just where I came from, and why I'm here."

"Easy now, my friend, easy," he said, smiling knowingly. "We all feel like that when we first break in here. Trot along back there and let us tell you what it's all about."

BY that time the clan had gathered at the rear of the tier. An empty soap box had been placed in the center of the runway and upon this my big friend, whom I soon found to be the judge, took his seat.

"Kangaroo court is now in session," was shouted in a deep, rasping voice. Inmates who were sleeping on their bunks in the cells were routed out. Card games ceased and all attention was given the business at hand.

The assemblage eyed me with curious and expectant mien.

A frowsy-looking individual with a pipe in his mouth took me roughly by the arm. I was pulled to the correct spot, facing the judge, and my hat jerked off, and thrown to the floor in front of me.

I was particularly struck just then by the quaint mixture of self-satisfaction, gravity, and merriment displayed in the judge's expression. But beneath it all I plainly saw a steely glint in the gray-blue eyes that spelled "hands off" to the meddler.

"This, the special daily session of the Kangaroo Court of

the Midland County Jail, is hereby called to order!" Thus quoth a fellow in shirt-sleeves who was lounging against the cell bars at the judge's left, and who I later learned was the court bailiff and sheriff.

"The prisoner is at the bar, your honor."

"What's your name, fish?" the judge asked.

As I opened my lips to reply he leaned toward me, glared and snapped out, "Shut up!"

I shut.

"Got any money, knife, razor blades, comb, or anything else in your pockets, or about your person?"

I started to answer but was again interrupted by the judge.

"Search him, sheriff!"

I was bidden to place my hands upon my head until the search was completed.

MY pockets were turned inside out. The waist lining of my trousers was rolled and scanned. The sweat-band of my hat was pulled down, and every conceivable place about my clothing and person was deftly and completely "frisked," even to the removal of my shoes and socks.

The results of the quest were given the clerk of the court—\$3.12 in cash, a silver pencil, a note-book and a pair of finger-nail clippers.

The man with the pipe, who, up to this time had not opened his mouth, was called upon to prefer charges against me.

He was the prosecuting attorney.

The judge addressed him. "You are instructed to place in evidence against the defendant the specific charges for which he is to be tried."

"Step a little closer to the judge, fish."

I did so.

"You are hereby charged and so arraigned with breaking into the Midland County Jail, without the consent of the inmates. How do you plead—guilty, or not guilty?"

I glanced about me. The grim visages which greeted me on every side warned me that even a smile might bring disaster. But I did not heed the warning.

"This is a helluva court," I blurted out.

"HOLD on, there!" the judge shouted at me. "That will cost you just fifty cents, fish, for contempt of court, in excess of your fine. Go on with the case."

"How do you plead—guilty, or not guilty?" the prosecutor repeated.

I pondered but a fleeting moment.

"Guilty," I said. And, doggone it, I was. So, what chance was there for an appeal?

The judge nodded his satisfaction in acceptance of my plea.

"That's better," he said. "I further instruct the prosecuting attorney to explain the meaning and methods of this court to the defendant and to tell him of its purposes and powers in governing the inmates of this county jail, after which I will pass sentence."

AND then the rules and regulations of the Court of No Appeal were expounded plainly but briefly to me in their full significance and purpose.

Each new prisoner upon entering a county jail is immediately tried as I was. There were six tiers in this particular jail, each capable of holding twenty-six men, in thirteen cells, two bunks to a cell.

There was a court on every tier. This, of course, impressed me at first as being merely a local affair, but later, as I became acquainted with some of the itinerates of jails in general, I found that the same sort of organizations held sway in practically every county jail in the country.

There is a twofold purpose in searching a new arrival so thoroughly. His financial standing must be determined and it must be positively ascertained that he is not holding out any cash. Then, too, for the protection of his fellows, as well as of his own person, knives or any dangerous articles are looked for.

Any trinket which has been passed up by the police or jail officials that may be of general use to the other inmates of the tier is brought to light. As in the case of my nail-clippers, I was instructed by the judge to lend them at any time to my fellows, and they all knew I had a pencil and that it could be borrowed at will.

THE regulation fine imposed is \$2 cash. If the defendant has only a part of this amount he is permitted to pay it and work the remainder out on the mop and broom at the rate of ten cents a day.

If he has none, he must work out the full twenty days, cleaning three times a day under the direction of the tier boss, who is usually the judge of the court.

In case a prisoner has deposited his money with the office of the jail, he is instructed that an order can be written for the amount he requires. In fact, the order is written for him by the court clerk, signed by the prisoner, and sent to the office by a guard.

When a "fish" declares himself insolvent and completely broke, with no hopes or possibilities of getting money, he is watched care-

fully for several days to see that he has told the truth, and if his work is satisfactory, he is permitted to use the court property and take advantage of all good things the fines may purchase. This is perhaps why there is never any dissatisfaction by prisoners when fined—their knowing the money is to be spent to help the fellow who has none.

The purpose of the cash fines was then explained. This money is used for the purchase of razor blades, soap (shaving, toilet and laundry), talcum powder, and such little "luxuries" that become necessities at times.

There is always one safety-razor on a tier, and this is in the custody of the court clerk, who is also responsible for the expenditure of court funds and the handling of all court supplies.

Writing paper, stamps, and pencils are bought at times, and when a particularly prosperous string of "fish" is caught, cake, pie and candy are indulged in.

In other words, the money derived from fines is used as



"Got any money, knife, razor blades, comb, or anything else in your pockets?"

best it can be for the comfort of those men who are broke, and who have no way to get the bare necessities of life. A cigar box is tied to the tier bars, not six feet from where I sit writing. It is half filled with tobacco, and cigarette papers and matches can be had on application to the clerk.

An unwritten law forbids a prisoner who is in funds from using this. Next to liberty, smokes are probably the most essential and desirable things in the daily lives of most men in confinement.

IN paying my fine of \$2, and the fifty cents assessed for my back talk, I felt glad that I was fortunate enough to have that amount with me when I landed in jail.

There was but sixteen cents in the court treasury when I was tried. The mirror had been broken a few days before, which made shaving all but an impossibility. Razor blades were needed and the tobacco was low, so it can be well understood how welcome I was.



When the judge passed sentence upon me he warned me against lending or giving anything to two certain men on the tier. They had been declared outlawed by the court—had become pariahs in that community at least, because of their refusal to abide by the decision of the court in a sentence handed down at a recent trial.

After a man is once "kangerooded," he is not asked to contribute any more money to the court, and may spend whatever he cares to without molestation or comment.

The court's powers reach further out than the initial trial of a "fresh fish." Prisoners are arrested by the sheriff and hailed before his honor on the complaint of any other prisoner.

A trial is held and evidence heard from both sides. Charges such as unclean cells, failure to do the share of work allotted, selfishness and refusal to lend, untidiness of person, and stealing from other prisoners, are the most common.

The most severe punishment is allotted the man who takes from his fellow man that which does not belong to him. A man may be a "dip" (pickpocket), a "highjacker" (hold-up man), a "moll buzzer" (purse snatcher), or even a finished "pete man" (safe blower) on the outside, and that is his own affair and never questioned in jail. But a man who will stoop so low as to purloin even as much as a pin from another prisoner is degraded in the eyes of his associates beyond all hope of redemption.

Should a man fail to prove his charges, after making complaint to the court, he is tried for false arrest and his punishment is generally sure and swift.

"Inside trials," as they are termed, result in two kinds of sentences: a prescribed number of days on the broom and mop, or a certain number of "licks" applied with the business end of a belt to that portion of his trousers which stretches the tightest as he inclines, face down, across the side of a round iron ash-can.

My inherent nose-for-news began to itch as days went by. I soon learned more of these singular organizations of the disorganized strata of life in which I found myself living.

There are approximately 3,065 kangaroo courts scattered throughout this country. There is a county jail in practically every county in the United States, and in some of the jails there are two or more courts in session all the time, depending on the nature of the jail and the division of its inmates. And there are exactly 3,065 counties in the United States to-day.

Arrest and conviction in any part of our country in compliance with the laws has shaped itself to me as more of a disease than anything else.

It comes in stages.

A pleasant and agreeable person, with square-toed shoes, taps you gently on the shoulder and informs you that "the chief wants to see you." The chief tells you that it is necessary to detain you for a short while for reasons he makes quite clear, and even though he "just hates to do it," he must lock you up in his hold-over.

And there you are, in a cell at the police station—the first stage of the disease.

The second stage attacks you when, after a hearing in police court, you are bound over to the grand jury and placed in the hands of the sheriff and lodged in a cell at the county jail.

Then the third and last stage—the state penitentiary, after conviction in the higher court. This is the culmination of the disease, the ailment of which they sing in that pretty little ditty entitled,

You May Get Better, But You'll Never Get Well

And, even at that, the only "get better" in it is the "get better" acquainted with the hardship of a jailbird's life.

"Bring in BUCKNER,

*When a man is murdered in the moonshine
lead to his murderers is infinitely harder*

By HOMER G. WELLS

DESTINY chose for my birthplace a section of the more or less rugged country of Tennessee. I grew up among the people and amid the scenes that I will now try to describe in this narrative.

It would be a monstrous misrepresentation to portray my native community as a lawless and uncivilized region. In reality, Cleartop, Tennessee, is a clean, thriving little town. In the main, the surrounding country is composed of progressive and peace-loving citizens who exemplify the tenets of Christianity and respectfully abide by the Constitution of the United States. I regret the necessity of saying—in the main—instead of "exclusively."

But there is another, and a darker, side of the picture. And in contrast to the good, there is a small area, practically isolated from the main, in which it seems the jetsam and backwash of humanity has drifted into a stagnant stage of pollution.

Only a few years ago I operated a bloodhound service at Cleartop, and traversed a wide scope of territory, throughout Tennessee and Kentucky, in the pursuit of criminals. During my five years in this service I gained an intimate knowledge of the crafty rural lawbreakers, and became particularly well acquainted with the turbulent district of my native Kane County.

Fourteen miles from a railroad and twenty-five miles from the nearest city, this section is accessible only from the Tennessee River on its curving eastern boundary, and in other directions over practically impassable dirt roads which wind among the trees, over sloping hills and through the valleys. No more

propitious locality for operation of moonshine stills could be found than in the almost impenetrably thicketed hills and ravines that abound there. It is over these rough pathways through the solitude of the woods that the fiery vintage of those alleged moonshiners is transported to the distant marts of distribution.

Approaching this barren province, a picture reminiscent of the river fortresses of more than fifty years ago is brought to mind by long rows of hand-hewn cross-ties,

stacked as if in defensive formation, along the river bank that borders it. Traveling inland and following the main highway around a long hill and over a stretch of rolling country for almost a mile, not a sign of habitation can be seen. Then, abruptly, the road turns through a sequestered woodland, and there, nestling in among the trees on the hillside, is a rambling, unpainted building, covered with black tarred roofing. This is known as Ferguson's store.

It is here that the tie-makers and farmers, and possibly moonshiners, congregate on Saturday afternoons to purchase their simple commodities from this far-removed commissary. And it is here that the lonely folks of the hills and river bottoms find human contact to satisfy their inherent desire for companionship and association with their fellow men. But, in establishing this contact, certain rules peculiar to the cold and unrelenting code of these simple people must be observed—otherwise, human blood is likely to flow without warning.

In the light of retrospection, a vivid memory of these old scenes flashed into my mind when the press of the entire country recently focussed this locality in a sudden glare of front-page publicity. (In what follows I have changed names, dates and places when deemed necessary.) This was occasioned by the murder of Burt Richards.

When the story broke, following the murder of Richards, which occurred April 7th, 1924, the newspaper reports were like the beginning of a forest fire, and each succeeding day, with the spark of mystery fanned by rumor and conjecture, the story grew in potency. Representatives of the Associated



The deputy
had entered
the store

DEAD or ALIVE"

*district of Tennessee, getting clues that will
than finding the proverbial needle*

Press and other news-gathering agencies were quick to perceive an unusual element of mystery in the case. First accounts of the murder appeared commonplace. They told how the slain man had met death by the roadside at the hands of unknown assassins. Arrests were prophesied.

In later accounts the lid was tilted and conditions were described, of which I, with the knowledge gained from past experi-

a respectable and law-abiding citizen, member of the minority faction in the moonshine domain, had openly defied the moonshiners—had become a crusader against them—and died a martyr to the cause of his convictions. Thus the motive for the assassination of Richards was apparent.

With each succeeding day, I looked to the newspapers with expect-



Two men, members of the lawless clan, were buying high-power rifle cartridges

tancy. Surely, the Richards murder mystery will not remain unsolved much longer, I thought. Still the enterprising scribes kept the story alive—subsisting upon minor developments. And each day I felt a growing desire to tackle the case myself. This desire became uncontrollable when I read the following in an evening

paper, dated April 13th, 1924:

LIQUOR GANG DRIVES MORE FROM HOME

Grape-Vine Warns of Murder If Slayers Are Arrested.

ence in that territory, was blissfully ignorant. They told of the existence of a "whiskey ring," in which it was estimated that seventy-five per cent. of the population of Kane County was alleged to have been engaged in this illicit whiskey business. And it was contended that Burt Richards,

Cleartop, Tenn., April 13, 1924.—The law left northeast Kane County last night, and moonshiners, some of whom murdered Burt Richards, farmer raider, on the highway near his home, were in complete control of the district early to-day, despite a reward of \$1,000 offered for Richards' slayers.

"If any man is arrested for the murder of Burt Richards,

nine more will die." Such was the grape-vine warning that sent nine more members of the vigilance committee of the district fleeing from their homes last night to escape the anger of the liquor makers. Among this number is Carl Hacker, a deputy sheriff, and Thomas R. Morris, a former county magistrate, while several others are wealthy landowners. . . .

Other details told of a mass meeting to be held at the county seat, in which plans were to be laid with a view to suppressing the lawless element in the outlying district. But the part quoted was amply sufficient to completely arouse my ire.

"What do you think of this, Chief?" I said, handing the newspaper across our desk to the Chief Special Agent of the Union Railway Company, in whose service I am employed.

"Damn bad advertising for your old home town," Chief Smith commented when he had finished reading this latest article. "Looks like they've got the officers up there all buffalo'd," he added.

"Not all of them, Chief, or at least I'm still willing to bet on Sheriff Caldwell."

Too long had I known that tall, grey-eyed man, whose pleasant demeanor so effectively masked the sterner stuff of which he is made, to believe that any gang of moonshiners or anybody else could swerve him from the path of duty. Still—I wondered what terrible handicap was restraining him in this case.

"IF any man is arrested for the murder of Burt Richards, nine more will die," Chief Smith, reading again from the newspaper, interrupted my momentary reverie.

"Say, Chief, how about letting me off for a day or two?" I inquired.

I guess he knew what was in my mind, for there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes when he replied: "If you want to commit suicide, why not jump into the Mississippi River?"

The Chief's good-natured banter was lost upon my serious mood. When he saw that I was in earnest about getting off duty for a few days, he readily consented for me to go.

"But what can you do up there? Judging from the newspapers, it don't look like a one-man job," he countered.

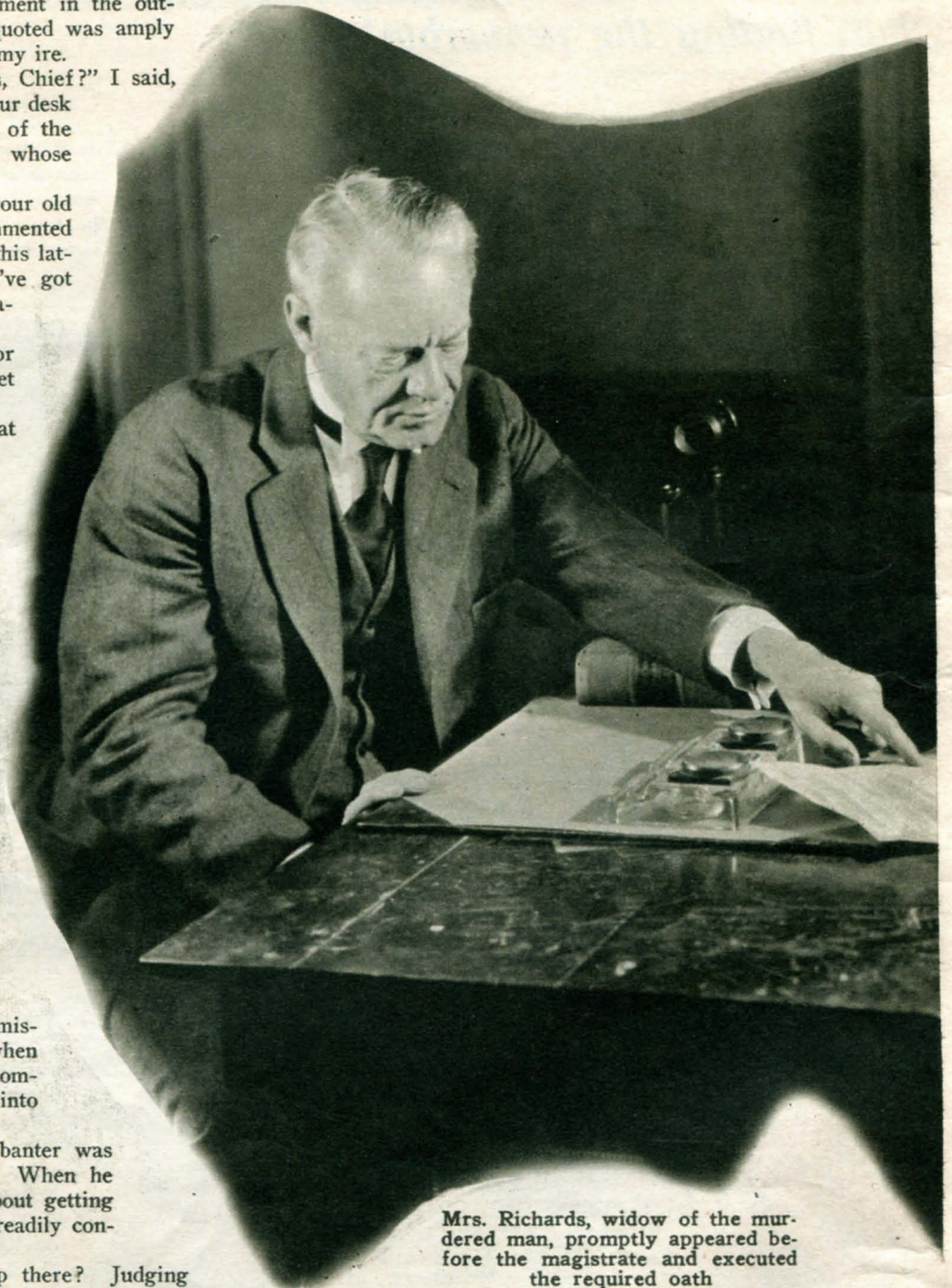
I had to admit that my decision was probably rash—maybe I was borrowing trouble by plunging into this thing uninvited—but I meant to formulate some plan and devise a scheme that I could fit myself into with at least a promise of success in the offing.

MY first move was to place a long-distance telephone call for Sheriff Caldwell at Cleartop. I had an idea that he might have an ace up his sleeve. I knew it wasn't unlikely that, in his deliberate and methodical way, the mystery might be much nearer solution than the public was aware. Then,

too, I wanted to be certain that he would welcome outside aid.

Fortunately, it required only a few minutes to get Sheriff Caldwell on the wire. I explained why I had called, and asked if he had had any late developments in the now famous murder case.

"No, Homer, I haven't anything tangible," he said. "The Governor telephoned me from the State Capitol to-day and



Mrs. Richards, widow of the murdered man, promptly appeared before the magistrate and executed the required oath

proposed to double the reward offered for arrest of the slayers, but I don't believe that would help much."

"Have you any likely suspects so far?" I inquired pointedly.

"That's the trouble—we have too many likely suspects. There are so many that I would have to be a second Solomon to pick the murderer out of that crowd," the Sheriff replied.

"If you haven't any other move on foot, I think I'll take a run up there and we'll talk the situation over to-morrow."

"All right, Homer, come ahead. They're going to hold

a mass meeting at the court-house to-morrow, and I'd like to see you before the meeting takes place. I hardly think there will be any developments before you can get here," he concluded.

Chief Smith had only heard my end of the telephone conversation. So he waited for me to tell him what the Sheriff had said. That finished, he told me that, since I was going into the thing, he would arrange to take care of our work and give me whatever time the case might require. He seemed inclined to pessimism, but I guessed that was due to his apprehension regarding my personal safety in this undertaking. Before



leaving the office, he counseled me to be extremely cautious in the procedure.

Now that everything seemed in a fair way for me to have a part in the investigation of this sensational affair back home, I racked my brain for a feasible plan that I might suggest to the Sheriff—something that would give promise of success.

That the situation at Cleartop was tense, I had no reason to doubt. And I wondered if it was possible that a Deputy Sheriff and other good citizens could be driven from their homes and made to desert the most sacred of their possessions in order to avoid a fate such as had been so recently

meted out to their deceased comrade. How could civilized people tolerate such an outrage? How long would this reign of terror be permitted to prevail? It looked as if a bloody banner had been flung out challengingly in the face of law and decency!

"There is no better way to put an end to the devilment of those cunning monarchs of the hills than by capturing the ones among them who put Burt Richards out of the way," I soliloquized.

But, again, I was thinking in circles, and everything led back to the original problem. How could that be accomplished? I knew that no ordinary "gum-shoe" methods would succeed in this case. The usual private-detective procedure would avail nothing. A spy could not be placed in the ranks of these outlaws to "rope" them. Even if a stranger could survive in their midst—which was unlikely—these silent people of the hills would never confide their murder secret. If an open investigation could be productive of results—I was well aware of the capability of Sheriff T. P. Caldwell, in whose hands the case rested.

These thoughts almost disillusioned me. I remembered what my boss had said earlier in the evening: "What can you do up there?" And then: "It don't look like a one-man job," had been his words. I felt like a dunce for butting in on the case.

Gradually, as I mulled the problem over in my mind that night, a more or less intangible idea, or maybe it was a "hunch," took form. Poignantly, I realized that my Chief had been correct in his opinion that this was not a one-man job. But who—or what combination of men—did this case call for?

"INSPECTOR GRIFFIN!" Like a flash, I thought of him. Inspector Griffin was my friend. I wondered if he could be induced to take a brief leave from his responsible position as head of the Detective Division of the Memphis Police Department and assume charge of the investigation at Cleartop, if agreeable to Sheriff Caldwell.

At first the idea seemed fanciful. But in this dilemma I could think of no other man so well qualified as Inspector Griffin. His keen power of deduction and remarkable success in ferreting out the guilty have built for him a national reputation. And, recalling the Sheriff's remark with reference to the number of likely suspects, I couldn't get around the idea of soliciting Inspector Griffin's aid—or, more correctly, hoping there might be some way in which I could aid him if he could be induced to handle this case.

I resolved to see Inspector Griffin the first thing in the morning. That decided, there was still a disturbing thought—for the plan was far from complete. It would not be fair to persuade Chief

Griffin to take up this case without being in position to offer him a full measure of assistance. Would Sheriff Caldwell and I suffice for this purpose?

Next, I thought of A. N. Lindsey, Special Agent for the L. & N. Railroad. It was a happy thought, for it is doubtful if there is a man living better qualified for the "field work" in a murder investigation in that section of the country than he. "Newt" Lindsey, as he is familiarly known, is a veteran peace officer who is held in reverent awe by the (so-called) "bad men" of that region. He lives in Memphis now. But there was a time when he knew every pig path in Kane County. Knowing also the topography, he had a correct appraisal of the character of each individual—and they all knew him.

Back in the days when Newt Lindsey served as an officer in the hill country, it took a real he-man to hold the job. Our space here will not (Continued on page 108)

I Had To BREAK

Not all detectives' work is the picking criminals. Detective Thompson was the man

By Detective J. R. THOMPSON
as told to MARK MELLEN

ONE sultry, lazy sort of a day last summer I entered a French restaurant in the theatrical district of New York, intending to have a bite of lunch and also to kill time, having an appointment in the neighborhood at a later hour.

I gave my order and turned to my paper as the waiter started for the kitchen. Nothing in the headlines engaged my attention and I turned over page after page. Just as I reached the Society page the waiter returned with my food. He impressed me as being awkward and not having his mind on his work, and this I understood when I glanced up and noticed that he was paying more attention to the page before me than he was to the locations in which he placed the various dishes.

I probably frowned a bit as I glanced at him and he seemingly lost all interest in the paper immediately. But as I looked to try to locate the article that he seemed to find of such absorbing interest I realized that his glance again was over my shoulder. Something on the page intrigued him.

The only feature that stood out on the page was the picture of a woman and underneath a caption reading:

Mrs. Amelia Tyson, one of the patrons of the Fifth Avenue Dog Kennels Dinner-Dance at the Ritz last night.

From the very nature of his business, a detective habitually comes to attach more importance to such matters than does the average individual. And I am a detective, conducting my own private agency. It is not surprising, therefore, that I found myself speculating as to the cause of the French waiter's interest.

It was not at all probable that such a man would be in the least interested in a woman of Mrs. Tyson's apparent social standing. I had the thought that the fellow might be interested in dogs, and not the woman—and put the subject out of my mind.

The incident, however, had caused me to give more attention to the waiter than would usually be the case, with the result that his face and general appearance registered with me.

After finishing with my meal I puffed a perfecto for a time and then consulted my watch. Finding that I had just sufficient time to walk around the corner to the big office-building in which I had my appointment, I left the place.

WITHIN ten minutes I entered the private office of Mr. John B. Zeamer, President of the Central Trust and Safe Company.

"Sit down, Mr. Thompson," he invited cordially. He proffered a long, black cigar, lit one himself, and settled comfortably in his big chair as if for a chat.

Mr. Zeamer is an old man, well past seventy, but hale and hearty physically and just as alert and keen mentally as he has been all through the years during which he fought

his way from comparative poverty to the head of one of the largest and strongest financial institutions in the city.

I was not a stranger in his office, as he had retained me from time to time to make investigations, look up occasional patrons of his bank whom he suspected might have ulterior designs against the institution's cash reserve, keep tabs on employees who manifested a disposition to step out at times, and all that sort of thing.

In handling such matters for him, luck invariably had been with me. I had always given his work my best efforts and personal attention as well, with the result that every case entrusted to me had been handled to his entire satisfaction. I was not, therefore, surprised when he phoned me to call on him again.

"I have a case of rather a personal nature, Mr. Thompson," he went on after we were comfortably seated. He was not a man to waste much time in useless preliminaries. "Jim Tyson and I were boys together. We worked hard, and saved our money while other young fellows dissipated and squandered. It wasn't long before we were in a position to make small investments—and eventually larger ones. But Jim was much more venturesome than I was. I wanted something conservative like a first mortgage, with the result that I accumulated money rather slowly. Jim speculated and often lost, but he finally hit it right when he took a chance on a gold-mining proposition, and he became immensely wealthy."

HE looked hard at me out of his cold, steel-gray eyes, and I merely nodded my head as an indication that I was following him. As yet I had no inkling as to what he was leading up to.

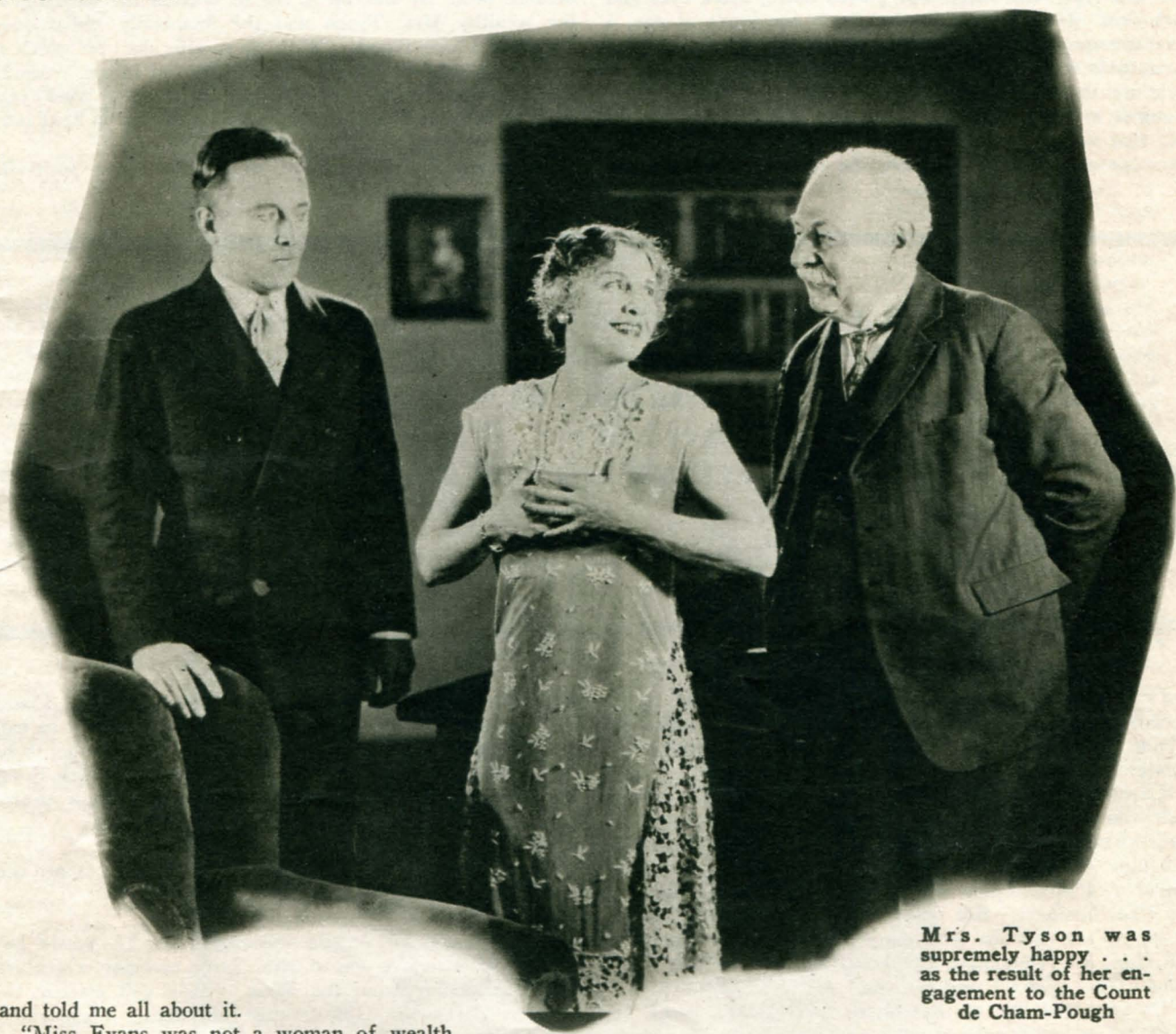
"Jim and I continued close friends, and I came along slowly and also accumulated considerable money," he resumed, after puffing on his cigar several times to get it to drawing freely. "We finally came to New York together, in search of better opportunities. I found mine in this bank here. He became a broker, but frequently consulted me regarding investments nevertheless, although he was extremely well informed. He always kept an account in my bank. And whenever he contemplated any real important move he always talked it over with me—except when he was considering the question of getting married. Probably he didn't consider me an expert on the subject of matrimony, as I've never married."

The old gentleman stopped here for a moment and smiled, as his right hand toyed with the paper-weight on his big flat-topped desk. I continued silent.

"Jim married a Miss Martha Evans, a woman twenty years his junior, after remaining a bachelor until attaining the age of forty-five. It is highly probable that he believed I would advise against a marriage where the discrepancy in ages was so great, so he proposed to her first and then came

A Woman's Heart

*up of clues and the bringing in of
hired to keep a woman from marrying
she loved*



Mrs. Tyson was supremely happy . . . as the result of her engagement to the Count de Cham-Pough

and told me all about it.

"Miss Evans was not a woman of wealth, but of course that fact would not have entered into consideration. But she was a social climber, and I never have had any great feeling of sympathy for that type. However, she proved to be a good wife to Jim—the difference in their ages considered. Of course her tastes at times differed radically from his. With all his wealth at her command, her social ambitions became stronger and stronger. They entertained nice people, and poor Jim eventually had to dress for dinner every evening."

A smile spread over his face as he pictured his sturdy old friend reluctantly donning the trick scenery before presenting himself at the table.

"Yes, she tried hard to break into society, but she never quite made the grade," he resumed, while I nodded my understanding. "They never succeeded in being listed in the Social Register. Not that Jim tried or cared. But she did.

"Jim finally died, a few years ago. His will was left in

my custody. A reading revealed that everything was left to his widow, and I was named as executor. I realized that it was up to me to keep a watchful eye on the fortune, and advise Mrs. Tyson as to her investments.

"Now, Mr. Thompson, I never disliked Mrs. Tyson, although I have enjoyed many a good laugh at her expense, because of her efforts as a social climber. And she always seemed to harbor none but the kindest feelings toward me, and left her business affairs in my charge even after the estate was settled and the cash and securities transferred to her. She is now past fifty, and although well preserved and as attractive as a woman of her years can be expected to be, she is not a woman who would attract a handsome young man—unless he happened to be a fortune hunter."

Up to this time I had not fully comprehended his purpose in giving me this detailed account of Mrs. Tyson's affairs,

but now I sensed what was coming and was not surprised when, after remaining thoughtful for a few moments, he continued:

AFTER a period of mourning, Mrs. Tyson resumed her social activities, and seemed more anxious than ever to mingle with the upper crust. And like all of that type, she always paid great homage to the nobility. Now it looks as if she is about to marry a Count de Cham-Pough, a penniless foreigner. His manner is refined, he has the airs of a gentleman and is considered handsome by those who like the dark type, with black hair pasted down, black eyes and dark skin. He is only thirty or thirty-one years of age, a good dresser—and, as I said, flat broke. Not being on good terms with work, and having no means of his own, it is a certainty that he is nothing more nor less than an adventurer in search of good American dollars. I have no idea that he is in love with Mrs. Tyson—but he certainly loves her money. For her part, she covets the social posi-

"They're to announce their engagement very shortly," the banker explained. "And she has just sent me word to dispose of some securities so that she has plenty of cash available for a grand ball which she proposes giving. She also wants to give him fifty thousand dollars early next week to pay his hotel and other bills and to keep him in proper style until the day of the wedding."

There was a look of contempt on his face as he uttered the final sentence. And I felt the same way he did about such a man.

However, my feelings or sentiments didn't count. I had a definite task. It was up to me to prevent the wedding of the wealthy Mrs. Tyson and the financially embarrassed Count de Cham-Pough. With no specific data on which to work, this was rather a large order. And it was essential that I produce results promptly, else the wedding would take place as scheduled, and anything I might bring to light later would be of no use.

I determined to cable to Europe and learn positively

"THE Count de Cham-Pough has requested invitations for a number of titled foreigners, all friends of his, who will be in New York on the date of the grand ball, and Mrs. Tyson is in the seventh heaven of delight,' Mr. Zeamer told me. 'You have your work cut out for you, Mr. Thompson, as it will be a most difficult matter to prevent this marriage.'

"It was—just how difficult, I did not then fully realize."

tion which she thinks such an alliance would give her. And to make matters worse, she is actually in love with him."

"She needs to be protected against herself and her foolish ambition," I suggested.

"Exactly. For my part, I have no use for these dukes, lords, counts and barons. I've seen too much of this sort of thing—American girls marrying titles and going abroad with their husbands and their wealth, and coming back with neither. If Mrs. Tyson wants to make a fool of herself, that's her business. But when conditions are such that it appears to me that she is in danger of losing her money—well, then, Mr. Thompson, I feel it is up to me to take some action. That's why I sent for you."

"Do you wish me to investigate this Count's past?" I asked, not as yet exactly certain as to what he had in mind. "The chances are that I will be able to bring to light many facts in connection with him that will in no way reflect in his favor. I never yet knew one of these foreign financial wrecks who rated very high morally. The chances are that I can show him up so that Mrs. Tyson will be only too ready to dismiss him and send him on his way."

SSMALL chance of that, I'm afraid," Mr. Zeamer answered, with a negative shake of the head. "I'm certain that she is deeply in love with this fellow. It would break her heart if you revealed him as an adventurer and money-seeker."

"In that event I'll take great pleasure in breaking her heart," I rejoined. "If that Count is not stopped it's a safe bet that he'll break her heart, and also break her financially. I'll try to break her heart, but leave her the fortune intact."

"You'll have to work fast."

I looked my inquiry.

whether or not there was such an individual as the Count de Cham-Pough and also to ascertain whether or not he had ever voyaged on the sea of matrimony. Only too often these slick adventurers and fortune hunters do not let a little thing like a wife in a foreign country interfere with their efforts to annex money and another wife in this country.

"When can I meet this Count?" I asked.

Mr. Zeamer thought deeply for a moment, then tapped the top of his desk with his pencil.

YOUR name will remain unchanged, Mr. Thompson, but I will introduce you to Mrs. Tyson as being a wealthy mining promoter from the West. We'll call on her tomorrow afternoon. I'll arrange all that. Then you'll probably meet the Count, as he is paying close attention to the business in hand. After introducing you I'll drop out and leave the case to you."

We made a definite appointment for the following day, and after a little general conversation I left the banker and returned to my office. There was nothing much I could do, so I decided to take no action until after I had met Mrs. Tyson and, possibly, the Count.

My work as a detective has generally been in connection with the slick individuals who operate confidence games and swindles. To be retained for the purpose of frustrating the efforts of Dan Cupid was a new experience for me. Never before had I set out with the express purpose of preventing a wedding. This fact made the case all the more interesting to me, for, like a man in any other calling, I like to try to handle some branch of my work with which I am inexperienced, as this sort of thing both relieves the monotony and broadens one at the same time. I was deeply interested in this unusual case.

The following day Mr. Zeamer and I presented ourselves at the luxurious home of Mrs. Tyson and were duly received. It was evident that she had gone through a long course of training at the hands of competent social mentors. Her dress, manner and talk were those of a society matron. She no doubt showed to unusually good advantage that day. Mrs. Tyson was supremely happy, fairly bubbling over with joy, in fact, as the result of her engagement to the Count de Cham-Pough.

She wanted to marry him because she thought to thus make her social position secure, but there was no questioning the fact that she was also deeply in love with the dapper, suave individual who put in an appearance shortly after we

arrived. He flattered her with his constant attentions, but I rather gained the impression that he was just a trifle too obsequious. I reasoned, however, that possibly I was supercritical because of the fact that I regarded him as an adventurer, and because I realized that detectives generally work up a feeling of animosity, if not hatred, toward those whom they are employed to oppose or run down.

Mr. Zeamer and I did not tarry for any great time. Tea was served and we soon took our departure, leaving the Count in full possession of the field.

"What do you think?" Mr. Zeamer asked, as we drove down the Avenue, after leaving the Tyson home. There was a quizzical look in his eyes (*Continued on page 89*)

The "Duke" was none other than the little French waiter in the restaurant I had visited



The SEVEN Who DIED

By One Who Lived

THOUGH I am going to tell my story in print, there are sufficient reasons why my real name should remain a secret until after I am dead. Just what those reasons are will become apparent a little later on.

It is possible you remember accounts in the newspapers about three years ago of a series of strange and seemingly irrational murders, apparently done by the same hand. Seven persons, one of whom was a beautiful woman, and none of whom were known to have enemies, were killed. These murders occurred in New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Boston. Near the body of each of the unfortunates was found a small, wooden roulette wheel, black and red, about an inch and a half long. It was this mysterious circumstance that linked the seven murders as having been committed by the same person—a madman, the police and detectives decided.

I am that supposed madman. But, at that time, this judgment of me might have been a little more tempered with good sense if the police had progressed further in their investigation. They then would have discovered that a certain ship that sailed from Havre, France, some time before these murders were committed, had on board all seven of the persons murdered. By this they might have tumbled to the fact that there was method in my madness.

But let me get quickly into the story.

Immediately after my graduation from an American college, I went to France to take a post-graduate course in chemistry, locating at the little town of Enghien-les-Bains, eleven minutes out of Paris by rail. Enghien, at that time (before the Great War), was a miniature Monte Carlo, and its Casino was its chief attraction, and support.

ONE evening, feeling bored, I strolled over to the terrace overlooking the lake, in the direction of the Casino. A half-hour later I had become acquainted with Carmelita Perez, beautiful Spanish girl, who was destined to play such an important part in my life. I was then but twenty-two years of age, and, though not particularly susceptible to women's charms, I must confess I took a strong interest in Carmelita from the first.

A little later that same evening I entered the Casino, and in an idle frame of mind, without particular thought, placed a ten-franc piece on the wheel. That was the beginning of one of the most spectacular runs ever witnessed at Enghien-les-Bains. The *croupier* finally turned down his box, signifying that the bank could go no further, and when I had counted up my winnings I found that I was 200,000 francs the richer, or, at the then exchange rate, about \$40,000 in American money.

From two dollars to forty thousand dollars in the space of two hours! That was enough to turn the head of an older man than I, but, however, it never occurred to me to be nervous about carrying so much cash on my person until Carmelita dropped a warning note by my table out on the terrace, where I had gone to partake of a little refreshment. "*Soignez-vous bien vers la maison!*" it read. "Look out for yourself on the way home!"

I had noticed a group of evil-looking men watching me

at the roulette table and they had seen the money paid to me. I did some thinking, and quickly decided I would not go back to my lodgings in Enghien that night. I thus would avoid the risk of being waylaid and losing my money. Instead, I would hire a taxi—without the services of a driver—and would motor to Paris.

Just as I was getting into the car, I heard a woman scream. In the semi-darkness, twenty yards away, under a row of trees by *La Jetée*, which led away from the Casino, I came upon Carmelita struggling with a group of men. I was named all-American tackle at college back home, but, however, I attribute my success on this occasion to the fact that I had the advantage of taking the thugs by surprise.

I half dragged Carmelita into the car with me and gave the motor all the gas it would take as we roared along the road to Paris. Then came a front-tire blowout and we were ditched; fortunately, the both of us escaping serious injury. The thugs, who had been trailing us in another car, were upon us in an instant, when again good fortune intervened just when I felt my last moment on earth had come. There came a glitter of moonlight on steel. I made a desperate lunge—then a low rumbling and the steady tramp of feet sounded from around the near bend in the road. "*Allez! Vite!*" came a sharp cry from one of the men who had been menacing me, and they all made a dive for their machine.

It was an infantry regiment transferring to a fort near Paris, and with the kindly aid of Colonel Gaveau, who was in command, our car was righted, a spare tire substituted, and Carmelita and I were enabled to continue our journey. The following day I banked my winnings from the Casino at Enghien, at the *Crédit Lyonnaise*, and after a short search I found a fine studio apartment in the *Quartier Latin*, having decided to take up my abode in Paris, where I could have better facilities for my laboratory experiments.

The next day Carmelita invited me to come to see her at her apartment. There she introduced me to a man whom she said was her father, but the moment I heard him speak I felt certain he was the same man who had stood over me with a knife two nights before and threatened my life, and who would probably have killed me had not timely help arrived. The man wore a mustache, and he might have been disguised. Anyway, I would hardly have recognized his face, for I had not seen it plainly that night. But his voice I recognized. I was sure it was he.

I TRIED to find out from Carmelita who the men were who had been with her that night, but she would not tell me, and she asked that I would please not question her any further on that point. This set me to thinking. I began to be a little worried. I did not allow this to interfere with my acquaintance with the girl, however, which progressed steadily.

Soon after I became settled in my apartment I embarked on a chemical experiment along lines on which I had long been working. On this particular afternoon I was mixing two chemicals together in a retort, thinking meanwhile of Carmelita as I worked. We were to lunch together on the

An accident made "Roulette" the possessor of a secret worth millions to several European governments and to a score of capitalists. All were determined to get that secret, no matter what the costs

following day and I was looking forward to that event with a pleasurable anticipation. I took a small portion of the liquid which formed and poured it into a pan, placing the pan over an alcohol flame. Immediately it started to sizzle and crackle in a queer fashion, and a light, bitter vapor came up in a thin stream from the bottom of the pan.

I leaned over the pan, the better to examine the mixture and see what was happening. At once everything went black before me and I lost consciousness.

I was lying in my bed,

"Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, Doctor, but I feel very much alive, though a trifle weak."

The doctor gave a short laugh in his black beard, and the other one looked at me over his shoulder as though I were an extraordinary specimen. "I wouldn't talk too much if I were you," said the doctor. He turned to the other then.

"It's a most amazing thing,



It was too much for human endurance, and I—

and two doctors and a nurse were near me, talking, when I opened my eyes.

"He is conscious, Doctor!" exclaimed the nurse.

The doctors wheeled instantly and hurried to my side. One of them took my wrist to feel my pulse.

"Where am I, and what happened?" I inquired, having a little difficulty in talking on account of a curious feeling in my chest and throat.

"You are alive, my boy, which is very peculiar, because—you died some time ago," said the bearded doctor in French, examining me as though my being actually alive was an insult and affront to all French medical science.

but his pulse is absolutely normal.

Now, how can that be?"

He shook his head, and so did the other. It appears that it is a serious thing to

make a liar out of French doctors by being alive when they have pronounced you dead, and that is what I had done. However, they took care of me perfectly, and the next day, after having been unconscious for two days and given up for dead, and in bed for one more, I was up and dressed, though I did not venture out until the day after.

The doctors dismissed me with a warning not to breathe anything I knew nothing about—this was after I had told them that I had breathed the vapor from the pan containing my unknown mixture while it was cooking over my

alcohol flame. I promised not to, paid my bill, and they went away very much appeased, even though I was alive instead of dead, as I should have been.

My first thought, when I was able to think coherently, was of Carmelita. What day was it, and had she been here? The concierge, or janitor, was able to answer my questions. It was he who had found me two days before, lying as though dead, on the floor of my laboratory. He himself, I think, though he never knew it, owed his life to the fact that the window was open, the material in my pan all burned away, and the vapor dissipated outdoors. He had called the doctor, a nurse had been engaged immediately, and here I was.

Carmelita and her father had called the day before and had been met by the doctor, who told them of my condition. They left—greatly agitated, according to the concierge's account of it—promising to call again the next day, which they did almost as soon as I had finished talking of it to the concierge.

I was now dressed; though, as I have said, I did not leave my apartment until the next day. I was felicitated on my miraculous escape, and Carmelita's eyes were full of a luminous sympathy which was very pleasant to me.

"You must not take such foolish chances, Charles," she whispered to me softly, while her father was at the other end of the long room examining a picture critically.

"Why not?" I inquired, more to hear her reply than because it was a common-sense question.

"Well, for the sake of . . . your friends," she said, and her pressure on my hand sent my temperature up to perhaps a dangerous height. Her father came back then, and we had no more of this extremely personal conversation.

We discussed my strange adventure, and I told them what was in my mind. It had been almost fatal to me, but it was fortunate, too, in a way. Many great chemical discoveries are the result of accidents, and this was no exception. I had evidently discovered a vapor that was a violent poison—fatal almost instantly, if inhaled in large enough quantities. I knew I could only have inhaled a tiny whiff of it. A little more—a very little more—and I would not now be here. Of that I was sure.

Now, the point was just this: A large chemical manufacturing company in America had told me, some time before, that they would pay an enormous price if I could discover a formula of some kind of poisonous gas that

would be fatal to rats and mice. They had been experimenting for a long time, but so far their experiments had not turned out satisfactorily.

What I had done, in my accidental experiment, had been to manufacture a gas that was poisonous to human beings. Now, a gas that is poisonous to human beings is also poison-



"Roulette, how would it be . . . if you told your secret to me?" asked Carmelita softly

ous—and in much smaller quantities, too—to rats and mice. Which is the reason rats and mice are so often used in experiments.

I remembered exactly how I had produced this gas, and I knew I could produce it again at any time. From my remembrance of the gas, I thought it could be bottled up with no great difficulty. That was simply a manufacturing detail. A whiff of that, injected into any rat hole, would kill the rats instantly.

It seemed to me as though my fortune was made, and Carmelita and her father rejoiced with me when I told them about it. They went soon after, but not before I had made an appointment to call for midday dinner at their house the following Sunday, and after dinner I was to go with Car-

melita to the Fort to visit Colonel Gaveau, who had helped us so kindly when I was about to be put out of the way by the bandits who were avid for my roulette winnings.

The next day I experimented again with the gas, but this time I contrived a kind of mask that permitted me to breathe uncontaminated air. I discovered several things. One of them was that while the gas was indeed fatal to rats—it was, in fact, fatal to any living thing—it would be impractical to use for several reasons. One of the reasons was that the rats died instantly, without having a chance to stir from their tracks. This was bad—rats should not die in the house. Another was that the poisonous gas was a low-hanging vapor, which, while easy to bottle and keep, lingered in the rat holes, and any efforts to dislodge it would result in blowing it into the house itself, with perhaps fatal results to the occupants.

It was a curious kind of gas. I watched it blow away in the wind without being dispersed—as though it was a

“You know, of course,” he said, “in fact everybody knows, that we are on the verge of a war that will make every previous war seem like a skirmish. I divulge no secrets when I say this, my friend. Every thinking man is aware of the fact. The time has come when, I believe, Alsace and Lorraine will come back to us. That is not the principal reason for the war that is to come—there is an economic factor, also, but I am a patriot and a soldier, and I am interested principally in the return of our lost provinces. What the business men of France and England and Germany, and—even of the United States—do after we force Germany to return to us what she so ruthlessly took away more than fifty years ago is no affair of mine. I am interested in the movements and effectiveness of armies.

“*Alors!* This is to be a different war than any ever waged, and the weapons must be different. Our chemists have long been looking for some sort of gas that can be propelled into the enemies’ ranks by means of projectiles.

“**YOU** won’t secure this secret formula of mine—by killing me,’ I said.

“No, we won’t,’ agreed the leader of the gang. ‘But then, neither will anybody else—and that’s very important.’

“I was silent for a space. I had never thought of that angle of it. . . .

“He motioned to two of his men. . . . In imagination I could already feel the sear of the red-hot iron, and smell the pungent odor of burning flesh—my own flesh.

“It was a test—and I resolved to meet it.”

piece of a filmy curtain hanging in the breeze. It blew out of sight, and then I discontinued the experiment for that day, because I was afraid the gas would reach some unsuspecting and innocent victim, who would die through my carelessness and my mania for experiment.

So, making mental notes of the exact process for manufacturing this gas—though I did not know just what I would need it for—I resolved to work no further in that direction. As for my plans for making a fortune by means of this gas—as a rat killer—my disappointment did not last long. Youth is resilient, and life was at that time very sweet and desirable to me, even without any added fortune. After all, I was already in an enviable financial situation—and did I not know Carmelita? What more could I want?

The coming Sunday we visited the Fort, Carmelita and I, and were very kindly received by Colonel Gaveau, the commanding officer—more, I take it, because of Carmelita than because of me. He showed us all over the fortifications—at least, over as much of them as it was permitted for a layman and a foreigner to inspect. I found it very interesting—though I found everything interesting that I did in the company of Carmelita Perez. She colored my life, and I think that, at that time and for some time after, I lived only in her and because of her.

In the course of conversation, she told the Colonel of my strange mishap, and the Colonel took a lively interest in the matter, asking me every imaginable question about the peculiar gas, or vapor, that I had generated. He explained to me later why his interest had been so keen.

So far, they have had no great success. Neither, as we have means of knowing, have the chemists of our proposed enemies, who shall here be nameless, though I hate the stolid, phlegmatic soul of Germany.”

I smiled, but he went on, seemingly unconscious of what he had said. The Germans were regarded as enemies by every Frenchman, and the possibility of a war was always in their minds—and with whom should they fight if not with Germany, their hereditary enemy?

“From what you have told me, I think you have invented a gas that might do—in a military way and on a large scale—what it did to you in private. You say yourself that you hardly took a full breath of the gas—that a really full breath would probably have killed you. Also, it seems to hang together—is not dispersed too easily by the wind, and even seems a trifle heavier than the air, so that it sinks to a low level. If your gas can really do all this, and if it can be bottled up in a great projectile, I think that it is just what we have been looking for. I have no authority to make any sort of proposal to you, but if you wish I can bring the matter to the authorities. It would be doing a service to the Republic, and probably it would make a fortune for you.”

I looked at him in silence for a while. It was the working of the military mind. I would not have thought of such a use for my gas in a million years. I did not answer for a time, thinking it over. It was too new an idea for me to grasp completely—too divorced from my way of thought. Finally I said:

“It’s something to think (Continued from page 98)

The MAN Who

*All his working time—his play—his energy—were wrapped up
“Get it, no matter how.” Even his beautiful young wife
asset. And when her starved heart yearned for the tender*

By **JOE GIBBONS**
as told to **DAN D. RHODES**

WHEN I was arrested on a murder charge, the front pages of the New York papers shrieked:

R. PETER MONDAK MURDERED

**Office Manager Charged With Crime
Blames Alleged Hold-Up Men**

I was sixteen when Fate, in the shape of an advertisement for an office boy, led me to the office of the R. Peter Mondak Wrecking Company. Mondak, who hired me, looked to me as if he had been rough-hewn out of a six-foot, massive, deeply seamed old block of mahogany, with a red-hot ember in each eye socket. When he took his feet off the desk the cuspidor rattled and when he wrote my name, the fountain pen spat ink. He had come here from somewhere in eastern Europe, started as a common laborer, saved his money and when I went to work for him he was the head of one of the biggest house-wrecking concerns in New York City.

Mondak was a born slave-driver. There was hardly a job but some poor fellow got maimed or killed, yet he never batted an eyelash. His motto was: "Let the insurance company worry." But unlike most men who lack sympathy, he wasn't a coward.

I had been with him about seven years. One day, when we were wrecking a building on Fourth Avenue, I had to take an important message to him. Half a block away, over all the clatter and klaxing of the crowded street, his bellowing voice came down to me in a rain of profanity from where the roof of the house used to be. Sixty feet overhead he stood balanced on a narrow support, next to a very shaky front wall, bossing a gang of men who were lowering a derrick truss. He yelled for me to go around the wall and come up, pointing to a tall ladder that leaned almost vertically from a corner of the pit's edge against the support he stood on which was already teetering, and seemed ready to fall.

Slowly I crawled up that ladder, feeling every moment that the next step would surely send me tumbling over backward. Within six rungs of the top I stopped. He looked down with contempt. "Afraid, are you, mama's baby?"

GINGERLY I climbed the next rung, and another until, with my chin just level with the top rung, I looked down into the bare pit back of me where the inside of the house used to be. Suddenly there came a scream from the top of the derrick, a bang like the report of a shotgun, the tearing grind of steel against masonry and with an ear-splitting crash one end of the immense truss raised a volcano of dust from the pile of bricks and rubbish at the bottom. While the loose end swung to and fro dangerously near us. The slender wall trembled like a leaf and, with the fear of death clutching my throat, I clung motionless to my perch, my eyes bulging at the swaying girder as if by sheer will-power I could bring it to a halt.

Two human forms lay limp on the heap of débris at the

foot of the derrick. Others were scurrying for cover. Meanwhile Mondak, furious but unafraid, was shouting orders, cursing the two dying men for

giving the firm a bad reputation. At last one daredevil got a rope around the swaying truss, others took hold, and Mondak suddenly notified me of his intention to come down by the simple means of aiming a vicious kick that just missed the top of my head. A little more and he'd have pitched me off the ladder.

But my wages were good, jobs were not plentiful and I couldn't risk losing mine, being the main support of my mother and two sisters. By the same token I never told them about Mondak and how everybody who knew him hated him.

ONE day the office force were treated to a bomb-filled with laughing-gas. Mondak, we saw in the society columns, was getting married. He was fifty-two, and the bride-to-be nineteen. The office was buzzing, wondering what sort of a girl would fall for that hard-boiled, swarthy-faced old ditch digger.

"She'll be a happy bride—I don't think!" chirped Alice D., one of the typists. "What a lovely home she'll have, with that old bear spitting profanity and chewing tobacco all over the chintz furniture."

"She should fret a banjo," threw in Lawton, the chief bookkeeper, jazzy for his years. "Gold-diggers have to take the dirt along with the metal. The old reprobate's worth four million. I saw his income tax returns and—"

"Say, fellows," I grinned, "you're muddying the place up something terrible, dishing dirt that way. Why don't you wait and see? Maybe she'll humanize him yet?"

But Alice had another drop of vinegar to spill. "In that case we'll have two bosses instead of one. A wolf and a cat. You'll hear her purr—and look out for the claws!"

While Mr. and Mrs. Mondak were on a three months' honeymoon I was in charge of operations and, if I do say it, business went humming with no more noise or friction than a sweet-tuned six-cylinder car on a smooth highway, and I closed two contracts that left a profit as fat as any Mondak had licked his chops over.

THE morning he and his bride were expected back, we were all set for a ceremonious welcome. We had chipped in for two vases of American Beauty roses on the desk in his private office, showing how dearly we all loved to have him back in our midst. It was the spring of the year and we all had our hands full. Typewriters were clicking at half a dozen desks, bookkeepers bent over their ledgers, my desk was piled high with blue-prints and two foremen were figuring with clumsy pencils in their time-books. Yet there hung over us an air of expectancy like feverish heat waves shimmering over a parched roof.

Ten o'clock came. Alice had some letters for me to sign. "Got your speech of welcome all memorized?" she kidded.

"No," I replied. "I'll leave that to you."

"All right," she retorted. "I'll tell the old bear how glad

Courted MURDER

in one idea: Money. represented a business things of womanhood—

we are not to see him again, and you can sing *Hail to the Bride!* For my part, I think the world could get along without any marriage-grafting vamps."

"Oh, quit knocking," I said, and she tripped back to her desk humming *Oh, Sweet Alimony; Oh, Sweet Alimony*.

Eleven o'clock and no sign of Mondak or his bride. Tommy, the office boy, who reminded me every day of what I used to look like, had been running in and out of the private office all morning sniffing the flowers and flicking the last speck of dust off the furniture.

"If you take two more sniffs," said Alice, "there won't be any smell

left for the bride."

"Aw, you gimme a pain," retorted Tommy. "I got

two bits invested in them roses, ain't I? I ain't hurtin' 'em."

Twelve o'clock, and nothing happened. Some of the girls took their powder puffs and got up to primp for lunch. Lawton got out his milk and crackers and there was the

Mondak aimed a vicious kick that just missed the top of my head

usual noon hour let-down when suddenly Mondak's unmistakable clomp-clomp sounded down the marble floor of the hall, the door flung open and the boss stalked in.

Alice rose with an expectant smile, Lawton choked on a cracker and hurried to greet the happy groom, but Mondak made

straight for his private office without a look to right or left, or a nod to anybody, and slammed the door behind him. I had jumped to my feet, trying to think of something appropriate to say in the line of welcome, but the scowl on Mondak's hard-wood face decided me to wait 'til sent for.

The buzzer sounded. Report sheets in hand, I went in.

"Glad to see y——" I began, but he shut me up.

"Were any of you invited to my wedding?" he barked.

"Why—er—no, sir," I said, not knowing what he was driving at.

"Then what the hell's the idea of these fool flowers? This isn't a conservatory. It's a business office, get me? Throw the damn things out and let me see your report. The men working on those new contracts yet?"

Tommy started to distribute the roses among the girls, tying them up as little corsage bouquets. "Hey! Cut that out," I said. "Take them to some hospital."

"Don't you do it," warned Alice. "Those flowers are

bad luck, now. The old grouch has put a jinx on them."

Things went on that way 'til mid-winter. Mrs. Mondak never came to the office. Then one day Mondak strode to my desk. "I want you to come to the house to-night at nine and help Mrs. Mondak straighten out her household accounts. She's been handing out checks like a drunken sailor, the damn little——"

I COULD hardly believe my ears, that even a brute like him would call his wife such a name, and moreover, I wasn't a bit stuck on the job he had wished on me. Some fellows might have taken it for a compliment, but when a guy slips you a stick of dynamite with a burning fuse at either end, it doesn't look much like a love-feast usually, because you are sure to get hurt no matter which end blows up first.

Mondak, being what is socially known as "a climber," had bought a house in the Murray Hill section of the city, where a lot of old Knickerbocker families are still entrenched in a losing fight against the attacks of business buildings and cheap rooming houses.

Promptly at nine that evening I mounted the broad steps

evening. Still, what the ——. Anyway No. 3 finally came to life sufficiently to announce: "Mr. Mondak is expecting you, sir," the way a judge might say: "And the Lord have mercy on your soul."

Then, in a solemn procession of two, he and I soft-shoed through a magnificent waiting-room, skated over a hardwood floor in a drawing-room that looked as stiff as the baronial hall in some old French chateau and so into a large sort of mixed office and lounging room where my guide halted on the threshold and in a subdued voice heralded: "Mr. Gibbons, sir."

Passing the butler I noticed a distinctly hostile twist at the corners of his mouth. I wondered what in the world he had against me.

MONDAK, standing with his massive legs apart, like a weather-beaten statue before an open grate, looked over the edge of a newspaper long enough to growl: "Tell Mrs. Mondak he's here." Without taking any further notice of me, he went on reading and I had my first chance to study the boss in the sweetness of his own home. He was moistly chewing the end of a fat Havana and, as he half

"SUDDENLY there came Mondak's voice from the hall, then a pause as if someone were answering, then his voice again, cursing, then the blow of a fist and Aileen ran in, panting: 'Quick! Help! Joe! He struck——'

"Blood was on her lip! Instinctively I grabbed the revolver, flew to the hall——"

of his colonial-style mansion and discreetly raised the old-fashioned door-knocker, a brass lion's head on hinges. The moment I touched it, the door swung open as by clockwork and before me loomed a decorative footman in blue coat and trousers and red vest with brass buttons. He didn't say a word; merely stood at attention, to signify that I might enter. Before I recovered from the surprise, another flunkey appeared, six feet behind the first and stood like a graven image at the foot of a marble stairway, with a silver tray in his hands.

I started to tell them what I'd come for, but flunkey No. 1 discouraged any such familiarity by a severe gesture toward the silver tray. At the same instant a third functionary, in a black Tuxedo coat with white tie, appeared noiselessly from nowhere, remained silent at the top of the stairs and majestically accepted the silver tray from No. 2, after No. 2 had condescendingly received my card. Then No. 2 deftly relieved me of my hat and overcoat and disappeared with them as quickly and mysteriously as he had arrived.

No. 3 looked to me as if he might be the butler, and the way he lifted his eyebrows at that card of mine showed it didn't make much of a hit with him.

"What's wrong with that card?" I asked myself.

JOE GIBBONS
Office Manager
R. Peter Mondak Wrecking Company,
1298 Sherwood Street, New York.

NOTHING could be plainer. The trouble was, it was too plain. It was printed, when it should have been engraved, and I had yet to learn that it isn't good form to present a business card at a personal call, least of all in the

faced the fire, his jowls, bulging over the edge of a stiff white collar, were none the prettier for catching reddish slashes of light on the brown tobacco drool crusted around his lips. Diamond cuff links, glittering at the sleeves of his dinner jacket, screamed attention to the spatulated, square-nailed fingers that gripped the paper as if he were on the point of tearing it in pieces.

Presently the butler returned. "Mrs. Mondak is ready, sir."

MONDAK glared. "What d' you mean, ready?" he barked. "Are you too — — dumb to take a message? I told you to tell her he is *here!* You understand? Here!" pointing sharply at the floor.

The butler, bowed like a hinged cucumber on ice, said: "Very well, sir," and, turning on his heel, threw me a nasty look as if it were all my fault, and made a noiseless but hasty exit. I was darn glad I didn't have his job.

For another minute or two there was silence, broken only by the crackle of the logs in the fireplace. Then the door was softly opened and, with a catch of the breath I looked in amazed admiration upon a dream picture of youth and ethereal beauty. Framed in the dark folds of the portiere stood Aileen, Mondak's wife. Her delicate features, classic head, glorified by her golden hair, erased all thoughts from my mind except that I was gazing upon the living ideal of some painter whose brush had been inspired by the godlike mind of a poet.

As she came within the undulating light from the fireplace, her gown, of some silvery, clinging material, revealed her virginally perfect figure. I felt lifted out of myself, transported, watching spellbound the demure question that traveled from under the curtaining lashes of her limp

violet eyes toward the sinister bulk that stood, insultingly silent, at the hearth. I saw her face flood with color, a faint trembling of her rose-leaf lips and at once a hot resentment doubled the pulsing of my blood, to be quickly forgotten as her gentle voice came to me like silvery bells at a cathedral service.

"You wanted me here, d-dear?" she asked almost submissively, hesitating the breath of an instant over that word "dear."

He answered indirectly: "This is Gibbons, from the office. Got those accounts with you?"

I FELT guilty, ashamed to be witnessing his insulting behavior and powerless to interfere. A warm sense of pity flooded over me, a longing to say something to break the tension, to ease the awkwardness of the situation both for her and myself, but all I could think of was to make a little bow and mutter a respectful: "Mrs. Mondak—"

A pretty smile rewarded me and somehow I felt that she knew she had found a friend in me. Another moment and I would have told Mondak what I thought of him and let the devil take the hindmost, but I think she guessed as much, for she quickly opened a silver mesh-bag, took out a little leather-bound notebook and said, addressing her husband: "This is my

"There is \$4000 in this," Aileen whispered. "Put it away for me. I am being watched"

haps we'd better sit at that table, in the window, so we shan't disturb your papers." Then to me: "I am afraid you will find me a very stupid pupil, Mr. Gibbons."

I'd have given my right hand for something bright to reply, but clever retorts always come to me twenty-four hours too late. All I could think of was: "Is this little day-book up to date, Mrs. Mondak?"

"I don't think so," she replied with a candid little shake that made a golden wisp come peeping down her forehead into the violet mirrors of her eyes. She brushed it away, but it fell down again. Then she blew it upward, but of course it didn't stay up and I watched it, fascinated, wondering what would happen to me if I suddenly yielded to the temptation to take that little wisp of gold between my finger-tips and—yes—kiss it—for I had never seen so much ravishing prettiness all at once, let alone sit so close to it. Her breath was like roses and such portion of my mind as wasn't a perfect blank was going crazy. I almost forgot where I was or what I was there for—

Suddenly a snarl from near the fireplace: "Come in!"

I had not even heard anyone knock, but the butler came in and offered Mondak a visiting-card on the aforementioned silver tray in much the same fashion that a Chinese pidgin man presents a golden prayer-paper to a statue of Joss.

"Show him in here," said Mondak, curtly, and then, adding a shade of gruff-

day-book, d-dear." Again a stumble over that "dear."

"Hm," he snorted.

"It's a hell of a day-book. Well, get to work, the two of you. I'm sick and tired paying twice over for the same things." Then to me: "You arrange to come here once a week and see if you can balance those things and"—with a nasty glance directly at her—"report to me."

I WAS inwardly raging, but I clenched my fists and said "Yes, sir, I will," hang-dog fashion. I had been his obedient employee so many years, it never struck him I would even think of rebellion. Nor had I any intention of doing so. He was paying me fifty dollars a week, and that was real money even in New York. Not enough to fly high on, but sufficient to be comfortable and put away a little for a rainy day.

"May we use your desk?" said Mrs. Mondak. "Or per-

ness for his wife's benefit: "Aileen, you and Joe go to the library with that stuff. Do your figuring there."

Walking on fleecy clouds I followed her satiny footsteps across a gorgeous anteroom, through a flower-filled conservatory and thence into the library.

"I hate this room," said Mrs. Mondak, and I didn't wonder. It was as high almost as the interior of a cathedral, and about as cheerful as a church on Monday night. With a deadening carpet, a center table that made one think of a catafalque, mahogany chairs like bishops' thrones, and tier upon tier of books frowning from floor to frieze, the place seemed far too austere for any human being except the butler, and I had yet to be convinced that he was human.

"There must be splendid reading in all these books," I ventured, feeling I had to say (Continued on page 110)



Confessions of a

"Never take a man until you are sure he's going no mercy." That's a con-man's creed. How

YEARS back, when I was but a kid, I mastered the secrets of marked cards and loaded dice. I have had to read ac-

By One of Them

curately these pin-head marks on cards that were across a six-foot table under a glaring light cluster, not once, but fifty and a hundred times between eight o'clock and dawn. At one time in my life I played poker every night for a year, using marked cards! That is why I wear thick-lensed glasses now.

I have run a chuck luck in a lumber camp where men, rough, raw-boned men, maimed one another for the sheer joy of fighting. For a time I ran a bucket shop. I have promoted stock in gold mines when the only gold in prospect was that which reposed in the pockets of the investors. I know what a trainer of race-horses means when he gives a significant wink and sprinkles goo-goo dust on the tongue of his horse before a race—and I've turned that knowledge into money. In short, I have been a con-man for upwards of twenty-five years. Now I am out of it. *I found that it didn't pay.*

I mean just that—literally. For, although I have made several fortunes in my time, to-day, when I am almost what one might call an old man, I am practically broke.

I was born and reared in a small town in Pennsylvania on the banks of the Susquehanna River—we will call the town Dover for the sake of convenience—and it was there in the law office of Jimmy Black that I got my first lessons in crookedness. I wonder sometimes whether I was crooked by nature, to begin with. I don't think so. At least, I did not inherit it from my parents. Few men had a more sweet, gentle, upright woman for a mother than I, nor a finer man for a father, mentally, morally and physically, than was my Dad. If I admit that I have been crooked, I must look for my excuse elsewhere.

But the word crooked is sometimes misinterpreted. Personally I have a firmly rooted sense of right and wrong, which, through all the years of my varied career, never has deserted me. And I have stuck by it. It may sound like a bluff from a crook, but I have followed my conscience—and the truth of this will be apparent I hope, as my story develops. There is more than one way of being a con-man, just as there is more than one way of being a banker.

THE first deal I attempted of any consequence was the forging of the will of the Widow Higgins, one of the prominent residents of Dover. Her cast-off son, Charlie, the black sheep of the family, was to split \$50,000 with me for my share in this, but the thing didn't go through. The woman died, and she left the money, but she also left a new will, which I hadn't counted on, along with certain entries in her diary that caused my arrest when the forged will was presented for probate. Jimmy Black came to my rescue, bailed me out, and I skipped bail and town at the same time—on Jimmy's advice. Meanwhile Charlie Higgins was arrested and jailed, and he swore that he would get even with me. I laughed at him.

I went to Philadelphia and the only worry I had in the world was the thought that Mary King might find out what

I had done. Mary was one of the prettiest girls in Dover, and we were engaged. I had made the sacred agreement with her shortly before I

left town. I had vowed that I would come back, and with plenty of money—and that we would marry.

I put up at Green's Hotel, a flourishing place at that time—some thirty years ago. A few nights later I was at Art Chambers' gambling house, in a game with six players, at draw poker, jack pot, using marked cards of my own which I had introduced into the game by a ruse. It was at that game I met Gil Hawkins, the Iron Man, as I called him. I quit the game eighty dollars to the good and was on my way home at 4 a. m. when old Gil stopped me with a tap on the shoulder.

I will not enter into detail, but it took him about two minutes to convince me that forty dollars of the eighty dollars was due him. I had wondered why I had won that money so easily and why that silent stranger with the hard, steely eyes had seemed to play into my hand so consistently. We went to a restaurant together and in the next hour I learned more about the con-game than I had thought possible to learn in that space of time. Gil Hawkins was a past-master of the con-game in all its phases and right there I became his pupil, and we hitched up together as pals and co-workers.

THAT very morning, just as I started up the steps of my rooming place at dawn, I stared into the muzzle of a revolver held by the shaking hand of Charlie Higgins, drunk-crazed and desperate. I left him unconscious on the sidewalk from a blow on the jaw and without trying to get my clothes or grip, caught the early morning milk train for Trenton, and there, that evening, Gil found me, at a second-rate hotel near the Trenton station. Shortly after that the Shelby-Alter Circus came to town and I joined the show as strong man with the Hinkle Troup, acrobats—on Gil's advice. Gil figured that we could make a clean-up with that circus.

But there came a sharp interruption to the gaiety and glamor of the new life when one morning I came down from my room in the hotel to find a letter from Dover awaiting me, addressed in Mary's handwriting. In it she said: "I can't get through the situation I'm in, without you," and she stated that she must see me immediately. That didn't sound like Mary at all. It got me to thinking.

Charlie Higgins! He was at the bottom of this hurry-call home, I felt certain. It made me mad clean through. I decided not to follow my first impulse, but to stay away—and if I found that Charlie was indeed back of this, if he had upset Mary and worried her, I'd settle with him in a way that he'd remember for the rest of his life!

I sat down at once and wrote Mary, telling her that if she was in trouble—which I frankly doubted—she would find a real friend and confidant in my father. I told her that I had just caught on with the circus, and a break now would be fatal to a glowing future. I looked up the itinerary of the circus and found that in three weeks I would be twenty miles from Dover. Then I could look into this affair and get at the bottom of it.

CONFIDENCE MAN

to take you. Then go after his money, and show it worked out in Jim Kendall's case—

Of course I showed the letter to Gil and told him what I thought. He simply nodded, but I knew from that that he agreed with what I intended to do.

I had been curious to know just what he had in mind in connection with using the circus for a clean-up. As I have said, I knew better than to ask a direct question, or to annoy him by being

with Gil when I didn't know he was otherwise engaged.

Just before the big-top show was to open one afternoon, Gil and I were standing on the lot in a crowd. The crowd was gathered to witness one of the come-on attractions of the show—which was a parachute jump from a balloon.

Sure enough, there lay the pea on the table. Gil's left hand reached for the \$100

The ballyhoo man stood on a platform at the edge of the crowd: "Madam

Dervish will now perform the wonder feat of the



overcurious. That first week I was to learn what he had in mind—and when I knew, I couldn't help my open admiration for his methods of work, nor my frank amazement at the man's varied abilities.

HE had come to the circus every performance, every day since I had taken my new job. He would spend a whole afternoon in the side-show tent. Again, I'd find him in chummy conversation with a forty-dollar-a-month man of all work—strange company for him.

My act came on about four in the afternoon, and again at ten in the evening. Between parade and practice time in the morning, and time for the act, I had little or nothing to do when we were not on the move. This time I spent

age. She will leap from the basket at an altitude of—"

Necks were craned, breaths were held, hardly a person in the crowd moved, so intent were the onlookers to miss nothing of Madam Dervish's daring parachute jump. I had seen the jump a dozen times, and it had lost its glamor for me; this afternoon I was more interested in watching the crowd.

Suddenly, on my right, I saw a quick movement. Focussing my attention, I saw a young, poorly-dressed fellow of twenty-three or so, a fellow I had seen hanging around the tents often—dart his hand into a man's coat pocket and take out a wallet.

Instantly I started to thread my way past the people next to me to get up to him and collar the pickpocket. And be-

fore I could get within six rows of closely packed men and women, I saw him deftly slip a woman's handbag from her fingers and hide it under his coat. The woman and the man both were unaware of their loss. Their attention was held by the parachute jump.

Suddenly I felt a firm grip on my shoulder. Turning, I saw it was Gil's hand detaining me.

"Steady, son. Don't monkey into things that don't concern you. I saw it, too."

"But, Gil," I said, hot with indignation, "I saw him take a handbag and a wallet. That sort of thing ought not to go on in a crowd like this. These countrymen are out for a good time. They don't mean to trim anybody, so why should they be robbed—and by a dip, no less?"

GIL clapped a hand over my mouth to keep me still. I saw that I had attracted the attention of several who stood near by. With no loss of time he started to pick his way through the crowd toward a spot on the lot where we could talk without interruption.

"Son," he said, "you have a lot to learn. You came near gumming the whole works, losing your job and our chances."

"I did? What do you mean?"

"That dip and about a dozen others are on the payroll of the show. Most small circuses are gyp outfits. They can't make expenses on the up and up, and this is one of the ways

calls out, and then one of them lays on the sucker 'til he's just inside the animal tent. And while the candidate is gawping at the giraffes or the elephants, the dip gets in his work. Did you ever see in a big city— But of course you haven't; you haven't been to a big town yet, except a few days in Philly. But when you get to New York, say, you'll find pushcarts in cheap sections of the city, selling leather wallets dirt cheap—real leather stuff for a nickel or a dime. They come from places like this. That's all."

He didn't say: "Never think of interfering with a pick-pocket again," but I had "got the office to lay off," without his saying so. From that day on I never raised my hand to interfere in an affair that wasn't mine—pickpockets in particular.

I COULD not get Mary out of my mind. I pictured her possibly waiting for me to come through the gate of her home, a worried frown on her face. I imagined her in money difficulty—worried perhaps over an injury some friend or supposed friend had done her—injured maybe, wanting to keep the news from me for fear of worrying me—a hundred and one things went through my mind in imaginative array. But always I came back to the belief that Charlie Higgins had in some way worked on her mind until she wrote me to come home, so that he could throw me into jail and so take revenge.

"A LITTLE game of science and skill, men. Just to show that the hand is quicker than the eye."

"Here's a dollar that says I can find the pea."

"A dollar it is. Come on, men—anybody else?"

they fill in. Did you suppose the parachute jump was for the amusement of the customers? Not by a good sight. It's a means of keeping their heads up, their eyes toward the sky. During that few minutes the circus makes one of its biggest killings of the day. Come along with me. I want to show you something."

I was astounded. But I knew that Gil told the truth. He wouldn't give me a bum steer. He led the way to the ticket booth, where late comers were buying admission tickets to the main show.

"Stand over there, and listen now."

I walked over to the flap of a tent, and watched the sale of tickets, missing nothing of what the ballyhoo said.

For awhile I could distinguish nothing but the ordinary line of sales talk, done in the way peculiar to circus ballyhoos. Then I noticed that a certain phrase was repeated several times, interspersed with the sales talk. That phrase was: "kick right." Sometimes it was "kick left," and once or twice "upper left," or "upper right."

Feeling that I had discovered something, I went back to where Gil stood and told him what I had heard.

"You got it, son. And this is what it means: 'Kick' is a pair of pants. The ticket seller, of course, sees where a man keeps his money—pants pocket, left, or pants pocket, right. If it's the vest pocket, of course he calls that out. Now look over there."

I FOLLOWED the direction of his nod, and saw close to the main entrance half a dozen or so rowdy-looking young fellows, most of them wearing caps and suits gone to seed.

"Dips—all of them," said Gil. "They get what the barker

And the more I thought of Mary, the stronger my affection for her grew. I saw her blue eyes, her light hair, her strong chin—a shade overstrong for a woman—the straight arch of her back, her shoulders squared and high as if she walked in pride of health and pride of right thinking—this vision of her was before me always. I began to count the days until I could see her again. And I began to reckon the time until I would ask her to marry me.

AND with the thought of her there was always the consciousness of danger. I knew that if she found out about my card-playing, the grift that I had elected after my association with Jimmy Black—she would not marry me, regardless of how she loved me. I knew, too, that she was the one woman for me. Without her, my world would come tumbling down on my head; I would lose ambition, life would mean nothing.

In two and a half more weeks I would see her!

The night of the pickpocket experience Gil and I had supper early. "I want to get back to the lot before the main crowd," he told me.

By quarter to seven we were on the grounds once more.

We went into the side show, and Gil centered his attention on a man who stood behind a small rough table, covered with green baise. The man was fat, and broad of shoulder. He wore a derby hat gray in color, and his suit was black-and-white checked.

"A little game of science and skill, men," he was hawking to the men who stood by. "Just to show that the hand is quicker than the eye. Now you see it, now you don't. Step right up, men. Try your luck." (Continued on page 116)

The *Riddle* of the ANCIENT CODE

*"'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord." Here
is one man who thought he knew better
than the Almighty*

By Detective MAURICE WAHLMERS
as told to CHADWYN BAEN

The song died in a
hoarse whisper, fol-
lowed by a
gasp of
horror

IN the gray light of early dawn the marble walls of the empty corridors echoed back the throaty, yet cheerful, melody. Mrs. O'Toole, scrubwoman in the Empire office-building, set down her assortment of pails and mops to unlock the door bearing in gold on its ground-glass panel the words: "Jaffe Investment Company, Inc., Louis Jaffe, President. Private."

With the song still on her lips, the woman opened the door and went inside to dust the furniture.

Mrs. O'Toole was walking toward the desk in the center of the room when the words of the famous old song died in a hoarse whisper, followed by a gasp of horror.

A moment later, babbling a prayer, she staggered out into the corridor and leaned for support against the wall. Recovering her strength as the fit of dizziness left her, she walked across the hall to another office and telephoned the police department.

The ringing of my telephone bell dragged me out of bed fully an hour before my usual time for rising.

"Maurice Wahlmers speaking," I announced as I lifted the receiver.

"This is Desk Sergeant Garrity," came the voice over the phone. "There's been a murder in the Empire office-building. You'd better investigate right away. I'm sending Schenck and Dodge with the wagon. I could not get the details—the woman who phoned was so excited she could only squawk, 'It's murder, it is, in the Empire building.'"

A fourteen-story structure of the modern fireproof type, the Empire building is in the heart of the Metropolitan theater and shopping district. When I arrived at the street entrance, the police car was already there. The night watchman,



a man of fifty who said his name was Jones, was pacing importantly in front of the elevator.

"You can't go up," he snapped as I approached; "orders of the police."

"I'm a detective from Headquarters," I informed him, pressing the electric button. "What do you know about the murder?"

"Not very much," answered the man more respectfully. "I was in the furnace room in the basement when old Mrs. O'Toole, the janitress, comes down in the elevator yelling

motioned to the woman to take us up. It was then she began volubly to relate the incidents recorded at the beginning of this report. At the eleventh floor she stopped the car and opened the door into the corridor.

"It's that way." Mrs. O'Toole showed a disposition to remain as far away from the scene of the crime as possible, merely pointing with a pudgy finger down the corridor, where Schenck stood guard at the office door.

"Come with me—both of you," I ordered; "I shall want to ask you some questions."

"The saints presarve me from those—" whimpered the woman.

"You won't have to go into the room again," I assured her, "but I want you to remain within call. Come along, Jones."

The Jaffe Investment Company occupied a suite of two rooms, consisting of a large outer office for receiving the public, and a smaller room which Jaffe used as his private office. The two were connected by a single door between, and both offices had doors on the corridor.

"Have you been inside?" I asked as I joined Schenck and gestured toward the private office.

"No," he answered; "just looked in, that's all. The door was standing open when I came."

For a moment as I stood in the door to the private office and inspected the general arrangement of the room, I saw nothing unusual. About sixteen feet square, with south and west exposure, the room was situated in the corner of the building. In the center was the desk. Instead of the usual swivel chair, there was a deep, velvet overstuffed chair with its back toward the west window, the lower sash of which was up its full height. A tall, steel filing cabinet stood between two windows in the south wall. Except for a hall-tree and a visitor's chair at the right of the desk, the room contained no other furniture.

The city burns soft coal... there was no dust on the window-sill...

like a loon, 'Shure it's Mister Jaffe that's after being murdered it is, and it's me that's after calling the police.'

"No," says I, 'Mister Jaffe don't come down to the office so early in the morning—it's only six o'clock.'

"But it's him indade," she insists. So I goes with her and sees for myself. She stays back by the elevator while I goes to Jaffe's office, and when I looked—"

At this point the elevator appeared, with the scrub woman and Patrolman Dodge.

"Stay down here in the lobby, Dodge," I directed, "and keep out the curiosity seekers. It is an hour before the building is usually opened to the public. If you see anything that looks suspicious, press the elevator buzzer three times."

Ushering Jones into the car, I closed the steel door and

With Schenck and Jones at my heels, and while the woman murmured prayers in the hall outside, I stepped into the room and around to the other side of the desk.

Then I was able to understand the cold terror that had seized Mrs. O'Toole upon the discovery of the ghastly thing there on the floor of that private office. With jaw relaxed, with wide staring, bloodshot eyes that seemed to pierce through me and beyond into the empty void, lay the body of Louis Jaffe, president of the investment company bearing his name. A purplish contusion extending from the right brow up into the hair showed where the death blow had fallen. Evidently a short piece of water-pipe, or something



of a similar nature, had been wielded by a powerful assailant, for my experienced eye told me that the skull had been crushed.

Why should anyone desire the violent death of this man? The motive was not robbery, for there was no disorder such as is usually found when a room has been searched for hidden treasure. What the awful motive was I was soon to know, although many weeks were to elapse before I learned from a man in the shadow of the gallows what prompted that motive.

"Say," suddenly exclaimed Schenck, pointing down at a piece of paper lying on the dead man's leg, "isn't that a leaf out of the Bible?"

"That's exactly what it is," I affirmed in amazement, bending over for a closer examination.

WITHOUT disturbing the position of the paper lying on the dead man's leg, I noted that a passage had been heavily underscored with a lead-pencil.

"—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—" I read aloud.

"It's the code!" exclaimed Jones. "The code of the ancient Hebrews!" He nodded his head in respectful awe, and pulled excitedly at his short chin whiskers. "This is surely the hand of God—"

beyond what she had said before. She was one of a half dozen who worked from floor to floor, scrubbing, mopping and dusting. Jaffe's reception-room adjoining the private office, I found to be some thirty feet in length and sixteen in width. There was a complete equipment of exchange board for chalking up the market quotations, desks, typewriters, telegraph instrument, ticket, *et cetera*. Everything was of the most modern and expensive kinds.

AT eight o'clock the coroner came, perfunctorily examined the body, pronounced death due to a blow with a blunt object in the hands of an unknown assailant—motive, revenge. He stated that the man had been dead since five or six o'clock of the previous afternoon. He authorized removal to the morgue, asked me a few questions as to the thoroughness of my inspection, and took his departure.

Jaffe's stenographers and bookkeepers began to dribble in soon after eight, and by eight-thirty the complete force was on the job. I spent the morning questioning them singly and as a group, but will not delay this report by going into details of things having no bearing on subsequent revelations.

The office manager, a Mr. A. L. Kierstead, I found to be a genial, stout, gray-haired man of fifty. He had known Jaffe for fifteen years, most of which time he had worked for him in one capacity or another. At my suggestion he

"WITHOUT disturbing the piece of paper lying on the dead man's leg, I noted that a passage had been heavily underscored with a lead-pencil.

"—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—"

"It's the code!" exclaimed Jones. **"The code—"**

"What time do you come on duty, Jones?" I interrupted, not wishing to hear what I considered under the circumstances to be the ravings of a religious fanatic.

"At eight in the evening and I leave at four in the morning, but I often take a nap on a cot in the furnace room before going home for breakfast."

"And were you asleep this morning when the woman came down to call you?"

"Yes, sir."

I COMPLETED my inspection of the room and stood with my back to the open window, summarizing the situation: Mrs. O'Toole had found the hall door locked; the south windows and the connecting door to the outer office were also locked. By leaning far out the west window I discovered no ledge—not even one of half an inch in width—which afforded a possible means of passage from one window to another. The outside walls for eleven stories below and for three above were of white terra-cotta almost as smooth as an egg-shell. No so-called human fly could scale such a building.

As I stood there by the open window, I took particular note of the position of the body and imagined that Jaffe had been seated at his desk when a slight noise behind him caused him to turn—only to be struck down before he could make a move to defend himself. I would give that thought more consideration later.

Leaving the room exactly as I found it, I returned to the hall and questioned the scrub-woman as to the details of her work. However, there was little of importance to learn

turned over his duties to his assistant, and together we shut ourselves in Jaffe's private office. That part of his story concerned with this report is given below:

Kierstead's acquaintance with Jaffe began soon after Jaffe's wife died—a mere girl, considerably younger than her husband. The manager knew nothing about her except that she died of heart failure soon after her marriage. The dead man had no known enemies and had not discharged an employee for the ten years of their association. Jaffe was a sufferer from asthma, and, except when the weather was blustery, never sat in his room without having the window open.

"Will you assist me in dramatizing the murder?" I asked, when Kierstead had finished.

"How do you mean?" asked Kierstead curiously.

"Suppose you take Jaffe's seat," I explained, "and I will go through the movements which I believe resulted in the man's death."

"Oh, sure," he shrugged gingerly and dropped into the chair at the desk.

"Remember," I went on, "that the doors and windows—except this one—are locked. What would be your first impulse if you heard a strange noise within the room?"

"WELL," began Kierstead thoughtfully, "since the window behind me is open and since I can see practically every other part of the room, I would naturally turn around toward the window."

"Good!" I commented. "Please do so."

Kierstead turned and saw me (*Continued on page 66*)

LONE WOLF, the

With only a single thumb-print, left in a police tackle afresh the job of landing city into a fever

By **BERNARD G. PRIESTLEY**

Formerly of the *Boston Herald*

It is not the intention of the Publishers or to bring further distress to the unfortunate women. In order that true identities may not be names have been made

A WHOLE city terrorized—no woman feeling she was safe on the streets or in the confines of her own home—all because of the depredations of a mysterious bandit calling himself "Lone Wolf." This was the situation confronting a police force five hundred strong.

For weeks the crimes of Lone Wolf continued, with no clue to his identity except a thumb-print which he brazenly left, knowing it

The very next day what seemed to be an attempted fulfillment of the threat was carried out, but in a section somewhat removed from the particular locality in which Lone Wolf had been operating. The scene was the apartment of Miss Muriel C. Smith, a stenographer.

There was a strange angle to this case. Miss Smith had been employed previously by Miss Rogers, one of Lone Wolf's victims. Only shortly before had she accepted a new position at the Public Library.

The job at Miss Smith's was carried out in broad daylight, while scores of people were moving about the apartment-house. Fortunately for her, she had been at work. As if to vent spleen upon her for not being home to entertain, the burglar or burglars wrecked everything at all breakable in the apartment.

A phonograph was dismembered into many parts—an act which no amount of logical thinking could find a motive to justify, aside from an ingrown complex for pure cussedness. In addition to various valuables, \$90

in cash was taken—money which, the girl told reporters, she had been skimping herself for weeks and weeks to save in order to pay the funeral expenses of her cherished mother, from



His face was the image of the photograph of Tom Crick

would reach the avid eyes of the police.

The crowning touch in his campaign of audacity came when Lone Wolf sent to the City Editor of a prominent newspaper the following message, scrawled in disguised handwriting, in pencil, on a bit of note-paper:

Watch for my biggest move before I retire from the city.
As you say,

LONE WOLF.

Boudoir BANDIT

moment of bravado, to guide them, the the solitary bandit who threw a whole of nervous fear

the Editor of TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES who were victims of the crimes of Lone Wolf. established, and needless harm result, all fictitious in this story.

whom death had separated her only a few months before.

Had this been Lone Wolf's idea of his "biggest move"? The police hardly thought so, although they realized that if Miss Smith had been home, it would not have been difficult for a person of Lone Wolf's traits to have made a "bigger" job of the case than he had yet done.

And was Lone Wolf intending to leave town as he had hinted? The police, at least, were not influenced one way or another by this hint.

Fear of Lone Wolf and his possible disciples became even more widespread. There was a new exodus of timid misses, also ones not ordinarily timid, to safer parts of the city and to relatives and friends in places many miles away. Many who were forced to remain in the vicinity because of the pressure of their duties or their inability to afford time off from their work without pay, sought permits to carry revolvers.

House-to-house canvassers began to avoid the locality as if it were poison. In this decision they showed discretion, for the pressing of an apartment door-bell brought a scream down the speaking tube, and a knock on the outer door of a suite was quite likely to result in a summons to the police, even though the person seeking entrance

was really an honest tradesman. Reporters frequently found their self-instituted investigations balked not only by shouts for the police but by revolvers brandished in shaking female hands.

There came a day when the police were encouraged by the first real progress toward establishing Lone Wolf's identity. And the thumb-print he had left defiantly on the ginger-ale bottle was responsible!

The U. S. Navy Department, tried when police departments
(Continued on
page 70)



"My husband the Lone Wolf? Why, that's impossible"

The Curious Case of

*Rene Hanley
stand in her
A fortune in*

"See, it's
a grand
big room,
Maisie"



I RECOGNIZED his face in a flash as soon as I entered our outer reception room. An elusive, forgotten memory of something sinister and disagreeable, stirred to life immediately. His name for the instant, eluded me.

Heavy jowls; sensual lips under a short cropped moustache; small, mean eyes; sandy hair thickly sprinkled with gray; doggy English tweeds; an air of "high-and-mightiness" that hinted at a background of imported limousines, clubs on Fifth Avenue, and a well fortified sanctum entrenched in some big banking house on Wall Street.

Up and down the small office, he was pacing, like a peevish tiger.

We came together at the door which led towards the Operative's Room. For a moment he paused. As he blocked my way, I, too, was forced to stop. I looked up at him inquiringly.

I could see by the way his brows contracted and his eyes glittered, that recognition was mutual—but was not going to be acknowledged by him.

"My good girl, would you find out why Browne is keeping me waiting?" he demanded in a surly, disagreeable voice. "I sent in my name over five minutes ago."

Now, there's nothing "uppity" about me. I would just as soon do a favor for the window cleaner or the iceman as I would for the King of Siam. But when a man tried to high-hat me, and addresses me snippily as "my good girl" why, he simply gets my goat and brings out every little bit of sauciness in my system. Quite automatically, several nice,

the Andrews PEARLS

did not let breeding and tender sensibilities way when she had to live with a gang of thieves. stolen jewels—and infinitely more—was at stake

By RENE HANLEY, Chief Girl Operator for Howard Browne, Former Pinkerton Operative

I had barely time to roll under the big, double-bed when—

prop of Wall Street, philanthropist and well advertised churchgoer.

Of course there would be lots of jack to be made out of any case he brought into our office. His august presence (in person) suggested some personal peccadillo. But I hoped I wouldn't be asked to work on it.

Anyway, I wanted a vacation. Perhaps it was the delicate, balmy spring air which whispered of



sizzling tit-bits of repartee blazed into spontaneous combustion—if you know what I mean—but I squelched them.

Turning to our switchboard girl, I drawled in my best brand of silk-backed-velvet tones: "Maisie, have you sent in this—er, person's name?"

The man's eyes glared at me, and if looks could kill, Rene Hanley would have bit the dust right then and there.

MAISIE'S voice broke an awkward silence: "Mr. Browne is busy with a client just now. He said he would see Mr. Andrews in a few moments."

Andrews—Joseph Madison Andrews—that was it! At the sound of the name all the forgotten details of the Andrews-Morrison case responded immediately, like bits of steel at the approach of a magnet.

Andrews isn't the man's real name, you understand. He wasn't a crook—he was a client. Yet, I know lots of crooks—real mean rascals, too—that I respect more than I do this

alluring countrysides, fruit blossom scents, acres of orchards buried under clouds of soft pink and white petals, that was responsible for my sudden distaste for the unsavory job of sweeping up the débris of clients' messy scandals.

As I made out my report on the trial proceedings of a case of blackmail, I decided to ask the Chief for a month's leave of absence. If he wouldn't give it to me, I would quit!

Well, that was just the mood I was in, the afternoon I was given one of the slipperiest and most dangerous assignments I have ever handled.

By the time the buzzer sounded an hour later, summoning me to Mr. Browne's office, I had worked myself up into a fine state of rebellion.

Picking up my report, I glanced over it hurriedly, trusted

to luck that the spelling was all right, and with the pages crackling in my hand, I took my way hastily—before my courage would die out—towards the sound-proof room where the Chief presided.

"Mr. Smith, the prosecuting attorney said he wouldn't need me any more," I said as I laid the sheets on the desk. "And—I want a leave of absence for a week."

"Sorry, but it can't be done just now," Mr. Browne answered shortly, without looking at my report. "Did you see Mr. Andrews in the reception-room?" I nodded. He chuckled. "Humph, I guessed he referred to you. Well, his wife's jewels have been stolen, and we've got to get them back within the next two weeks."

I SANK down on the hard-seated oak chair near his large flat-topped desk and prepared to listen. I was mad clear through, but somehow I never can argue with the Chief.

"We'll have to work strictly under cover," he continued. "Andrews wants no arrests made. He'll pay well for the recovery of the jewels—but the thief must never know where the money comes from."

He paused and lighted a cigar. When it got going, and

"Yet, I don't understand why he picked on Betty as the thief?" I demurred.

MR. BROWNE smiled grimly. "Oh, she probably did it all right. While Andrews was here I went outside in Brandt's office and called up the superintendent of the apartment house. I happen to know him. I had a hunch Andrews wasn't telling a straight story. There was no party given there. If there had been, I was sure the theft would have been reported to the police. The servants had been discharged. Betty was alone in the apartment with Andrews—that's why he knew she had taken the jewels. And that's why he doesn't want her arrested."

"What about his civic duty?" I couldn't help interrupting. "He was eloquent enough about that when Tommy Morrison's mother offered restitution for the \$500 bond——"

"That's none of our affair now," the Chief broke in curtly. "To get back the jewelry is the only thing we have to consider. To-night I'll have men cover all the night clubs and if possible get a line on the girl. To-morrow, I want you to start roping her in."

"How long is it since the robbery was committed?" I asked.

CHORUS girls of third-rate variety—jewel thieves—dance-hall habitués, both men and women—these characters and others, Rene Hanley made her daily associates, fearing every minute that she would make a slip and give away her true identity, fearing every minute the vengeance of men who hated the law and all representatives of the law. For days Rene played her part well, and then——

little spiral puffs of blue and silver gray floated upward, he asked me abruptly:

"Has Betty Morrison ever seen you?"

"Betty? Do you mean Tommy Morrison's sister?" I asked. "No. I saw her in the court-room the day her brother was sent away, but she didn't see me. Her mother called here once—the day before she committed suicide. You remember she got on her knees to Andrews and offered to make restitution——"

"Well, the description of the girl Andrews suspects fits Betty exactly," the Chief interrupted me sharply. He knew how I felt about that case. Referring to some notes lying on the blotter before him, he continued: "Here it is: blonde, oddly shaped, dark brown eyes with a sort of Oriental, upward slant at the outer corners, full pouting lips, very deep dimples in her cheeks, beautifully shaped hands with long tapering fingers, about five foot one, sloping shoulders, speaks in a slightly husky, sweet voice."

"Why does he suspect her?" I demanded.

MR. BROWNE carefully flicked the long gray ash from his cigar into a large receiver before he replied, speaking slowly, in a dry, caustic way:

"His story is that a friend borrowed the Andrews' apartment to give a party to a big out-of-town customer and that he saw Betty coming out of his wife's bedroom. Mrs. Andrews is at present in a sanitarium being treated for some nervous disorder. For a while she was quite irrational. Now she is on the road to recovery and expects to return home very soon. Yesterday she wrote asking Andrews if he had deposited in the bank vault some valuable jewelry which she had left in a bureau drawer. He looked there and found they had been stolen."

"It wasn't robbery," the Chief smiled as he corrected me. "There was no violence or force attached to the crime. It's a case of plain grand larceny. And this was committed five days ago—which has given a fence ample opportunity to skin the pearls."

"You mean like they did in the Harden case," I spoke up to show the Chief I wasn't so dumb as to forget everything I learned. "They heated and softened the pearls and then stripped off several of the outer layers of skin, so that the weight and shape were changed."

"Yes, that's it. When this has been done, though, an expert can detect the trick. Before you spend any money, be sure to call in Marx to examine all the jewels you buy back."

Marx's reputation is none too good. He is well known in the underworld, however, and is an expert. He is a handy man to call in on those "confidential" affairs.

"Now, you run along home and pack some of your dizziest clothes," Mr. Browne ordered as he pressed a button to summon his secretary. "If you make good on this, you'll get a vacation and a bonus on the side. To-morrow I'll have a full list of the jewels for you."

On the subway going to my home in Brooklyn, I recalled the time when I had been sent out to "rope in" Betty's brother Tom. He was a nice kid. Clean cut. Sweet seventeen. Received fourteen dollars a week for delivering bonds worth millions. Under direction of a crook, he stole a \$500 bond for which he received \$30.

Tommy graduated from Elmira with a chip on his shoulder and promptly joined a gang of hold-up hooligans. Sing Sing followed. Betty was implicated but released. Lively little thing. Rather pert to prosecuting attorneys and reporters. Crazy about her brother. Connected up with the Ellsworth blackmailing gang who "got" Copwell

for \$30,000 before Mr. Browne managed to throw a monkey-wrench into their machinery.

"Gosh," I couldn't help muttering to myself as I got off the train at Hoyt Street, "these hard-boiled babies of Broadway may be dumb. But they're dangerous as dynamite for the wily Wall Street boys to play with."

Next morning when I arrived at the office, I found that Mr. Browne had left for Pittsburgh. Tim Arlen was in charge.

"Dailey and Marcus couldn't find out where the Morrison girl lived," he told me, referring to the reports of the night operatives. "She hasn't been seen around the clubs recently. For a short

while last winter she was in the chorus of a musical comedy on Broadway. She was chummy with a lot of the performers, but we can't question them. That would put her wise that we're after her. You'll have to scout around and pick up her trail yourself. Better pose as a successful little gold-digger, temporarily at leisure. Here's some jewels from your last 'daddy.'"

He handed me a case of "jewels"—prop stuff—but darned good imitations. It would take an expert's very close examination to discover that they were phoney.

I selected a "diamond and sapphire" studded wrist-watch, a dinner ring, a bow-knot brooch of diamonds and sapphires and a long rope of imitation pearls. These I decided to wear that day. The rest of the synthetic collection I put in the suitcase I had brought with me.

I looked at myself in the mirror. The reflection was satisfactory. I'm of medium height with dark hair and eyes, a smooth, clear colorless complexion and naturally vivid red lips. I've often passed quite successfully as a chorus girl, and have their jargon down pat.

Going uptown, I engaged a room at a small theatrical hotel. That was simply a place to park my suitcase. Then I set out to find out where Betty lived.

Eleven o'clock was striking as I left the Princeton. Just the hour when the inhabitants of "Longacre" start out to breakfast. Most of them patronize the large bakery lunch places. Of these there are about two dozen in the neighborhood. It was in one of them I hoped to pick up Betty's trail.

MOST of the girls in that quarter are regular patrons of certain restaurants. They usually come from the same hotels or rooming-houses and sit at the same tables morning after morning. The managers make a practice of remembering their "regulars" and the places really have somewhat the atmosphere of a club.

I visited each one in succession, repeating a little formula which I have often found effective.

Entering the restaurant, I stood looking around. The manager would come forward and ask if I were looking for someone. I would describe Betty. When the man declared he didn't recognize the description, I walked out. My spiel was that I had a breakfast engagement with my chum and had forgotten the name of the restaurant, but knew it was in that locality.

It was almost two o'clock before I struck "pay dirt" in one of the large Broadway places near Fiftieth Street.

The head waiter told me that my "friend" usually breakfasted there around eleven-thirty. He hadn't seen her for a couple of mornings.

At eleven-thirty the following day I was back. He showed me to a table where several typical showgirls were seated. Quiet, rather tired looking, very well

"But Betty, I'm not trying to get the jewels back for Mr. Andrews," I lied



groomed. One chair was turned up against the table. They looked up rather surprised at my intrusion. The captain explained.

"Oh, you're a friend of Betty Morrison?" one asked cordially. "Is she back in town?"

The captain bowed, and walked off.

"My friend's name is Irene Carter," I answered, looking disappointed. "I described her to the head waiter and he told me she had breakfast usually at this table. I expected to meet her yesterday. Perhaps you know her. I just got in town yesterday and she called me up on the 'phone. I lost my address book and don't know where she lives. Do you mind if I sit here?"

MY bluff worked well. Over grapefruit, toast and coffee, we became quite chummy. I learned that two of the girls (Dolly Lefever and Blanche Castle) were living in the same rooming-house as Betty. Before the end of the meal, I had arranged to go over there to see if the landlady had a vacant room.

"Why don't you come back with us?" Dolly, the more vivacious of the two asked. "We're going now. It isn't a bad dump, considering."

"I'd love to," I said. "I don't like hotels unless I have a room-mate. Too lonesome."

The "dump" proved to be one of those brownstone fronts which look quite well from the outside, but inside, it had the forlorn, scuffed, bleak atmosphere which is peculiar to all rooming-houses. On the soiled, buff walls were framed photographs autographed in sprawling signatures.

Mrs. Grogan, the landlady, who answered Dolly's call down a back stairway leading to the basement, was a plump little person with a reddish, mottled skin and dyed hair. A pair of large, dark, snappy eyes, a cute little button of a nose and a cupid's bow mouth—all somewhat buried in an over-fat face, suggested that she had once been quite a beauty of the doll type.

"Here's a girl wants a room, Mrs. Grogan," Dolly explained. "What about Betty Morrison's?"

"I dunno, dearie," she wheezed. "Miss Morrison left in a hurry. Said she would send somebody for her things by the end of the week if she didn't come back. But I have a swell little room on the top floor for \$10 a week. There was two ladies lookin' at it this morning, and they promised to let me know—but I always say first come first served."

I WANTED to see Betty's room, the worst way in the world.

"I don't like to live so far up from the telephone," I said. "Where is this Miss Morrison's room?"

"It's the first floor front," Mrs. Grogan replied. "You might show the young lady that. I'm sure Miss Morrison

wouldn't mind. Then, if she would take the top room temporarily, she could move down tomorrow when the week will be up. I'm sure you'll like it—"

She would have continued, but Blanche interrupted, saying it was matinee day and they'd have to hurry.

"Well, here's the keys, dearie. Thank you so much. My legs are that bad today—"

Dolly seized the keys and we climbed the shabby, red-carpeted stairs to the first floor front.

It was a large room with a big bow-window, draped with coarse, grayish-white lace curtains. Over the mantel was a large mirror. The place had been "picked up" but not cleaned. To my unbounded joy, I saw that the waste-basket had not been emptied and was half filled with scraps of paper. A piece of twine was strung from each end of the mantel. On this dangled two pairs of silk stockings. Four small handkerchiefs lay like huge white butterflies on the shelf. Evidently they had fallen off the mirror where they had been drying. (The virtuous Jobs who declare that the "wicked flourish like a bay tree" don't know life as it is lived in the roaring forties, I'll tell the world!)

"I wish I could take this room right away," I remarked to Dolly.

"Well, you'll probably be able to get it tomorrow. I'll bet, Blanche, that Betty's gone kiting after Gene Parker. He isn't dancing at the Marquis any more—"

"**S**H! Dolly," Blanche snapped. "Don't be such a dirty gossip. Your tongue will get you in trouble some day." Then turning to me, she asked, shortly. "Do you want to see the other room?"

"Yes, might as well, and trust to luck this will be vacant tomorrow. I expect to stay all summer."

We raced up the remaining three flights. On the top floor were two rooms, furnished. The rest of the space was used for storage of broken bits of furniture, spare cots and worn-out bedding.

"Oh, I'll take it, I guess," I said dubiously.

"I'm afraid you'll find it quiet here in the evening," Blanche said. "Nearly everybody in the house is working at night, and the girl on your

floor is a nurse who's away on a case just now."

"Do you want me to take the keys down to Mrs. Grogan?" I asked.

"No, thanks," she said, quickly. "I want to borrow a five-spot off her. Do you want to pay in advance? She always asks for it the first week. After that, you can usually stall her. Here's your key and a latch key. The rent's ten dollars."

I handed her a ten-dollar bill and fifty cents deposit for the keys.

With a cheerful "So-long," she raced downstairs to her room on the floor below. The house was very still. A door opened—closed. Steps descended (*Continued on page 94*)

CASH FOR OPINIONS

WHEN you have read this issue of TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES Magazine, let us know what you think of the stories it contains.

Which story is best? Which poorest? Why? Have you any suggestions for improving the magazine?

Ten dollars will be paid to the person whose letter, in the opinion of judges in charge of this award, offers the most intelligent, constructive criticism; \$5 to the letter considered second best; \$3 to the third.

Address your opinions to the Judges of Award, c/o TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes May 31st, 1927.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them.

Yes! Really Natural

Skin Tone Color from **ROUGE!**



It is the secret of just one rouge—PRINCESS PAT

SKIN TONE color from rouge—or that “painted look”—which?

It is the skin tone color women strive for, the beautiful, subtle tints of natural loveliness. But the utmost care and skill with usual rouges fails of the desired result—as all women know.

Now learn about rouge—as rouge *should be*. The woman who tries Princess Pat Rouge for the first time is instantly aware of a beautiful difference. Instead of the painted look, there is a clear *skin tone* effect, a perfect semblance of soft natural color which actually seems to lie beneath the skin, *and not upon it*.

And most women—delighted, charmed, entranced with the *actual result*—are curious to discover the secret of this splendid new beauty. It is due—this unique effect—to the special ingredients used. *No heavy-bodied coloring goes into Princess Pat Rouge*. Instead, the rarest and most *delicate* of pure vegetable tints—tints which possess *transparency*, as well as *color*. It is this same transparency—in the finished rouge—that makes Princess Pat the one rouge giving

Nature's own complexion tints. Apply Princess Pat as *lavishly as you wish*. Color will be deepened—but no painted look results.

There is something else, too. Princess Pat Rouge *changes* ever so slightly to meet the requirements of *individual* skin tone. It takes its charming color note from the skin itself, blending subtly until it is precisely right, exactly natural. And of course Princess Pat has long been known as the most enduring of all rouges—permanent until you wish to remove it.

Select Any of the Six Princess Pat Shades Without Regard for “Type”

With usual rouges—lacking Princess Pat's transparency—women have had to be content with just one shade, selected to “match” type—blonde or brunette, for instance. With Princess Pat—giving *skin tone* color all shades harmonize beautifully and perfectly with any complexion.

Think what this selection of shades means to beauty. With bright sports wear, one selects Princess Pat Squaw, or Vivid—to secure perfect harmony of complexion and gowning. The idea is new, the effect beautiful and *enlivening*. For more neutral costumes, Milady chooses Princess Pat Medium, or English Tint (the

Original orange). “Theatre” befits the most elaborate frocks for formal afternoons. Then there is the new Princess Pat shade, Nite—perfect color for evening. A most fascinating feature of Nite is its curious violet tinge by *day* in the box. Then watch it as the lights go on. Instantly Nite changes, becomes a shade that gives to the cheeks pearl and rose tinted flesh tones hitherto inimitable.

Enjoy this luxury of greater selection of rouge shades and the wonderful beauty of color which seems to lie *beneath* the skin—not upon it. Never the painted, dreaded gauche look if you use Princess Pat. All the better shops can show you all six shades.

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The very popular Princess Pat Week-End Set is offered for a limited time for THIS COUPON and 25c [coin]. Only one to a customer. Besides Rouge, set contains easily a month's supply of Almond Base Powder and FIVE other Princess Pat preparations, including perfume. Packed in a beautifully decorated boudoir box. Please act promptly.

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Enclosed find 25c for which send me the Princess Pat Week End Set.

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Princess Pat perfect beauty aids include: Princess Pat Cream Skinfood and Ice Astringent (the famous Twin Cream Treatment), Princess Pat Skin Cleanser, Almond Base Face Powder, Rouge, Lipstick, Lemon-Almond Lotion, Two-Purpose Talc, Perfume, Toilet Water.

The Riddle of the Ancient Code

(Continued from page 57)



Sousa Endorses the Harmonica

"I am a great advocate of the Harmonica," says Lieut. Commander John Philip Sousa, famous bandmaster, "and especially endorse the Harmonica bands which are winning sweeping popularity. This instrument is a foundation for a musical career; and many boys and girls who are now learning music on the harmonica will step into the great symphony orchestras and bands of our country some day."

You can learn to play a Hohner Harmonica with the aid of the Free Instruction Book. Get a Hohner "Marine Band" today and ask for the free book. If your dealer is out of copies, write M. Hohner, Inc., Dept. 158, 114 East 16th Street, New York City.



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Will give you lovely lips!

A new, darling shade—waterproof—it stays on all day! Send your name and address for free samples of Kissproof Lipstick, and Kissproof Rouge. Enclose 10c for packing and mailing.

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New Shampoo for Blondes only!

Keeps Hair Light—Lustrous—
Lovely; Brightens Faded
Blonde Hair

No more dull, darkened, streaky blonde hair! Blondex, the wonderful new special shampoo for blondes only, keeps light hair from darkening—brings back bright golden color and youthful brilliance to faded, discolored blonde hair. Not a dye. No harmful chemicals. Fine for children's hair. Leaves hair soft, fluffy and delightfully silky. Nearly a million users. Why not try Blondex? Sold at all good drug and department stores, or a generous trial package will be sent you FREE if you write to Swedish Shampoo Laboratories, Dept. 45, 303 Fourth Avenue, New York City.



standing behind him with a pair of gloves held up as though about to strike.

"Then what would you do?" I asked.

"I would try to escape the blow by rising and backing toward the corridor door."

AS he spoke he turned and rose. I quickly brought the gloves down on his head striking him a light blow over the left eye. He feigned unconsciousness and slumped down between the visitor's chair and the desk—the exact position in which Jaffe had been found by the scrubwoman. Then I remembered that the mark on Jaffe's brow was over the right eye. That could mean but one thing—that the murderer had struck with his left hand, since he and Jaffe must have been facing each other at the moment. Again we went through the re-enactment of the crime. This time I held the gloves in my left hand, and they fell exactly in the position of the contusion on the murdered man's head—over the right eye.

Kierstead nodded in approval.

"You've got the right idea," he enthused, "but how could the murderer come in at the window? How could he come and go without being heard in the outer office?"

"As to your first question," I admitted, "I am not sure that the murderer did come in at the window, but I am inclined to think so. Of course there is the possibility that he had a key and entered from the corridor. As to your second question, there was practically no sound made by the murderer. The thud of the weapon would be easily obliterated by what noise there was in the outer office—typewriters, telegraph instrument and so forth—even if the walls were not soundproof. By the way, who, besides the scrubwoman, has a key to this office?"

"No one," answered Kierstead, "except the building superintendent. I understand he keeps a set of duplicates."

Upon visiting the building superintendent I found that a duplicate set of keys for all the offices was kept in a steel case which was never left unlocked. I learned that all tenants of the building were required to deposit five dollars as a guarantee to return all keys at the expiration of their tenancy. There was no case in the memory of the superintendent of a tenant who had not turned in his keys and claimed his deposit. I went over the key question so thoroughly that I was convinced that it promised nothing, and finally returned to the window hypothesis.

WITHOUT the knowledge of anyone except the building superintendent, I concentrated my attention on the office on the twelfth floor—just over Jaffe's; for, if the murderer entered at Jaffe's window, the room above would afford the most convenient base from which to operate. The Pacific Coast Insurance Company occupied the offices over Jaffe's suite, and the general agent, a Mr. Whitlock, was out of the city attending a meeting of the national association of life insurance underwriters, at Denver. During his absence, his office force—consisting of two stenographers and a bookkeeper—had occupied their positions in the outer office as usual. There were

nine insurance salesmen who spent practically all their time outside, looking up prospects.

When I considered the probability of the murderer using a rope ladder from Whitlock's office, I realized that such a feat could be accomplished unseen only by one who had made a careful study of the habits of Whitlock and his office people. Such observation by the murderer required his presence at the scene of his crime for a number of weeks, perhaps months, prior to its culmination.

Upon examination of the window-sill in Whitlock's office, I found no marks such as might be made by hooks supporting a rope ladder. Of course the hooks could have been covered with felt. But even hooks so wrapped would leave marks in the loose dust. Then I made the discovery that there was no dust on the window-sill. I took a white handkerchief from my pocket and ran it thoroughly across the sill from end to end and into the corners and out on the stone ledge. Imagine my amazement when I looked at the handkerchief to find it perfectly clean; for the city burns soft coal, and there is always an accumulation of soot and dust on the windows in down-town buildings. No janitress was ever so thorough in her work as to raise a window and mop off the window ledge outside. Indeed, few take the trouble to wipe the dust from the corners of the sill inside; but here was a window with its sill and ledge absolutely clean.

I made the handkerchief experiment on the windows of the thirteenth and fourteenth floors, and the cloth was black with dust and grime when I finished. I knew I was on the right track. The murderer had used Whitlock's office, and for fear of leaving some tell-tale finger-print or other marks had taken the precaution after he had returned from his unholy mission to clean the sill and ledge.

MY next task was to construct in imagination the type of man who could perform such a feat. Only a sailor, a steeplejack, or an insane person would have the nerve to step out into darkness on a slender, swaying rope ladder a hundred feet above the sidewalk. That the murderer was not acting on a sudden mad impulse was conclusively proved by the fact that the page torn from the Bible showed that it had been carried in a card case or a wallet for a long time. The creases where it was folded were worn through in places.

It would only delay this report to mention the many false clues and the numerous disappointments I encountered in trying to find a man who met the specifications of the murderer—as I pictured him. This went on for a week and I seemed to be making no headway. All through this time a thought kept recurring to me; it had, in fact, stuck in my mind until it had become an obsession with me. This was a seemingly trivial circumstance that happened when I was making my investigation in the office of the Pacific Coast Insurance Company.

A man had come into the office, appar-
(Continued on page 68)



This Amazing Free Offer Will Make Your Skin Dazzling White!

HERE is an amazing special offer! To introduce our wonderful new kind of face powder we are going to give a full size 75c box of this new powder **FREE** with every jar of Golden Peacock Creme—the most popular, most used Bleach Creme in America!

Now you can easily acquire a crystal clear, sparkling white skin almost overnight—now you need no longer suffer with freckles, blackheads, roughness, sallowness, or a muddy complexion. Already a million women are using Golden Peacock

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You do not pay one penny for the large box of powder—all that you pay for is the Bleach Creme at its regular price.

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No more shiny nose—no need to powder all day long—this new kind of face powder comes off only when you wash it off—yet it is wonderfully soft and fine.

Not only that, but it is actually a *skin tonic*—it is compounded of certain imported ingredients which have almost magical results in correcting enlarged pores, pimples, roughness and blackheads.

Go to your favorite drug or department store and ask for a jar of Golden Peacock Bleach Creme. If you present the attached coupon, your dealer will give you a full size 75c box of this unique new kind of Face Powder—Golden Peacock Tonic Powder. Take the coupon to your dealer right away before this offer expires.

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*Through this big special offer you can try this new Tonic Face Powder without the slightest expense—you can secure a full size box absolutely **FREE!***

Golden Peacock

BLEACH CREME..TONIC FACE POWDER

(Continued from page 66)



YOUNG FOLKS WITH OLD STOMACHS!

Do you pamper your stomach and go without the things you'd like to eat? Perhaps you needn't! Did you ever try a Stuart tablet to overcome distress from over-eating—for that unpleasant gas?

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ently by chance, as I was examining the window-sill and had stood for a moment, at one side, observing me. I was aware of his presence, but I gave no indication of it, until I glanced up suddenly and caught his eye. I cannot just describe the expression that passed over his face as he hastily walked out, but it set me to thinking. At the same time, I figured then that any person caught showing the interest that he was showing, would naturally be taken aback, though entirely innocent. On the other hand, I could not get the incident out of my mind, and I resolved to find out who the man was.

Upon investigation I found that he was O. G. Rudell, a bachelor of forty, employed as salesman by the Pacific Coast Insurance Company. He was a commuter and lived in a suburb a few miles out of the city, renting a single furnished room in a private home. He had been with the company for a considerable period.

I got in the confidence of Davies, the sales manager, and, convinced of his own sincerity and discretion, I took a long chance—I told him the entire story of Jaffe's murder and of the incident I had observed in connection with Rudell. Davies then confided to me that he would not be at all surprised if I was on the right track, that in fact his own suspicions had been aroused in regard to Rudell, because of his abnormal interest in the case, which he could not seem to cover. He read avidly all the newspaper accounts and some of the salesmen working with him had noticed his constraint whenever the case was discussed, yet he had shown an eagerness too that puzzled them. This had been so obvious on several occasions that several of the salesmen had gone so far as to mention it to Davies—however, in a joking way, as they could not conceive of how Rudell could possibly be connected with the case.

THE more I learned along this line, the more sure I was that Rudell was my man, and I set about to dig into the facts. After considerable painstaking investigation I found that Rudell, who was a man of stocky, powerful build, had been employed for a number of years as a steel riveter on building construction in the West. It would take a man of his physical agility and training to do what the murderer of Jaffe had done. Also, why had he jumped from a job as steel riveter to that of salesman? Putting all the facts together, I decided to bring a show-down.

Rudell rode to the city every morning on the 8.15 electric. To establish myself as a resident of that suburb, I arranged to take the same inbound train every morning for several weeks. Rudell always sat in the smoking compartment with four or five other men—the same ones each day. When I felt that I had been accepted into the fellowship that naturally grows up among commuters, I came into the car one morning with a box of cigars under my arm and a radiant smile on my face.

"Well, gentlemen," I announced with gusto, "I am the proud daddy of a nine-pound son, and I am going to give a cigar to the first fifty men I meet this morning; have a smoke on Dad."

Congratulations followed, and amid the flow of facetious advice on how to raise a boy, we smoked our way into the city.

I left the car at my usual stop and out of the corner of my eye noted that Rudell was following me.

"My name is Edward Rudell," he introduced himself as he fell into step with me. "I'm with the Pacific Coast Life. As a father you will be interested in additional life insurance. Are you fully protected so that the wife and youngster will not suffer want in case you have to pass out?"

My bait was working nicely.

"Why, I had not thought of it in that light," I admitted. "I already have a policy in the New York Life for two thousand."

We continued talking as we walked. As we were passing the Savoy Hotel, I stopped and exclaimed:

"You've got me interested all right, Mr. Rudell. I believe I ought to take out an additional five thousand policy. Suppose we just step into the writing room of the hotel and make out the blanks."

Seated at a desk facing each other, we filled out the application blank, and I gave my check for the first premium. My heart thumped loudly when I noticed that Rudell took his fountain pen in his left hand. To his questions I gave truthful answers until he asked for my occupation. To this I replied that I was traveling for a wholesale house in a near-by city.

"Of course you will have to pass the medical examination," went on Rudell, making out the receipt.

"Yes, I understand that," I said.

OUR medical examiner is Doctor Thurlow, in the First National Building. He isn't in his office this early, but I can telephone his office girl to keep an appointment for you. How would eleven o'clock this morning suit?"

"Fine," I declared.

"To make sure," continued Rudell, "I'll call the office now."

He went into one of the telephone booths at the end of the lobby and returned in a few minutes with the announcement:

"It's all fixed for eleven. I'll meet you at Thurlow's office then."

At eleven o'clock I stepped into the doctor's office and found Rudell waiting for me. We chatted a minute or two before the office girl announced that we were to come to the consultation room. But it was not Doctor Thurlow who looked up from the roll-top desk as we entered.

"Why, there must be some mistake," stammered Rudell; "where is Doctor Thurlow?"

"He was suddenly called to the hospital and has asked me to meet his office appointments," smiled the man at the doctor's desk. "Please sit down—both of you."

We did so.

"Now," continued the man at the desk, leaning forward and turning his full gaze upon Rudell, "tell us why you killed Louis Jaffe."

In the flash of an eye Rudell was on his feet—a small revolver appearing in his left hand as if by magic. Before he could turn it upon himself I had grasped his arms and the pseudo-doctor had taken the weapon from him. The move was exactly what we had anticipated.

"This is Captain Burke of the city police," I introduced as we forced Rudell

back into his chair. "Now tell us your story—why did you kill Jaffe?"

"I don't admit it." The man became sullen.

"Come, come," I deprecated; "I have been gathering evidence on you for weeks, and this little scene is a clincher."

For several minutes Rudell was silent. His rugged, tanned face relaxed, and his eyes assumed a far-away expression.

"Well," he began at last, with a helpless gesture of the hands, "I have fulfilled my vow, and my life is useless for anything else—as I have since realized. I had thought I could go on with my business as usual, but I—well, ten years ago I came to the city and got a job as a bookkeeper in Jaffe's office. I made good, and he paid me well. Then I met Grace—the only girl in the whole world for me. She was—God, I can't tell you what she meant to me! We married and bought a little home on the instalment plan out in Spaulding Park. The work at the office was pretty heavy about that time, and Grace used to come down to the office and help me after hours.

"ONE day Jaffe came in and found us working together. I introduced him, and he remained and chatted pleasantly for a few minutes. A few weeks later he told me he needed another stenographer and asked if my wife would like to have the place. After talking it over, Grace and I decided that it would be nice to be together at the office during the day, and the extra money would come in handy in paying for our home. So it was she came to work in Jaffe's office. Soon afterwards he made her his private secretary and dictated his private correspondence to her in his office.

"Jaffe was much older than Grace, and it did not occur to me then to be jealous. But as time went on, she became more and more dissatisfied with our simple manner of living. She was wanting more money all the time for clothes and this, that, and the other thing. I did not know what to do, as we were both making all we could and in addition to paying substantial sums on our home, were living quite comfortably—so I thought.

"At last she demanded that I give her her liberty. I refused, and a few days later when I came down to the office, I found another man at my desk. He had the books spread out all about him. When I asked what was up, he told me that he was an accountant employed by Jaffe to examine all the office records to locate two thousand dollars claimed by Jaffe to be missing. Of course it was a frame-up. My books were perfect, but with the aid of the accountant it was possible for Jaffe to make it appear that I had taken the two thousand.

"I was kicked out into the street, and Grace was able to secure the coveted divorce. I made no effort to contest the decree. Thus disgraced, I was unable to find work in the city. I changed my name and bummed around from place to place for a few years. Finally I got a job with a bridge construction company. Sitting astride a narrow iron girder high up above a river valley or a rocky gorge, operating a compressed air hammer, gave me a nerve and constitution as hard as the steel I worked with. I had not kept up with things back in the city where I had left



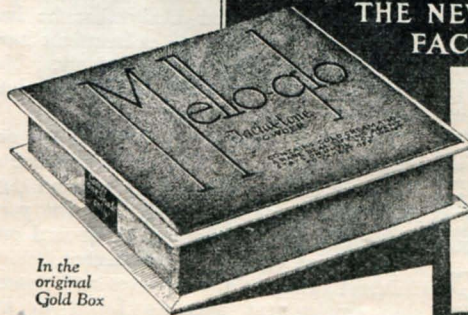
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Grace, but one day I picked up an old newspaper and learned that she was dead."

Rudell's eyes grew hard and his teeth snapped shut like a steel trap. His hands gripped the chair arms until the knuckles were bloodless.

"Up to that time," he went on bitterly, "just for her sake I had resisted the impulse to do murder, but when I learned she was gone——"

THE man's voice broke, and he made no attempt to finish the sentence. He took out a worn leather wallet, fumbled over the contents and removed a limp newspaper clipping.

"It says here," he continued, "that she died of heart failure. Yes—it was heart failure—the kind that comes of a broken heart. I know that she loved me, and regretted going to Jaffe, but——"

"Well, day after day as the hammer dinned in my ears, it seemed to repeat an old passage I had heard years before: '*an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*'"

"Then I planned it—worked out the details so carefully that it was seven years before I felt that I was ready. First I must change so that no one in the city would know me. Then I must manage to avoid suspicion afterwards. I studied the situation and found that my best opportunity lay with the Pacific Coast Life. My only fear was that Jaffe would die

a natural death and cheat me of the revenge. He was not in the best of health.

"The time came. Everything happened as I planned. I waited until late autumn so that it would be dark before time to close the office for the day. Since there is no tall building directly across from the Empire, I felt doubly safe. All I needed was a rope ladder and a short length of gas-pipe——"

"Returning to Whitlock's office, I carefully cleaned the window-sill with a cloth I had kept ready for the purpose, tied up the rope ladder and the gas-pipe in the cloth and carried them to the river, where I threw them from the bridge."

Captain Burke thoughtfully tapped with his pencil on the edge of the doctor's desk.

"So you got your cue from the Bible?" he mused.

"Yes—it seems so," admitted Rudell absently.

"The unfortunate part of it is," continued Burke, "that your knowledge of the Bible did not include that other passage which says, '*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.*'"

"That is the solution of the riddle of the ancient code. That is the answer. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, not to you nor me," said Burke crisply. "And you're going to have a long time in which to think this over, all by yourself, after you have heard the jury's verdict and the judge's sentence, or I am greatly mistaken."

Lone Wolf, the Boudoir Bandit

(Continued from page 59)

all over the country had failed, found a thumb-print corresponding with that of Lone Wolf. It was the impression of one Tom Crick!

While serving in the Navy, Crick had been treated two or three times for mental trouble, after having been found guilty of committing certain unprintable offenses. Finally, after a period of observation in the psychopathic ward of a nationally known hospital, he had got into more trouble and had been dishonorably discharged from the Navy. By occupation he had been an engine oiler.

Here, at last, was something for the police to work upon.

But the name Tom Crick was productive of no more information from the police records than had been the lone thumb-print. The same was true of telegraphic inquiries hastily made to the police of other large cities throughout the country.

Nevertheless, it was worth something to the police to know that if they found Tom Crick they would have Lone Wolf, even if no record was available to help along the task. It seemed likely that he had long since given up any idea he might have had of being employed regularly. Yet there could be no harm in looking into this phase of the matter.

The police consequently tackled the occupation angle of Crick's whereabouts. Being an oiler, perhaps there was an outside possibility that he might at the very moment be applying for work aboard one of the ships loading in the harbor.

Investigation at the wharves and steamship employment agencies failed to in-

dicate that a man answering Crick's description had applied for work—except in one instance. This was in the case of an employment agent who thought that among a group of men asking for work a few days previously was a person closely fitting Crick's description.

At about this time a man attached to the office of the District Attorney of Halstead County, a county which is wholly within the city limits—happened by sheer chance to meet a former "buddy" of his in the U. S. Navy during the World War.

This buddy looked like a man who had stepped out of a clothing advertisement. He talked a little "big," too.

"I'm making seventy-five a week," he said. "And it's the softest kind of money."

"How?" asked the man from the District Attorney's office.

THE buddy escorted him to a furnished room in the neighborhood, which was many miles off busy streets removed from the locality of Lone Wolf's outrages. What the buddy showed him made his eyes pop—a collection of loot of proportions that even the most seasoned burglar would have been proud to display. Incidentally, the buddy had a couple of automobiles in his pockets, too.

That buddy was known to the man from the District Attorney's office as Crick—and his first name, now he recalled, was Thomas!

On leaving Crick, the District Attorney's aide telephoned Patrolman Jim Peterson, of the nearest precinct station. The former went back to his work, satis-

fied that he had been instrumental in causing the apprehension of Lone Wolf.

Tom Crick, suspected Lone Wolf, had other plans, however. When officers, who made an immediate investigation, reached his cache, neither he nor the most valuable of his loot was present. Nor did either show back in the days that followed.

But the police went at the task of trailing Crick with revived hopes. At least he was probably about the city still, rather than a possible thousand miles away.

The hope of him being near at hand was short-lived, however. From New York City arrived police information that a man closely answering Crick's description had applied for a job as an oiler at one of the steamship employment agencies. The man in charge, whose help, like that of scores of other steamship employment men along the Atlantic seacoast, had been asked, had noticed this tallying of descriptions and had called the police secretly. Meanwhile striving to detain the suspect until their arrival.

Unfortunately, the suspect had not waited!

Inspector Clarence P. Gregory, one of the detectives working on the case, sped to New York. He picked up the suspect's trail. It led among the steamship employment agencies in that city for a couple of days, then to New Haven, Connecticut, where the Inspector just missed sighting the man by a few minutes. From there it went down through the Atlantic ports to Richmond, Virginia.

In Richmond the Inspector learned that without question the man he pursued was Tom Crick. At last Lone Wolf's trail had been picked up!

Now to catch him!

THE Inspector also found that Tom Crick's parents lived in Richmond, and that he himself was born there. Furthermore, he found that Crick had just visited the old homestead—and had departed suddenly after stealing, it was alleged, some money that his parents had worked hard to lay aside for old age.

Back up the Atlantic Coast Inspector Gregory followed Crick's trail, never quite getting abreast of him. Eventually it led toward the scene of his crimes. Though officers tried to prevent it, Crick slipped through into the city again ahead of Inspector Gregory.

The police now were fearful that there would be more sensational boudoir crimes. They were afraid, too, that Lone Wolf might decide to retaliate on the world at large for failing to get work at his trade, by striving to outdo his former crimes, if such a thing were possible without actually taking human life. Throughout police circles there was grave apprehension as to where he might pop up. About the only saving grace of the situation was that trailing him down and up the coast had shown no indication that he had acquired pals to help him.

Coincidentally with Crick's return there came a photograph of him which had been dug up by the U. S. Navy Department at the request of the police. Hoping against hope that its publication might speed the task of locating Crick, the police gave copies of the photo to the newspapers.

Likenesses of Crick were published in

(Continued on page 74)



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(Continued from page 71)

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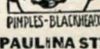
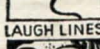
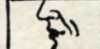
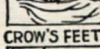
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the newspapers on a morning when Lone Wolf's reign of terror was nearly three months old.

Within a few hours a woman tipped off the police that a man who "looked just like the picture" was living at an address on Halstead Street. The police hardly thought there was much in this tip, for of all the places where Lone Wolf might be, Halstead Street, with its quiet, middle-class respectability, was the last in which they anticipated running across him. Inspector Gregory in particular was hardly prepared to think that, after chasing Lone Wolf down and up the coast, he would likely find the criminal in the same section where his own home is located.

Nevertheless, the police investigated without losing a moment.

Led by Inspector Gregory and Captain Martin Callahan, a squad of officers swooped down upon the Halstead Street house. The Captain drew his gun, the Inspector leading the way for part of the officers into the house. The remainder of the officers surrounded it.

NO shot greeted entrance of the portion of the squad going into the house. If Tom Crick, alias Lone Wolf, lived there, he could hardly be home. Otherwise, they felt sure, shooting would be in order.

The officers started to search the house. On their entrance to the kitchen a man greeted them calmly from a chair near the stove. His face was the image of the photograph of Tom Crick!

When informed, however, that he was under arrest—suspected of being Lone Wolf—he laughed heartily.

"Isn't your name Tom Crick?" he was asked.

"Guess again," and he laughed. "It's Arthur Holmes."

At this point a pretty girl just blossoming into womanhood appeared from another room. Indignant anger flashed in her big brown eyes.

"Why, what are you talking about?" she cried. "My husband the Lone Wolf? That's impossible! Why, he's been home every night—except when he's away aboard ship!"

"Then he's employed on ships?" countered Inspector Gregory.

"Yes, he is!" declared the girl with vehemence. "And he's a hard worker, too. Don't you dare to tell me that a man who could be so considerate of me could possibly be the Lone Wolf!"

She paused a moment to catch her breath.

"Why, we've been going to dances and parties right along—right in that very district the newspapers say the Lone Wolf is working. If my husband was the Lone Wolf, how could he have been walking on the streets there frequently without being picked up?"

"How long have you been married?" she was asked.

Attired in a plain navy blue serge dress, her cheeks and lips untouched with make-up, she was a picture of innocence and faith.

"Two months," she replied.

But the man suddenly gave the scene an anti-climax by admitting, in the tone of a braggart, that in addition to being Arthur

Holmes he was also Tom Crick and Lone Wolf!

Lone Wolf—the man whom they had doubted, along with thousands of others, would ever be taken alive, surely not without bloodshed—made not a move toward freedom. He did not even display resentment at his apprehension. Nor did he even call himself a fool for having deliberately put on the ginger-ale bottle in Miss Armstrong's apartment that solitary thumb-print that led to his identification and capture!

As the bracelets went over his hands, his girl-wife flew to him and, while she clung to his neck, cried again and again that such a thing could not be so.

But soon Lone Wolf marched away.

LONE WOLF'S confession as to his identity should, by all the laws of drama, have been the climax that brought the case to a prompt close. In reality his capture only marked the point where sensations in the case were well under way.

By the laws of nature he should also have undergone a reaction, once the strain of keeping out of the hands of the police was over, and have slumped back dejectedly, ashamed to look the world in the face, harassed by fears of retribution for his fiendish deeds. He acted just the opposite.

At Police Headquarters he posed for newspaper cameramen with all the relish of a State Senator. He displayed not the slightest fear; no repentance, no remorse.

A little later he was lined up with a dozen officers in plain clothes, and one of his victims, Miss Rogers, came into that Police Headquarters anteroom in an effort to verify his identity. How could he, if he had the shame of a flea, have held up his head at the sight of her? But he did—as erect as any one of the city's "finest."

Yet Miss Rogers picked him out almost instantly as the Lone Wolf.

Did he cringe or show the slightest indication of shame then? He did not. But he did display amazing impudence. He exclaimed, with a laugh:

"She must have seen my big feet."

Afterward others of his victims identified him.

In jail a few hours later, reporters interviewed him. Some of the high lights of the interviews were these:

"Would you have used your gun on any of your victims if they had attempted to resist?"

"Would I? You're damned right. It was my neck or theirs. That's what I carried the guns for. I toted two of them all the time."

"Did you plan the intrusions upon these women in advance?"

"Hell, no! I generally went up a fire-escape and entered the first flat that looked good to me. One night I went into fourteen different suites in an apartment, but found nobody home but the janitor."

"Did you have other sensational experiences besides those already told in the newspapers?"

"Did I? Hope to tell you I had plenty of them."

He chuckled and raised his head boastfully before continuing:

"NOT long ago I went back for a third time—a third time, mind you—to that apartment where I'd called on Miss Armstrong.

"I was in the lobby, pretending to fix my coat, when two girls came in. They were peaches. They went to the mail-box that was third from the bottom on the right, and I got a line on the flat they lived in. I would have gone in and visited them that night, but there were a couple of cops in the alley, so I put it off. I was going there to-night."

ASKED for more experiences, he told how he had dropped into an apartment from a fire-escape one night, to find an elderly man and his wife engaged in a family word battle. His entrance frightened them half to death. By some strange twist of his mind, which seemed in other cases to be devoid of pity, he decided not to job them, and left without harming them in any way. He said the woman was too old for him to bother with, anyway.

Suddenly, after beginning another experience, he broke it off and declined to relate any more, evidently fearing that the information he gave might be used against him.

Investigation at Lone Wolf's home revealed that he had kept up a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde existence that had completely fooled not only his wife but also her brother-in-law and sister, with whom they made their home.

Yet the police uncovered several caches of loot in that very house. The largest of them was in a secret hole in the plastering behind a closet. But diamonds, watches, and other articles were found hidden in dresser and bureau drawers and other such places.

Several days after Lone Wolf's apprehension his girl-bride still could not believe it possible that her husband was an atrocious criminal. A little country girl of eighteen years, she had gone to the city only a few months prior to her marriage. She had first met Lone Wolf at a dance. Later their acquaintance had ripened at other dances, many of them in the very district that was the scene of his sensational escapades.

"He was so considerate of me that I just couldn't help loving him from the moment I saw him," she told reporters. "He was so gay, and popular, too. And as a dancer—oh, he was wonderful!

"It does not seem possible he can be the Lone Wolf. Why, we used to joke about it, when we read of Lone Wolf's exploits in the newspapers. He always laughed."

What a terrible shock to a girl filled with faith in humanity—to be forced eventually to realize that the man she married was playing the part of Lone Wolf during the very period of her courtship and two months of married life—and, moreover, was acting this fiendish rôle in the very locality in which he first pictured to her the dreams of matrimonial bliss! Perhaps he had even danced with some of the women who later had become his victims!

THE unfortunate girl found that the revelation her husband was the Lone Wolf was only one of many startling sides of his character toppled down onto



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Sincerely,

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"MAYBELLINE"—as though by magic, would make a wonderful difference in your attractiveness. Try it and see! Instantly, your lashes will appear naturally long, dark and luxuriant. And your eyes will become expressive deep shadowy pools of enchanting loveliness. Nothing else gives quite the same effect as "MAYBELLINE" because the formula of this wondrous beauty aid is secret.

Moreover, "MAYBELLINE" is perfectly harmless, having been used for many years by millions of beautiful women in all parts of the world. Obtain it in either the solid form or the waterproof liquid—Black or Brown—75c at all toilet goods counters.

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Spring styles clearly define the bust. Style artists have doomed the ill-fitting, flattening, pressing, tissue-destroying brassieres, and have given women a new charm and beauty with the bust line. YOUTHFORMS are the one support that serves both purposes—holding your bust in correct position and giving you that infinite charm of youth.

YOUTHFORMS' secret is in the elastic band which goes around the body, and the beautiful, first quality double strength satin cup-shaped forms which hold the busts in place, removing all weight from them. With YOUTHFORMS you can place the busts where nature intended, and have greater beauty and comfort. YOUTHFORMS are absolutely unnoticeable and can be worn with any frock. Perfect fit guaranteed. As each one is tailored to measure we cannot give refunds but all alterations are made free. Not sold in stores—order direct.

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YOUTHFORM Co., 53 Walton St., Atlanta, Ga. 1 Enclosed find \$5.00 (check, M. O., or cash) for which send me your regular \$5.00 YOUTHFORMS, size around body, just under bust.....in.; size around body across center of bust.....in.; top to bottom of bust.....in.; center of bust to center of bust.....in. Standard color pink.

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TRAVEL—SEE YOUR COUNTRY
Railway Postal Clerks get \$1,900 the first year. Their pay is rapidly increased, the maximum being \$2,700 a year. While away from home they get allowance for hotel.

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Railway Postal Clerks have a vacation of 16 working days (about 18 days). On runs they usually work 3 days and have 3 days off duty or in proportion. Their pay continues just as when working. They travel on a pass, while on duty, and have a wonderful chance to see the country.

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Clerks and Carriers commence at \$1,700 a year and increase \$100 a year to \$2,100 and \$2,300. They have 15 days' paid vacation. City residence is unnecessary.

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Open to men and women 18 or over
Pleasant work in the various government offices at Washington, D. C. and throughout the country.

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Mail the coupon today—SURE.

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Rush to me free of charge (1) full description of the position checked; (2) copy of 32 page book "How to get a U. S. Government Job."

Railway Postal Clerk (\$1900-\$2700)
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her head. She learned with sickening amazement that Lone Wolf, who had told her he never had loved anybody else but her, had been found by the police to have been married twice before, once in Europe while he was serving with the British Navy, and once in the Middle West. As far as was learned, his previous wives still lived.

Nor was even this the end of his affairs with women, she heard from the police. Lone Wolf, true to the saying about men of the sea, had women acquaintances in many ports of call. For instance, some of the articles he had stolen were identified in possession of two young women of the New York underworld, who admitted to the police that they had been acquainted with him for quite a while. Another woman turned over to the New York Police a ring which she said Lone Wolf had given her.

There were other humiliations for the wife, but perhaps the most painful of all came when, a few days after Lone Wolf's apprehension, the police called on her, accompanied by a Miss Cummings. This woman, whom the wife had never seen nor heard of before, identified as property stolen from her the lavish mink coat that Lone Wolf had given his bride as a wedding present—the possession that she had prized more than anything else in the world next to his love.

Before Lone Wolf went to trial, his girl-wife realized that her ways and his must take different directions. After visiting him several times in the jail, she cut herself off from him and left the home in which she had passed two months of supreme happiness, all the time believing that her husband was an honest engine oiler. She resumed her occupation as a waitress in a place where she was unknown.

Lone Wolf, running true to form, took the news of his wife's leaving without the slightest show of emotion. He made remarks that would strongly indicate that even this little woman who had virtually worshipped him, commanded none of his respect.

In jail awaiting trial, and with no chance to gain even temporary freedom, for his bail totaled \$90,000, Lone Wolf

continued to keep up his impossible brazenness. Even young lawyers striving to build a reputation by appearing in sensational cases would have nothing to do with him. The only way he secured an attorney at all, was because of a sense of duty a World War veteran felt for a fellow veteran.

Lone Wolf's trial opened within two weeks of his apprehension. He was charged with several counts of criminal assault, burglary, and other infractions of the law.

His bag of sensations was not yet exhausted!

TIME, and time again he brought the trial to a temporary halt with sensational actions that broke many of the rules of court-room etiquette. Once he shouted to the District Attorney to sit down. Again he commanded the Judge to wait. On another occasion he started to smoke a cigarette in the prisoners' cage. His asinine comments on the proceedings continued despite repeated warnings.

The world's greatest actor could hardly have made a more dramatic and realistic, if foolhardy, portrayal of an insane man.

But famous alienists, who had examined this arch-criminal before the trial, testified that he was sane—that his actions were only feints at insanity.

One of the alienists startled the packed court-room with the testimony that when he had asked Lone Wolf why he had committed such heinous crimes, the man had replied:

"I'm going to write a book. I had to study how women acted under certain conditions."

The jury found Lone Wolf guilty on every count with which he was charged. The presiding Judge, after a scathing denunciation of him for his unspeakable crimes and wild court actions, sentenced him to prison for life.

Lone Wolf was chewing gum at the moment of the sentence. His jaws stopped a second or two. With a sneer on his face, he exclaimed: "Now I can write my book!"

The latest reports from State's Prison are that he is finding little time for literary work.

Revelations of a Vampire

(Continued from page 23)

of her profession. And then she introduced me to Reggy, an all-around man of the underworld. He was to be my partner in the game; in other words, my pseudo-husband. About twenty-five years of age and small of stature, he had the gaunt face, murky complexion, and leering look of the confirmed wrongdoer.

Reggy was extremely pleased with me. He again set off my conceit by complimenting me on my good looks. Then he complimented Laura on her find in me. "Just wait until she gets the glad rags on," he continued, giving me a warm look.

"Glad rags?" I didn't know the meaning of the words 'til Laura said:

"Why, dearie, you don't expect to get anywhere with those mops you've got on!" and she began to laugh.

Instantly I realized why the people I had

interviewed for a position the previous days had stared so at my clothes. To them my garb had not seemed nifty, but dowdy and much out of style.

Reggy promptly arranged for me to get an expensive outfit of clothes, also for me to go down to a first-class hair-dresser and have my hair done the modern way. I was to have it done just like Laura's. And before I went, she told me just what to say to the hair-dresser as to how I wanted my coiffure fixed.

A few hours after I had returned from the hair-dresser's, my clothes were delivered. With Laura's help I tried them on. Once in them, and with my hair fixed up in an entirely different way than I had ever had it, I was fairly astounded when I saw myself in the mirror! I hardly recognized myself. The way my beauty had

been brought out, a fairy might have woven her magic wand over me and transformed me! And it all was to cost me not a cent! I was going to work for Reggy, and he had staked me to everything. A wild wave of pride swept over me.

I looked at Laura, but instead of glorying in the triumph of her "find," as I had anticipated her doing, her eyes stabbed resentment at my hauteur. Not until later did I learn what this really was.

But I'll never forget my first job. Not only was I a failure, but with it I received my first dose of the stern discipline of the underworld.

Barely had I had time to adapt myself to my new place in life, when Reggy called, and without ceremony informed me that he had obtained a "line-up" on a young man from California, who had just come in with several carloads of choice fruit which he had sold, and so had lots of "sweet-green," of which he meant to get a goodly share.

REGGY took me along down-town with him and established me in a room in a cheap hotel, to which I was to lure our victim-to-be, and which was to be my permanent quarters from then on. Then we stuck around until our man entered his favorite eating place, and, having pointed him out to me, Reggy, with a few last-minute instructions, left me to my own wits.

Laura's tuitions certainly came in handy for me. I followed into the café and arranged so that my table was opposite that of my victim. Presently he noticed me. Laura had forewarned me not to be in a hurry with victims, as this sometimes arouses their suspicions—"the slower, the better"—so I kept this in mind. Not until he looked at me the third time did I smile at him, and the next time I winked.

He was instantly responsive. He winked back at me, and my heart leaped, half from joy and half from fear. But before many minutes had passed, I had arisen and boldly sidled over to his table and sat down opposite him. Soon we were talking like a couple of old friends.

The favorite ruse of the vampire in those days was to get the victim to tell her as much as possible of his relatives and intimate home life. Then, by doing some quick thinking, she would get in her stuff by managing to convince him that she was a kin of his, who had broken family ties under some circumstances in the past. And, if I am not mistaken, this "stall" is still being used to-day by low-type vamps, it being varied as occasion and necessity warrant. My friend blithely informed me that his father had led a somewhat unsteady home life, and thereon I saw my chance to say that I was a relative from his father's side.

I had soon convinced him that his unsteady father was my uncle, and, consequently, we were first cousins. First convinced of that, my victim waxed warm, and I experienced no difficulty in getting him to promise me for sure that he would come up to my room at 7.30, where we would have a better opportunity to talk over our long lost kinship. He in turn asked me, when we had done that, to take in a show with him, and could I come home with him and visit all the folks, whom I had not seen for so long?

When we had parted, I hurried back to

Miss Anderson's Statement

When I arrived at the Kaufmann & Fabry Studio my hair was straight as you may see in the picture below. I had very little faith in any of the so-called hair-wavers as expected I would have to visit my hairdresser before keeping my other posing appointments in the afternoon. To my delight, as you will see from the center photograph, it was not necessary. My hair was perfectly waved. I have proved to myself that Maison Marceliers will save time, money and bother of waiting to have one's hair marcelled. They can be worn anytime.

(Signed) Miss Evelyn Anderson

Notice to Readers

A Chicago representative of this magazine and representatives of over 100 other publishers witnessed a successful and satisfactory demonstration of these wavers.

KAUFMANN & FABRY CO. Commercial Photographers

I, Edward J. Cook, hereby certify that these are actual photographs taken by me while Miss Evelyn Anderson's hair was marvelled with Maison Marceliers. The one at the left shows Miss Anderson's hair as she entered my studio. That at the right shows the Maison Marceliers in place. The center photograph shows Miss Anderson's hair as it appeared 30 minutes later. (Signed) Edward J. Cook Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of March 1926.

Emma W. Stolzenbach, Notary Public



Yours . . . The Loveliest Marcel Imaginable

Just 30 minutes—once a week—at home

BE FREE—free from slavery to your hair, from the tyranny of the hot iron, the expense of the beauty shop, the inconvenient "appointments."

Of course you're weary of your unceasing slavery to your hair, of the endless round of beauty shop appointments, the difficulty of appointments, the disastrous results of hot irons, the tedious process of the "permanent," the bother of water waves, the constant expense.

But, more than ever, you know how imperative it is to keep looking your best. If other women can take the time and trouble, if they can afford the money, to keep their hair constantly waved, then I must, too. And you go the weary round again.

End—TODAY—the expensive, time-consuming, hair-ruining, "beauty shop" habit

Don't be a slave to hair care a minute longer. It isn't necessary. You can be immediately and permanently, free from all the nuisance of hot iron marcel, "permanents" and water waves. But that doesn't mean that you must let your hair go, that you are doomed to straight, straggly, unkempt locks. Far from it!

A More Beautiful Marcel Than You Have Ever Known

You can have the most gloriously waved hair you ever had—a coiffure of smooth, loose, becoming waves framing your face, showing off your hair in all the beauty of its natural lustre, giving new grace to your shapely head. Just 30 minutes with the Maison Marceliers once a week—at home—gives you this marvel of unbelievable loveliness.

A \$1.50 Marcel Saved Every Time You Use Them

You know how appallingly your waving expense mounts up. The Maison Marceliers save all this expense and worry. Just the price of a marcel or two, and you are free forever from further expense. In no time at all, you have saved the price of a new hat or frock.

Be the Envy of All Your Friends

Think how your friends will envy you your constant good grooming! Think what a reputation you will earn for unflinching smartness, with hair never straggly and unkempt, but always in the loveliest of soft, becoming waves!

It Waves While You Dress

All you do is slip the Maison Marceliers on slightly dampened locks—and while you dress, your hair is waving. At the end of thirty minutes you slip the Maison Marceliers off—and your hair lies in a wave as utterly charming as the one pictured above. Does it sound too good to be true? Let your mirror decide. It will prove the almost unbelievable wonder of the Maison Marcelier results.

Bring Back Your Hair's Natural Beauty

No matter how ruined your hair has been by previous waving methods, your Maison Marceliers give it a chance to regain its own soft, silky lustre.

Once you are freed from the tyranny of hot irons that burn, break and discolor the hair and dry the scalp, the hot blast of water-wave "setting" that makes the hair so dry and brittle, or other waving method that take for all the life and lustre and make the hair harsh and kinky, your hair begins to return to health and vigor.

Ideal for Any Type of Hair—Any Arrangement

It doesn't matter how you wear your hair, in a shingle bob, Ina Claire, horseshoe wave or pompadour, center or side part, the Maison Marceliers give it the correct line for that style. And it doesn't matter whether your hair is soft and fluffy, coarse and straight, long or short—you will have a wave that is utterly lovely.

You can marcel your whole head, or you can simply reset the difficult side locks or a few unruly strands in the back. You can sleep with the Maison Marceliers on, if you want. They are made of soft rubber, light and flexible, scientifically designed.

Before putting this Marceling Outfit on the market, we asked fifty women to try it out and give us their opinion. Without exception, they were most enthusiastic about it. Here are part of some of the letters we received.

Read What They Say!

Miss S., Springfield, Mass.: I find each time I use Maison Marceliers a constant delight as they do make such beautiful soft waves on my head.

Mrs. M. S., Camden, N. J.: I am very well satisfied with your marcelers and is the truest advertisement I have ever sent for.

Mrs. G. S., Sumner, Wash.: I was surprised at the success I had the first time I put them in.

Mrs. A. N., Battle Creek, Mich.: I can't get along without them now.

Miss B. M., Chandler, Ind.: They surely are beautiful when you get them right. I have had several compliments on my wave since using the Marcelers.

Miss C. B. P., Flint, Mich.: I cannot too highly recommend the Maison Marceliers to anyone desiring a perfect marcel effect.

Miss J. E. D., San Francisco, Cal.: I am very well pleased with the soft natural wave which they put into my hair. Many have noticed the more becoming wave.

A Wonderful Offer—For a Limited Time

We know that the quickest, surest way to give this revolutionary new invention complete supremacy over all other waving methods is to place it in the hands of women who will use it. Their enthusiastic endorsement will give this new device country-wide popularity in record time. That is why we are making this special, limited-time offer: A complete set of Maison Marceliers, including a new and authentic marcel fashion chart, for only \$2.98, plus a few cents' postage—a price that scarcely covers the cost of making, packing and advertising.

Send No Money—Just Mail the Coupon

Even at this special price you need not risk a penny. Just sign and mail the coupon. In a few days, when the postman brings your outfit, just deposit \$2.98 with him (plus a few cents' postage). And when you put in your first marcel, you'll say it was the best purchase you ever made in your life, for your hair waving troubles are ended. Every time you use this outfit, you'll get better and better results and you'll never have to spend your good time and money for marcelers again. After you have tried this marvelous new marcelling outfit for 5 days, if you are not delighted with results—if it doesn't give you the most beautiful marcel you ever had and improve your hair in every way—simply return the outfit to us and your money will be refunded quickly and cheerfully. But don't put it off! Be among the first to take advantage of this special introductory offer. Fill in and mail the coupon.

MAISON DE BEAUTE

124 W. Illinois St., Chicago, Illinois

COUPON

Maison de Beaute, 124 W. Illinois St., Dept. 102, Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen: Please send me your newly invented marcelling outfit, including Maison Marceliers, Marcel Style Chart, and complete directions which I agree to follow. I agree to deposit \$2.98 (plus postage) with the postman when he makes delivery. If the marcelers do not put a perfectly defined wave in my hair, I will return the outfit within 5 days and you are to refund the purchase price without argument or delay.

Name.....

Address.....

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

NOTE: If you expect to be out when the postman comes, enclose \$3.10 with your order and the Marceling Outfit will be sent postpaid.

His Regularity Is What Counts!

Age need not bring on sluggishness — and won't, if you give the system a tiny bit of calcium now and then. Calcium cleanses the system as no cathartic can, with none of the after-effects that make salts so injurious. They form no habit—except as they gradually induce the bowels to daily, natural evacuation without aid. Calcium wafers are the best insurance against auto-intoxication.



Free!

Almost every drugstore in America has Stuart's calcium wafers in stock. They cost only a dime! Or write for a free box postpaid by F. A. Stuart Co., Dept. C276, Marshall, Mich.

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—says DOT ELLYS
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TRY... try... try and at last the winsome fragrance of one rare French flower has been equalled by this new blend of expensive oils and extracts—UNE FLEUR.

Try This Charming New Perfume

LAWRENCE would like your opinion of this alluring perfume that sells for \$6.00 an ounce bottle—as picture below. Take advantage of the following sample offer.



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Let Us Send You a Generous Sample

Mail us your name and address for a generous purse size sample bottle (value \$1.00)—including 25 cents coin or stamps to cover cost of packing and postage. ONLY ONE TO A PERSON.

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Philadelphia, Pa.

my hotel, where I found Reggy in the lobby, waiting for me. The flattering compliments he tendered me when I informed him of my success, I admit I needed sorely to buoy up my courage. I went up to my room. But the nearer 7.30 came, the more my heart fluttered in excitability. Had I not been in the straits I was in at the time, I don't believe I would have held out. But, I was under obligations to Reggy, my money was beginning to get low, and there was no work for me; I knew well what I would get if I returned home again.

At 7.15 I drew off my clothes. And my friend kept his word. At fully five minutes before 7.30 there was a knock on my door. I drew it open cautiously, and there he stood. He was reluctant to come in when he saw the deshabelle I was in. I had a negligée and bedroom slippers on, and my hair was down. "Oh, don't be so particular. Come on in," I said. "I'm getting ready for the theater, and I'll be respectable-looking in a jiffy." At that he came in, though somewhat diffident.

I OFFERED him a chair; I sat down on the bed and made a pretense at combing my hair. My part was now to carry on the conversation until I came to the crux in it—where I mentioned the fact that I possessed a husband. I saw that my victim gave a start when I said that I was married, and I think that, had I not had the key to the door in my intimate possession, my friend would have bolted then and there. He was getting decidedly uneasy now, and I believe that a number of times he had it on the tip of his tongue to tell me to hurry with my toilet. As for myself I had to use will power to conceal my involuntary nervousness. Would Reggy come? But hardly had I thought of it, when there was a knock on the door.

"My husband! Good heavens! What shall I do— If he finds you here—"

My California friend jumped to his feet in a fervor. I think he realized then that he had been duped. Before I knew what he was doing, he had pulled out a wad of bills and stuck a twenty-dollar note into my hand, with, "Here, get me out of here—where do I go? Quick! for Gawd's sake!"

Thinking that I had achieved a complete victory, I referred him to the window and the fire-escape. And never did I see a man move so quickly as my friend did through that window. It was ludicrous.

Then I unlocked the door, and my "indignant husband," Reggy, burst in.

Still laughing, I proudly flaunted the twenty-dollar note before his eyes. But never will I forget the look that overshadowed his face when he saw the open window. It stupefied me with terror.

"Do you mean to tell me that that's all you got?" Reggy shouted at me, his teeth bared like an angry dog.

"Yes—y-y-yes," I stammered; "isn't it—" before I could finish, Reggy had seized me by the throat with both hands, and was shaking me like a terrier a rat. And throttle and shake me he did until the room began to go black for me.

"You d— little jackass," I heard him say, and his voice seemed to come out of a void "Here I spend over a hundred smackers on you, and then you pull off this sort o' stuff on me—a twenty spot, when you should have gotten at least five

hundred!" And in a frenzy of rage he flung me to the floor.

When I came to from my semi-fainting condition, Reggy was gone. I was alone. One elbow was smarting painfully from an abrasion that it had received when I had struck the hard floor.

"Twenty dollars, when the least that we should have obtained was five hundred!" I repeated dazedly. I surely had made a mess of it. If there was a more forlorn individual in the whole of Chicago than I at that moment, I would certainly have appreciated meeting him. I felt that I hadn't a friend in the world. I thought of Laura. But I realized that she, too, would only censure and despise me for my ignorance and stupidity. But having paid another week in advance at my old boarding-place, I still had three or four days' domicile coming to me there. If it hadn't been for that, I don't know what I might have done. I am of the opinion that I would have ended all my troubles with gas, or something else of the same potency.

BUT when I got back to my old abode, and Laura accidentally met up with me, her attitude toward me was as much a surprise as it was a welcome. Instead of condemning me, she sympathized with me.

"Never mind, dearie," she said, and put her arm around me; "you'll learn by and by. That's the way it goes with all of 'em when they start in. The vamping game is a business that has to be learned just like any other business, and you'll get the hang of it by and by," she consoled me. When I told her how Reggy had treated me, she was terribly piqued. She told me that he was a "coky," used dope, and that it had frazzled his nerves to such an extent that he was bound to flare up at white heat over the slightest provocation, and that I would have to condone his shortcomings on that account.

The next day Reggy called to see Laura. Before he could say anything, Laura was at him like a panther, demanding an apology from him in my behalf for his treatment of me, when I was only a novice and naturally didn't know any better. Grudgingly Reggy made it; but that didn't satisfy the fiery Laura. She demanded further that he release me of all obligations to him, as recompense for the abuse he had administered to me the night before. It ended with Reggy and me shaking hands.

From that day Laura and I became staunch friends and inseparable chums. When she was not out on a "job," she was tutoring me, and often she tided me over with her earnings when I was in a pinch; but always there were those odd glints from her eyes that betrayed secret resentment. Laura was struggling with the monster known as Jealousy. Though I envied her for her knowledge of the game, she envied me my looks ten times more. She instinctively sensed, if I stuck to the game, that I would sooner or later attain a higher goal than she could ever hope to reach. But the way she cast selfishness aside for my sake was admirable. She knew more about life and possessed more common sense than a woman twice her age, the only regrettable fact being that it was directed along the wrong channels.

Laura proved to be correct. Vamping is a profession that must be learned from the bottom up, just like any other. Afterward I learned, too, that my boarding-place

was a rendezvous for shady characters. The lady that had befriended me in the station had undoubtedly been connected in some way with the Red Light Districts, and had had an obvious reason for sending me to this particular place.

LATER I again joined forces with Reggy—at his request—and many a “grand” (one thousand dollars) did I get for him. Without wanting to be egotistical, I say that he later admitted that I was the best little pal that he had ever worked with. And of the many things of my hectic career that beset my memory, one among the outstanding is the evening that I broke with him for all time on account of the fact that I had attained the position where it would be more lucrative if I worked my line by myself. He wept real tears, and often afterward he came to my apartment, saying that he was lonesome for me, at the same time fighting back the monster that Laura had once fought—envy.

Shortly afterward he entered another line of the shady business that he deemed more profitable, in order to catch up with me—and that was his downfall. The last I heard of him, the iron gate of a Western prison had closed on him for fifteen years, and I suppose he is there yet; anyway, not more than half of the time of his sentence has elapsed.

The ups and downs that I have passed through would fill a good-sized volume. But as it is only my intention to acquaint the outsider with the real life of the other woman, I will relate only the most interesting ones and let these serve my purpose.

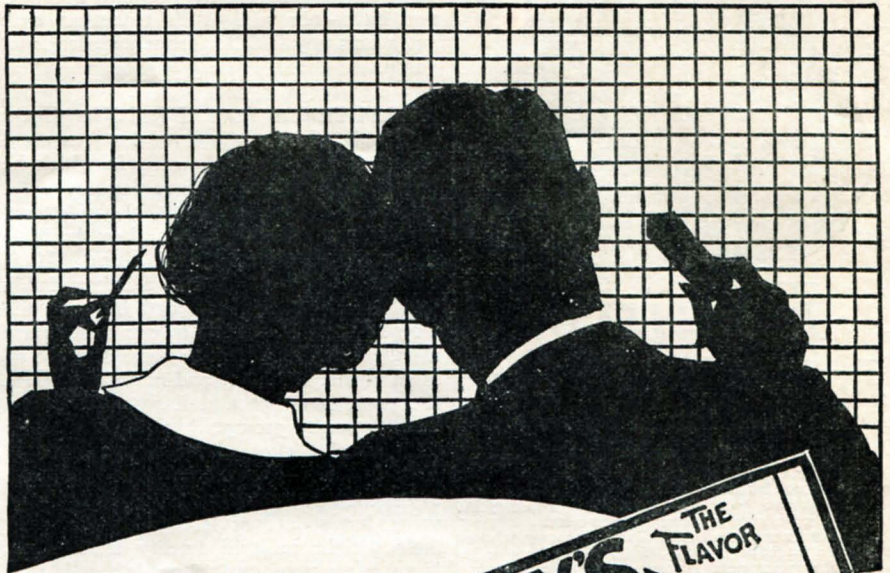
I WILL call him Arthur Franklin, because that is the least like his real name. I presume that Franklin still hates the memory of me with vehemence; but to me he is nothing short of a hero. A man who can free himself from the fetters of a vamp deserves a decoration for bravery, and Franklin is the only man that ever succeeded in giving me the gate. Furthermore, my experience with him terminated my career in Chicago.

Arthur Franklin was one of those men who had become penitent, not only through the workings of Fate, but through impulses of his own. I confess that I was taken aback in no small way, when one evening he called at my apartment as usual to take me to one of Chicago's most elite cabarets, and instead, amid much nervous fidgeting, said: “Margaret, I'm afraid we'll have to quit. My wife has become suspicious. She's wise to us. How she found out, I don't know. The old excuse of my having urgent business on hand wouldn't take any more. Besides, I am tired of this double going; honest, Margaret, I am.”

“But what's that to me?” I demanded sarcastically. Franklin was the only worth-while daddy I had in tow then. He was paying me five hundred dollars a month, besides cabaret and theater entertainments and occasional gifts in jewelry, and the thought of having this “allowance” cut off was repellant to me beyond words.

“Margaret, would you mind calling it quits now and give me back those letters that I wrote you when you were up in Michigan?” he demanded peremptorily, then.

Of course I didn't want to do it. All his pleadings as to how liberal he had been

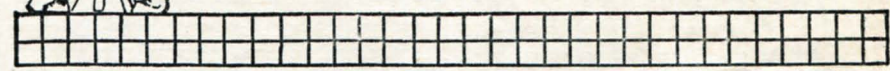


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with me, and so on, availed him nothing; nor have—nor will—such entreaties ever get a man any leniency from a professional vamp.

We parted in a huff.

I had little to fear. I had Franklin in my hands. I had fully three dozen or more letters from him in my safe, in which he had avowed passionate love for me.

Let me digress a moment. Love letters! Every vamp who knows her business thrills at the mention of them. If it weren't for these, many a sugar-daddy would give us the gate and be none the worse for it. But as it is, our victims are usually fated to take a business trip out of town sooner or later, and, naturally, Man, the poor, innocent and unsuspecting boob that his vanity prompts him to be, becomes sentimental, makes one of us his idol, and pens us flaming love epistles. Of course, to us, they do not only possess an intrinsic value, but sooner or later they are worth their weight in gold twenty times over. Here in my apartment there is a safe that contains my share of them, and were it ever to be robbed, I would be one of the most forlorn persons in the world!

IF our friend doesn't take a trip, then we do it. Franklin never had had occasion to leave the city, so that's why I had gone up into Michigan on the pretense to him that I was going for my health, when my real purpose was to get him to write me letters. And he, the poor unsophisticated boob, had lost no time in doing so; every other day he penned me a flaming epistle of love.

Of course I held out on Franklin—either it would be more money, or exposure. But what should the poor-smart simpleton do, but confess everything to his unsuspecting spouse, and then both of them went to that famous detective—I will call him Tinney—at that time known as Chicago's best strong-arm "deke." They engaged him to get Franklin out of my clutches. I had never seen Tinney, but I had read daily in the newspapers of his exploits with characters of Chicago's Red Light Districts. Tinney since has become internationally famous for his detective work.

Well, with such a man as Tinney suddenly becoming keenly interested in my everyday affairs, intuition born of experience warned me that it would be wise for me to leave the immediate vicinity until the sun shone brighter again. So, packing up, I hid myself to New York. Before leaving I made arrangements with Laura to keep me posted on developments by both letter and telegraph.

LAURA'S letters to me caused me no small amount of amusement for the time being. She informed me that she had ascertained that Tinney had accepted Franklin's case at a sum in five figures, and that he—Tinney—evidently having a hunch as to the nature of my character, was leaving no stone unturned in Chicago in his search for me for the purpose of learning my history and therewith confirm his hunch and then show me up publicly with it. Laura advised me to stay where I was.

All would have been well if my finances had not shown decided tendencies toward ebb tide. With living expenses sky high in New York, and my support cut off, my

meager savings were dwindling with a rapidity that alarmed me.

So when I wrote back to Laura, I admit that I used a lingo in razzing Franklin—what kind of a daddy I thought he was, and how I intended to fix him to make him come across with the coin as soon as the coast was clear enough to permit we to return to Chicago. That was pretty stiff, but highly pertinent of the mood that I was in at the time; and here I, too, for once wrote some fatal letters!

Suddenly Laura became enthusiastic in her letters about a daddy that she had landed. But this time she was considering herself in the high-baller's class, and soon, she thought, she would be in the pensioner's, thus putting one over on me! Diligent inquiry on my part elicited the fact that she had landed a young lawyer who had just graduated from law college and had hung out his shingle in Chicago, and whose father had died recently, leaving him heir to over a million dollars! She called him Jimmy, and he was a real sport—spent money like a drunken sailor. And did I need any legal advice? If so, it would be forthcoming gratis.

A few days later Laura informed me that she had learned that Tinney's zeal in his efforts to find me had cooled down somewhat, so it would be, she believed, comparatively safe for me to return. It sure was welcome news to me. I was already in high desperate straits. When I had paid my fare, I had only thirty dollars over.

WHEN I got back to Chicago, my first mission, I thought, would be to try to pay Franklin a visit and see about "shaking him down" for about twenty thousand, and if that was not forthcoming his past would become the property of the newspapers. But on second thought, I digressed. If I went to Franklin, he would immediately get in touch with Tinney, and if I met up with him, I could easily jump from the frying-pan into the fire. Then, too, I thought of Laura's millionaire lawyer-daddy. By using a subterfuge I could perhaps obtain some good advice as how to proceed better against Franklin to make him come across.

Upon my arrival in Chicago, I went to Laura's apartment. She invited me to stay with her as a guest for a while, a chance that I was glad to avail myself of, because I felt that I couldn't afford even a room of my own. She was expecting Jimmy that evening. But when I asked her to introduce me to him, she was peeved; she was afraid that I would take him away from her. Not until I had done all but sworn an oath that I wouldn't get intimate with him—even if he fell for me—did she consent to the introduction.

So that night, when Jimmy called, Laura promptly introduced us. By an hour, Jimmy and I were well enough acquainted for me to confide my litigation to him. Of course I used the name of a mythical friend of mine, who was in the same quandary as I. Jimmy told me that the best that friend of mine could do, would be to go to Franklin and try the sympathy stuff first, say that she was down and out, but that she still loved him and the like; and if he didn't soften, then to go ahead with rough stuff in the way of exposing him. But before long—the young, handsome, and most likeable chap that Jimmy was, and the mood

that I was in!—I had let slip the secret that it was no other than I who was concerned in the litigation.

That "got" Jimmy. He certainly was willing—overzealous—to help me. He advised me to go and see Franklin right the next day. Then I had to promise him that, if Franklin did not come across after I tried my wiles on him, I would give him the case, and then he would see that Franklin got plenty of front-page publicity in the way of a lawsuit. Jimmy informed me further that money would not be the object with him. He had plenty of that. What he desired most, was the opportunity to appear in court. Oh, how men will "fall" for a pretty lady, dangerous or not!

SO the next day I followed Jimmy's suggestion: I called on Franklin. He received me cordially, but never did I see a more obstinate and obdurate man. He told me that he was through with me forever, and not a cent would I get. He wound up by telling me to go to Hades!

I returned to Laura's apartment. But barely had I removed my wraps, when the telephone jingled. The call was for me, and it was from Franklin's attorney, who urged me to come down to his office at once, because his client—Franklin—had retracted and now wished to make an immediate settlement in my behalf; that is, if I would be by any means reasonable. Reasonable? I was overjoyed!

Calling a taxi, I drove down to the address given me over the telephone by the lawyer as his office. It turned out to be his office all right, but when I entered it, I received the shock of my life. The scene that met my eyes gave me a feeling as if I had been struck a blow.

There, grouped around an august lawyer's desk, were Franklin, Jimmy, my benevolent millionaire attorney, and several other men. And on the lawyer's desk laid not only the letters that Franklin had written me, but all my letters that I had written to Laura from New York, including the one in which I had razed Franklin to the limit!

Coming toward me, one of the men, smiling sardonically, introduced himself as L. H. Tinney, Chicago's master detective, and in turn he introduced to me our Jimmy, who turned out to be his right-hand man. Purposely, "Jimmy" had sent me on a wild-goose chase to Franklin, and during my absence—Laura also being out—he had gotten into our apartment with skeleton keys, ransacked it, and obtained our letters! And so there I stood, brazenly exposed to the world in all my ignominious glory!

Luckily for me, though, that the lawyer was not a judge. He informed me that his client had decided to be lenient with me and would not prosecute (but for no other reason than to avoid unwelcome publicity); and in no uncertain tones he then admonished me to obtain work along less peccable lines or leave the city immediately. Had he been a judge, I probably would have gotten at least five years in prison for blackmail, regardless of what Arthur Franklin would have decided.

All the while, however, I was dubious of Laura's loyalty to me. I was of the opinion that she had been promised a share of booty if she betrayed me, and had done

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it. But her further loyalty and devotion to me in tiding me over the sordid financial state that I was in, convinced me that she was innocent. True to his traits, Tinney had put it over on us in grand style.

BUT such a happening as a man liberating himself from a vamp's clutches, once he has been emmeshed, is rare indeed.

I presume that the question will naturally arise: What is it that makes men take these desperate chances with the "other woman" in the first place? That, I think, I can answer easily enough. It is usually the wife's own fault if she loses her husband, or he becomes "unfaithful" to her. In most every case it is traceable to improper conditions at home. The old saying, "Life is what you make it," is also true of the home: Home is what a wife, as its mistress, makes it.

Most men are but boys grown up. They have two natures in them—the man and the boy. Naturally, both of these natures demand attention. The "man" is complacent in the routine of business, but the "boy" is generally neglected.

Men do not take a wife for a helpmate alone. No, they want her for a pal, playmate, and sweetheart as well. But the way it is with most women nowadays, when babies come, they become wrapped up in them; or if it isn't children, it's their clubs and social activities. In other words, they are too absorbed in a sphere of their own to have time for hubby's play idiosyncrasies. And when a man's play spirit is stifled in his own home, what does he do but come to us to give it an outlet!

For proof to what I have just stated, I want to say that the brighter side of our friends' home life is often an open book to us. It is not uncommon for men to tell me all about "Junior," how he is growing, how he is taking after his dad—to substantiate it they have showed me his latest pictures—and how he reacted to his birthday present, and what wife thought of hers; and many other things they tell me. They think the world of their families. And as for their ever falling in love with us and vice versa—bosh! We know better than to make fools of ourselves that way.

It would of course be plain fibbing to say that men don't make love to us—for they do, and for obvious reasons we en-

courage them. But it is rare that they ask or attempt anything rash. In all my life only three tried it with me, and all they got for their trouble was a splendid display of jiu-jitsu on the part of my Jap butler when he hustled them out to the elevator. And these three were unmarried men. Then, for the ten or more of my men friends, we adhere to a regular schedule of dates; and the odd element in this is that there never is any jealousy between them such as there always is among real lovers. The foregoing, I think, again bears out the truth of what I say that married men have no bad intentions in mind when they come to us. All they want is to give vent to their play nature and have the good time that their own wives can't spare the time for.

EVEN then all wouldn't be so bad, if it were not for the unreasonable jealousy that so many women are possessed with; it is this—Jealousy—and nothing else, that our profession thrives on. It is the jealous rage of their mates that men fear most. If friend wife would give her mate a chance to explain his conduct fully when the crisis came, I wager that many an erring husband would become an Arthur Franklin of his own accord before it came to that. But what's the use? Human nature is a queer animal at its best.

But don't get the idea that our lives are the proverbial beds of roses, because they aren't. There is always something good in the worst of us, and it's the instincts from our better side that make life miserable for us. And—pardon my frankness—it's the motherhood instinct. I know that it will be hard for others to believe this, but it's a positive fact; remember that we are made of the same material as others, and so are but human.

Oftentimes, when I am out on the streets, in the parks, or in a home where life runs smoothly for the time being, the little tots—they get me. I get something worse than shame and regret—I feel despondent and disgusted with my life. And that's what has made more than one grister and high-baller give up the game before reaching the top pinnacle and follow the straight and narrow path. As for myself, instinct tells me that I, too, will succumb to it before leaving this old world.

Human Cargo

(Continued from page 32)

"Ah!" Andrade lay back in bed, lighted a cigarette and studied me through half-closed eyelids. I was both pleased and worried at the speed with which our talk had taken a significant turn. He had given me precisely the opening I wanted when he had asked me whether I did well at bootlegging. But did he suspect me of spying upon him?

Suddenly a smile flickered across his sensual face. "You look like a good fellow. Maybe I can help you," he said. "I take you to see some girls. If we do business, your boss pay me a commission, yes?" "Suits me fine," I replied, as innocently as possible.

"Very well, we go now."

Andrade jumped out of bed. He handed

me a cigar and went into the bathroom to shave, but as he left the door open behind him I was deprived of the chance to do a bit of sleuthing. I could only sit back and enjoy his excellent tobacco.

He was ready in twenty minutes, snappily dressed in a dark suit, with a dark felt hat, spats and a cane. We left the hotel and started to cross Union Square on foot, but Andrade changed his mind.

"Around the corner is my car in a garage," he said quaintly. "We will ride, and I will pick up a friend who also wants to meet the girls."

I did not like the addition of the friend any too well, but it was impossible to protest. He led me to the garage on Irving Place. A single glance at the car was

enough to tell me it was the one I had seen Natalie Goddard enter. I recognized the model, and there were signs that the right-hand window had recently been mended. The fragment of glass I had picked up was still in my pocket, by the way, a trivial clue of which I would now have rid myself, if I could have done so without attracting attention.

Andrade drove rapidly to an address on Christopher Street, where he rooted out a Spanish-speaking person named Gomez, whose manners were not quite so smooth and polished as his own. I did not feel comfortable under the squinting gaze of Señor Gomez's dark eyes, and I must say he struck me as being a dangerous person. He crowded into the extra seat, trampling on my toes as he did so. His knees actually pinned me in my place. But I did not protest during the brief balance of the ride to a brick house on West Seventeenth Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.

We all climbed the steps, and Andrade pulled on a bell handle three times. The door was almost instantly opened by a frowsy black woman. Andrade sauntered into the empty front parlor and looked around.

"Nobody here. Well, let's go up-stairs," he said.

I FOUND myself between the Cuban and Gomez as we ascended the stairs. The proceedings were taking on a sinister air, though just why I knew I was in danger it would be hard to say. A detective feels that sort of thing by instinct. My hand crept towards the inside pocket in which I kept my automatic.

On the next landing, Andrade fumbled with the lock on the door of the back room. It was a patent affair and required much switching back and forth. If Gomez's face had not been at the very nape of my neck and his arm brushing my body, I most surely would have struck down Andrade and used my gun to control the situation.

Presently the Cuban opened the door and pressed an electric button. This flooding the room with light, was undoubtedly done to restore my confidence. I got a rapid impression of the room. It had been in darkness because the windows were heavily padded. Two girls were sitting on a divan, a third on a chair, and a fourth was standing back of the divan. All were dressed for the street. The girl's faces, as they looked mechanically in my direction, all bore a singularly dazed expression. The two on the divan I thought looked especially dopey.

"I hope these ladies will excuse—" I began softly.

I never finished the sentence. Gomez grabbed me by the throat, and as I was drawn backward, Andrade smashed me a stunning blow on the temple. I crumpled to the floor, but did not quite lose consciousness. I knew that I was being kicked and dragged forward, and I heard the door closed with a snap. And as if very far away, I could hear the voices of the girls crying out.

When my brain began to clear, I found that I was still in the padded room, but the girls had been herded to the far end where I could scarcely distinguish them. Gomez was binding my ankles and wrists with whip cord, while Andrade sat straddled on



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a chair, his chin supported by its back, and glared at me.

"You damn fool! You bum detective," he sneered. "You think I could stay in this business if I was so easy to catch? I got descriptions of all you fellows on the Missing Persons Squad of the police. I size you up for a dick the minute I see you, and I know you for Pat Kinsella before we ever leave the hotel."

I DID not reply. It was humiliating enough for me to see my badge dangling from his forefinger as he talked and my automatic in his other hand.

"Why we no keel him now?" asked Gomez wolfishly.

But Andrade shook his head. "Murdering a city detective in this house would be a bad thing. What would we do with the body? After the girls are gone, you can come back and fetch him—at night, some time—run him down to the river and throw him off the end of a pier with a stone tied around his neck."

A piece of towel was forced into my mouth as a gag, and so thoroughly trussed up that I could not move, I was hauled into a side room and the door locked upon me. Sensational as it may seem to the reader, Andrade had done the logical thing in bringing me to the house. It was the only place where he could hold me a prisoner without running much of a risk. His indifference as to whether the girls saw me attacked, however, was decidedly puzzling. I asked myself how he managed to control them so fully that nothing he did in their presence mattered, but I could not find an answer to the question.

The afternoon passed for me in lingering anguish. It is a terrible experience to lie tightly bound for hours on end. The joints stiffen, the flesh burns under the ropes, and the circulation of the blood is partially arrested. One's whole body throbs like a toothache. But at least my eyes were free, and I used them to advantage. Feminine clothes were hanging in the room. I observed a coat with brown fur at the neck and sleeves, and a brown velvet toque decorated with a glittering brooch. Natalie Goddard had been wearing these, two evenings before, when she had hurried down the steps of the Hannah Bradford Home. It was certain, then, that she was here. I had not recognized her as one of the four girls I had seen, but that was no indication she was not in the house.

From time to time faint sounds came to me from the large room, but if the girls were talking I could not make out a word of what they said.

I BELIEVE my will would have broken down and I would simply have awaited my fate, if I had not noticed a slip of white paper being pushed under the door. I approached it by rolling over and over, taking extreme pains not to make a sound as I did so. When my face was above the paper, I read the following message, scrawled in a faint hand:

We leave to-night. Fruit boat *Bachimba*. Sails at nine. Save us.

I knew that the banana boats which ply to the West Indies never clear at night, and that the sailing hour of the *Bachimba* must be nine in the morning. But nothing was more likely than that the girls would be taken aboard during the evening when

they would attract little attention. It might even be that, with the connivance of the purser, they could be hidden until the ship was at sea. Beyond that point, the scheme baffled me entirely. I could not imagine how a kidnapper could get away—in these days—with transporting unwilling victims on a passenger boat. Perhaps only Natalie Goddard was unwilling, and the others kept her cowed. Yet the note had pleaded, "Save us!"

I writhed furiously in my bonds, with the effect of loosening them a trifle. The knots, however, had been artfully tied. I was soon forced to admit that I would never be able to free myself unless I could find a way of cutting the ropes, and I saw nothing in that room empty of furniture which could be of use to me.

Suddenly, as I pressed my elbows against my sides, I became aware that the piece of glass from the broken car window had not been taken from me. When Andrade had frisked me, it had been overlooked because its flat surface had not suggested a weapon. The almost worthless clue, as I had thought it, now offered itself as my one hope of salvation.

It would take too many words to tell in detail how I maneuvered the glass out of my pocket, steered it into an upright position and sawed the cords that held my wrists against its jagged edges. For every successful effort, I had a hundred failures. It was a triumph to see a single strand of the rope part. The job took hours, and I lost all track of time.

A little after dark, Gomez opened the door and stared at me. I lay still, my head covering the piece of glass, and pretended to be unconscious. A flash-light he held in his hand played slowly over me, and then he turned away.

PERHAPS two hours later, I heard the girls in the next room preparing to leave. It seemed queer that no one came for Natalie Goddard's coat and hat which were hanging above me. But there was soon no doubt that the party had gone. A deathly silence settled upon the house.

From sheer weariness and pain, I fell into a stupor some time during the night. It had become impossible, anyway, to get results with my piece of glass in the dark. The moment the first light of dawn appeared, I was at it again, and I judged it to be about 7 o'clock when I finally cut myself free.

Adventures, romances to the contrary, a man who has been bound for many hours is practically a cripple until his muscles have loosened up and his circulation is back to normal. It was twenty minutes before I could attempt to move from the room. The delay made me frantic, knowing as I did that the *Bachimba* was sailing at 9 o'clock.

When at last I felt equal to the attempt, escape from the house proved to be fairly easy. I broke a padlock which had been attached to the window, ran down the fire-escape into the back yard and climbed the fence without any move having been made to halt me. I knew, however, that I might have been seen and that the person in charge of the house might communicate with Andrade by telephone.

I did not stop to explain myself to the tenant of the premises on Eighteenth Street which I had entered, but rushed through the basement and on to the sidewalk. At the nearest corner, I did some telephon-

ing. I discovered that the *Bachimba* was docked at the foot of Joralemon Street, Brooklyn. I also got in touch with Headquarters and asked to have two men sent to meet me at the pier. Then I jumped into a taxi and started on a half-hour ride to Brooklyn.

There was a margin of fifteen minutes before the boat sailed when I picked up the other two detectives and dashed aboard. I flashed my badge at the petty officer who met us at the head of the gang-plank.

"Have you got four or more American girls traveling together, and accompanied in some capacity by a Cuban?" I asked.

The officer looked doubtful. "I can't place any such party," he answered. "The passenger list is small—not more than twenty-five. I'd surely know about them, if they were with us on this trip."

"Take me to the Captain. He'll have to delay sailing. I'm going to search this ship. The people I want probably came aboard last night—if that will help you any to remember them."

A light broke over the officer's face. "Some young women missionaries went to their cabins last night. Do you mean them?"

"Missionaries?" I exclaimed, startled.

"Sure. Five or six of them. I never saw such a dull-looking bunch of women. High collars and black skirts sweeping the deck. Old-fashioned hats. They walked as if they were asleep on their feet. I don't know why missionaries have got to be so—"

"Lead us to their cabins," I interrupted. The plot was perfectly clear to me now.

We found the girls—six of them including Natalie Goddard, asleep and

heavily doped with veronal. It would have been easy for Andrade to keep them in a dazed condition all through the voyage and make out that they were sea-sick. Unsociability on the part of missionaries would have been accepted by the ship's company as being nothing out of the ordinary.

The Cuban, we learned, was booked as a physician on mission service, and had announced himself as being in charge of the party. We arrested him in his cabin, and I am happy to say he is now doing a thirty-year term in prison.

My earlier deductions in the case proved to be correct. Andrade admitted at his trial that he had picked his victims because they had been in Mann Act scandals. He had had little trouble in establishing an influence over them. After abducting them, he had kept them in the house on Seventeenth Street and had treated them with drugs until their wills were pretty well broken. Once safely in Cuba, they were to have been sold into prostitution.

Natalie Goddard had written the note that had been thrust under the door for me to read. Because she was the most recent victim, she had had enough courage and initiative left to make an effort to save herself. Luckily she had overheard Andrade and Gomez talking about the boat they were to take.

But if I hadn't happened to see her enter Andrade's car in the first place, the *Bachimba's* human cargo would not have been intercepted, and there wouldn't have been a Chinaman's chance that Natalie Goddard, or any one of the other girls with her, would ever have been heard of again.

The Great Carleton Theater Mystery

(Continued from page 28)

Back in the greenroom, I found most of those who had been there when I left, and three more policemen, who were talking to Rooney. Dale looked at me with burning, questioning eyes. Joe and his brother stood apart in a corner. In other circumstances his features would have made me smile. Tears had made criss-cross lines across his chalked face. "It—the revolver—was in the drawer?" he asked eagerly, taking a step toward me.

"JUST a minute. First, answer me two questions. Did you have a permit to carry a gun?"

He shook his head.

"I thought so. Now why did you put a silencer on your gun if you only intended to use it if attacked by Dale?"

"A silencer?" His eyes went wide. "I didn't—I never had one."

I looked at those about us. "Did any of you who saw Lazari's pistol see a silencer?"

A chorus of "Nos" was the answer.

I took the weapon from my pocket, unrolled the handkerchief, and held it out. "Is this your gun, Joe?"

He and his brother came close. "Yes," he said hoarsely, "but not that on the barrel. I never even handled one. But," his face brightened, "you found it where we said—in the dressing-room?"

"Listen carefully, Lazari. Probably you

added the silencer to-day. That's the reason the others didn't see it. You know what it's for; to deaden the report. Probably you counted upon the racket made by the orchestra to prevent even the dull snap being heard."

"But I tell you I didn't—I couldn't shoot her. It was in my dressing-room. You found it there."

"I found it on the table which stood near you and your brother in the wings, beneath the costumes you had piled upon it."

For a minute he looked me full in the eyes, while his brain was grasping the significance of what I had said. Then his eyes closed, he tottered, and only the prompt assistance of his brother kept him from crashing to the floor. Mike placed him in a chair and stood before him, as if to shield him from the looks of hate and anger from every side.

I went over to Dale, who sat slumped, his hands clenched, his eyes staring into space. He started when I placed a hand upon his shoulder, then rose shakily to his feet. "Go to your dressing-room," I whispered. "Don't leave the theater. I'll want to talk with you soon."

When he had gone, I turned to the others. "All of you, except the Lazaris, return to your jobs. But none of you can leave the house, not just yet. Rooney, telephone for a wagon, then bring those

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fellows' street clothing here. Take them to Headquarters. I'm going to telephone Inspector Sullivan you're coming."

"You—you are going to arrest us?" from Mike.

"Are you going to come clean?"

"We have told the truth. We are innocent, except for having the pistol without a permit."

"All right. You can tell the rest to the Inspector."

AS I hurried out front and down the side aisle, I noted that fully half the audience had departed. Evidently they believed Gene's sudden collapse was more serious than had been announced from the stage, and the nervous tension had been too great for them to remain for the performance's conclusion. Locking myself in the manager's inner office, I reached the Inspector on the wire.

"Been waiting to hear from you, Ferretti. Sure it's murder?"

"Positive. Some one shot the girl with a revolver equipped with a silencer."

"Where were you when she was killed?"

"I was in the rear of the orchestra. Dropped in with a Fire Department inspector for a few minutes—"

"Well, for once a cop who was where he shouldn't have been, was in the right place. Now tell me everything and shoot fast."

Carefully I detailed all that had taken place, the progress of my investigation, and the evidence against Lazari.

"Looks as if you've got enough to convict him right now. When Rooney gets them here I'll have this Joe held on suspicion of homicide and his brother as a witness; maybe as an accessory. But listen, Ferretti. This is your first murder case. Hadn't I better send up Delaney or some other veteran to help you?"

"Please, Inspector, let me go this alone. I'll make good, sure. Besides, I'm after something that's too indefinite to talk about until I see you. There may be another arrest."

"All right. You've done pretty well so far and I'll give you your chance. When will you be down here?"

"Maybe not for an hour or two."

When I returned to the auditorium the audience was filing out. One of the stage hands who was standing guard to see that none of the ushers left, informed me that the Lazaris already were on their way down-town. He also told me that the Medical Examiner and finger-print men, were waiting for me on the stage, and that the latter had taken the prints of the clowns before permitting their removal.

I located the men in the greenroom and, requesting the finger-print experts to wait a few minutes, I beckoned the doctor and his assistant to follow me. Dale, I learned, was in his room. The body of the dancer had been removed to one which was vacant. "Doctor," I said, "it is of the greatest importance that you perform the autopsy here and now. Will you do it?"

"Surely." Directing that a table and other things he required be taken to the room indicated by the manager, he and his man went inside and locked the door. Immediately I summoned the finger-print men, conducted them to the quarters the Lazaris had occupied, and indicated the prints upon the chalk-spattered surface of the dressing-table.

"Were those made by the acrobats?" I inquired.

COMPARING them with those they had but recently taken, they replied in the affirmative. Then I showed them the paper I believed had contained dope. "Handle that carefully. Use your most powerful magnifier and see if there are any powder grains upon it."

This was done. They discovered many tiny flakes.

"Now tell me—were those greasy prints made by the same person who left that one on the drawer knob?"

The test required time, but both finally agreed that one person had made them all.

"Great!" and I laughed. "One more test, then fix up that drawer so you can take it with you." I drew the pistol from my pocket and unwrapped it. "Find the prints on that and see if they were made by either of the Lazaris."

Handling the gun with steel nippers, they went over every part of it, using a soft brush to dust white powder on the stock, and black powder over the barrel and silencer. Then, with a large magnifying-glass and a powerful flash-light, they studied the weapon carefully. Finally they looked at each other and shook their heads. Then one suddenly reached over and took up the powder paper. The other bent close and whispered, next looked at me. "All right, Ferretti, you win. I suppose you knew it all the time. The one who handled the gun last also touched the knob and the paper. There are faint marks which probably were made by Joe Lazari on the stock, but none on the silencer. The prints on the silencer—and somebody made a number when he fastened it to the barrel—and those on the stock which are on top of Lazari's prints show slight traces of grease. What's the answer?"

"Can't tell you now, boys, but you've done a big job. Bring the gun and the drawer with you. I'll keep the paper for a little while more."

On the way to the manager's office I beckoned Rooney to join us, and directed the experts to take the prints of every performer and employee of the place. "Note carefully the name and address of each," I told them. "The bird who left the prints we've uncovered, will be among them. If you get wise to him right off without comparisons, tip Rooney to come for me. Be careful your man don't get wise. I'll be back with the Medical Examiner or Dale."

After the manager and the box-office staff had supplied their prints and the manager had turned his inner sanctum over to my assistants, I went back-stage, after giving another warning that none was to leave until I said so. The Medical Examiner had completed his task when I reached him. I was a bit surprised at his angry frown when he admitted me. "This is a particularly dirty shooting, Ferretti. Here's the bullet. About a thirty-two, I guess. But the killer made doubly certain by dum-dumming it. See how it has been notched with a knife? It didn't quite reach the heart, but it tore away everything around it. She died practically on the instant.

"Wait!" he snapped, as I started to speak. "There's something about this I

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don't quite understand. I've been told the girl was stooping when killed, that she was shot from the wings. I don't believe it, from the direction the bullet took. It went absolutely straight down. I think it was fired from some point above her, say from the flies."

IHAD held my breath, and the blood fairly pounded against my temples while he was speaking. He gasped with surprise when I shook his hand vigorously. "Good for you, Doctor. I never watched anything closer than I was watching that girl when she was shot. And I know positively she hadn't stooped an inch; was standing absolutely straight. Looks as if Lazari told the truth. Now I must find out who really killed her."

"Maybe he hired somebody to do the job."

"Not a chance or—well, I think not. He'd been crazy to do that when so many knew he had a gun, and that his difficulties with the girl would come out. Nope, the killer stole that gun from Lazari's room, killed the girl; then, during the excitement, hid it in the clowns' clothing to put suspicion upon Joe. The murderer knew of the bad blood between the Dales and Lazari, so he must have been a performer or an employee here. Take the bullet and wind up here. I'll see you at Headquarters later. I'm going to question Dale. Afterward you can tell him he can remove his wife's body. Oh, just one thing more." I took the powder paper from my purse. "The microscope shows there are a few grains on that. Any way of telling what the powder was?"

He took the paper and sniffed it. Then he deliberately ran his tongue over it. "I'm not certain. Too little there. But it tastes like an alkaloid. Might be cocaine." Satisfied, I snatched the paper and hurried away before he could question me. Desperately anxious as I was to get back in front and learn if the finger-print check-up had uncovered anything pointing to the unknown killer, I decided a bit of questioning might bring a valuable clue from Dale. He was alone in his room. Explaining that I was in a great hurry, and that the Medical Examiner soon would come to him, I told him to think carefully and tell me if either he or his wife had any enemies.

"Not a soul. Neither of us ever quarreled with anyone except Lazari."

Without dropping a hint that I was looking for somebody else who might have a possible motive, I questioned him concerning the pasts of himself and his wife. I hoped a recasting of old incidents would cause him to recall something pertinent which, in his excitement, he had forgotten. His recital, however, though interesting, failed to uncover the lead I sought. Stripped to bare facts it was this.

He was Billy Dale, twenty-five, of a long line of circus people. His father, a fine musician, had taught him to play the violin. He had been in vaudeville eight years. His wife, Eugenie Gautier before her marriage, was a native of Quebec. She also was of a theatrical family, and had danced and sung since a child. Left an orphan at seventeen, she had joined a carnival company, operated by a Frenchman named Jean Breville. He, finding the girl unusually proficient, had taught her



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some special dances which she performed upon a tiny glass platform, while he operated colored lights from beneath.

BREVILLE, though several years her senior, had fallen in love with the girl and asked her to marry him. She had refused, many times. One night, in Boston, a youth had tossed her a bouquet from a box. Breville became insane with rage, attacked the girl in her dressing-room, and beat her insensible. Then he fled, probably believing he had killed her. The authorities traced him to Quebec, only to learn that he had escaped to his native France. Later Gene had heard he had been killed in the Great War.

The beating had caused the girl to lose her singing voice, but she continued dancing. She was doing a single turn when Dale met her. They fell in love and were married. After that their life had been the happiest possible until Joe Lazari had crossed their path. The entry of the Medical Examiner gave me opportunity to get away.

Reaching the manager's office, I found all had been finger-printed and the check-up completed. "Not so good, Feretti," said one of the experts. "There's not a fingerprint like the one on the gun and the paper. Somehow, one fellow's missing, though I guess he don't amount to—"

"Which one got away?" I cried angrily, turning to the manager.

"I'm sorry, but it's Steve Mack, the one I sent for the policemen."

Right then I recalled something which gave me a fearful jolt. Steve had been the one who had been standing near the table of costumes when I tripped over it, had helped me to my feet and followed me. He had been in a position to hide the gun on the table—

"Well, I'm—" I said. "And I never even suspected."

"I don't think he counts," said the manager. "He's only a poor hophead. He's half shot with cocaine most of the time, but usually he's got enough head to work with. Most everybody calls him 'Dopey' around here. Most likely the excitement was too much for him, and he's somewhere hitting the stuff—"

"Wait!" I said, dropping into a chair and thinking hard. So Mack was a dope-fiend; and there was a powder paper in Lazari's room with greasy prints upon it. "Tell me," I said, trying to hold my voice even, "what was this man's job?"

"He was one of the lights crew; one of the very best, or we wouldn't have kept him."

"And—where was he stationed tonight?"

"In the flies. He worked the lights which were flashed down on the cabinet in which Gene—"

"That's a dirty job, isn't it? He'd get his hands greasy?"

"I guess so. There's considerable oil on the screws of the light machine. But you don't think he—"

"What I think is—Steve Mack killed the girl, fired Lazari's revolver from the flies. What did he have against her?"

"**N**OTHING, I guess. But he had a quarrel with Dale. Held him up on Sunday for his tip instead of waiting 'til

the end of the week, as customary. Wanted money for dope, I suppose. Dale gave it to him. But he refused Mack next day when he tried another touch, and there were some hot words. But you don't think the poor nut got sore and killed Gene in revenge for that, do you?"

"Never mind what I think. Where does he live? My God, by this time he may be half-way to any place."

"I don't know," replied the manager helplessly. "He moves about every other week. Thrown out because of his habits, I guess. Wait!" He ran to the door, jerked it wide, and yelled to his employees, still knotted in the hallway to know if any one knew where Mack lived. Then he returned fairly dragging a husky "grip."

"I know," said the fellow. "I took him home Monday night when he was all but down and out with hop. It's in West Forty-ninth Street, not far. His old maid sister's got a boarding-house there. Can't remember her name. She took him in because he was flat—"

"Can you locate the place?"

"Sure."

"Call a taxi."

"I'll go along!" cried the manager. "I'd like to take him single-handed, the rat."

"Got a gun?"

"Yes," and he took a revolver from a desk drawer.

"Keep it in your outside pocket, same as I'm doing. You may learn arresting a doped murderer is no cinch."

Ten minutes later we piled from a cab before an old brownstone house with a high stoop. At the top I noted a name-plate, scratched a match and bent to read it. But I dropped the match with an oath. The name I had read was "Breville." The name of Mack's unmarried sister was—

As though dashed with cold water, the explanation of the killing burst upon me. The dope addict Mack really was Jean Breville, the Frenchman who years before had all but choked Gene to death in a frenzy of jealousy. She had seen him at the rehearsal on Sunday; the first time since he had attacked her. It must have been a fearful moment, each having thought the other dead. That was why she had been so upset from the beginning of the week, why she had refrained from explaining to her husband, lest there be a clash.

I had pressed the bell while thinking; not once, but many times. Suddenly a light flashed in the hallway, the door opened, and an old man blocked the entrance. Forcing him back, I showed him my badge, then: "Quick, where's the landlady?"

"She's gone out—out," he stammered.

"Well, where's her brother, Steve Mack?"

"He's gone, too. They went together, in a taxicab."

"What?"

"Yes, awhile ago. He came home awful sick. Then they packed up quick and went in a cab. I carried their grips down. They told the man to drive to the Grand Central."

"Are you telling the truth?"

"So help me! I'm only the houseman here. I heard them telephone about trains to Montreal."

I LOOKED at my watch. Quarter to one. The night train to Montreal left at one o'clock. Dragging the others down the steps and into the cab, I ordered the driver to break all speed laws in making the Terminal. We reached it just three minutes ahead of train time. My badge got us through the gate. The conductor already had his hand in the air when I grabbed him, told him my errand and described Mack, adding that he was ill and probably had a woman with him. He summoned several brakemen. One remembered seeing such a couple enter a day coach.

Reinforced by several of these huskies, we stormed the car from both ends. "There he is!" shouted the manager as we entered, pointing to where a woman was giving a drink of water to a man slumped in his seat. Mack tried to rise and fight us off when he realized that he was trapped, just as he was on the first leg of the journey which promised escape for him. But he was too far gone to make a real battle. I handled him alone. He collapsed when the handcuffs were snapped

about his wrists, and I carried him from the car over my shoulder.

Mack, or Breville, for it was the Frenchman, never reached the chair. His arrest snapped the last vestige of the reason left him after years of dope addiction.

He is now in an asylum, a hopeless madman. But, from his sister, to whom he confessed when he fled from the theater, we learned for a certainty that he had committed the crime.

The sight of the girl, whom he long believed he had killed, and the knowledge that she was married to another, revived all his maniacal jealousy. He overheard the quarrel between Dale and Lazari and saw the latter exhibit his revolver. Then, with dope-inspired cunning, he used the weapon to shoot Gene from the flies just after he had turned the lights upon her and placed the weapon where he expected it would help to fasten the crime on the acrobat. But, once out of the theater, he lost his nerve. His determination to return and brazen it out left him when he spoke to Rooney, and he sought safety in flight with the assistance of his sister.

"I Had to Break a Woman's Heart"

(Continued from page 43)

and the trace of a smile on his face. "Fortune hunter—pure and simple," I answered. "He may be more than that. I don't know now—but I will know before long."

His look was a request that I continue. "I now have a perfect description of the gent," I went on. Then I put my hand into an inside pocket and produced a photograph. "I just borrowed this when no one was looking. She has his pictures all over the room, so there's slight chance of this one being missed. There are two thumb-prints on this one—his and hers, I hope. Now I'll be in a position to find out 'what's wrong with the Count'—if there really is anything wrong."

Mr. Zeamer smiled his approval. "You'll find something wrong, I'm sure. That fellow's too nice to be true."

WHEN I returned to my office I lost no time in having the thumb-print developed and the photograph copied. In a short time copies of both were in the mails, addressed to the police departments of all the European capitals, as well as to several of the larger American cities. I also sent several cables, asking if there really was a Count de Cham-Pough, aged about thirty years.

For some reason or other I felt confident of trapping this Count, although I suspected him of nothing more than fortune hunting. I always feel confident of my ultimate success in connection with every case I handle, but on this occasion I felt unusually sanguine.

Then came a cable, stating that there was a Count de Cham-Pough—and some of my confidence oozed away.

But I felt all the more resentful toward the Count because of this unexpected turn of affairs. I had hoped to learn that the title was bogus and my quarry an impostor, but I was none the less determined to foil him in his efforts to annex a fortune.

Then came the "big night." Mrs. Tyson was giving a grand ball, and as a friend of Mr. Zeamer, I was invited. I was, of course, supposed to be the wealthy Westerner—a mining promoter. We also secured invitations for several of my friends—"men of affairs, from various cities, who just happened to be in New York at the time."

These invitations were used by such of my operatives as were able to appear in formal dress without looking like clothing dummies. I wanted them all to "spot" the Count, observe if he evinced any signs of being on friendly terms with any other of the guests, and then investigate such persons. Possibly there was a conspiracy to acquire the wealth of the impressionable widow. And I considered it as not beyond the bounds of reason that the Count might attempt to annex some of the extremely valuable jewels which would be worn by the wealthy guests, most of whom were probably social climbers and prone to display the evidence of their financial success. I put nothing beyond the Count, as I consider a man mighty low when he attempts to prey on women. With me, the Count's stock was far below par.

Then I learned that he had made himself stronger than ever with Mrs. Tyson.

"THE Count de Cham-Pough has requested invitations for a number of tilted foreigners, all friends of his, who will be in New York on the date of the grand ball, and Mrs. Tyson is in the seventh heaven of delight. She now feels assured that this event will rank with the big affairs of the season," Mr. Zeamer told me when I dropped in to see him and discuss the case with him. "You have your work cut out for you, Mr. Thompson, as it will be a most difficult matter to prevent this marriage."

It was—just how difficult I did not then fully realize.

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en masse, stick up the entire party and make away with what jewels they can collect?" I asked. But I realized that they would not thus jeopardize the success of the Count's suit, so I added: "It's more likely that each one of these fellows will work independently of the other, and collect what he can. But you may rest assured, Mr. Zeamer, that if any of them yields to a yearning to possess a diamond tiara, or some other valuable bauble, one of my operatives will foil the attempt. We'll watch this crowd of lords, dukes and earls very carefully."

"They'll bear watching, I've no doubt," was his comment, as I left him.

I was among the early arrivals the night of the ball.

Then after most of the guests had assembled, the Count and his friends staged a dramatic entrance. All the social climbers were a-flutter when he introduced Baron Le Pruyyn, Count de Chartreuse, then a Russian nobleman with an unpronounceable name, and a little duke of something or other, whose dress suit looked as if it had been hired for the occasion from a dress-suit parlor which did not boast a full assortment of sizes. It fit a bit liberally. This first attracted my attention to him.

The Count de Cham-Pough always dressed in perfect taste, his clothes being a credit to his tailor's skill; his manner was beyond reproach, his hands soft and his nails carefully manicured. In contrast the Duke looked slightly shop-worn.

Watching the Count and his friends closely, I could see nothing that looked like an attempt to annex any of the valuable ornaments worn by the guests. They all paid great attention to the ladies present, and were seemingly chivalry personified. But after circulating among the guests for a time I could not but note that each one seemed to single out some particular woman on whom to bestow his polite attentions. And it was not the most attractive or beautiful or youthful women who were so honored, for in each and every instance the titled gentlemen attached themselves to ladies who were known to possess great wealth. Evidently the men were close students of Dun and Bradstreet. They displayed the technique of a credit manager. It now looked as if all the noble gentlemen were in search of wives—with plenty of money on the side. Or *vice versa*.

THEN I chanced again to notice the Duke, who was dancing with a rather hefty woman who was known to possess an equally hefty bank balance. He seemed to be laboring hard as he steered the none-too-active partner through a fox-trot, and I had to smile as I watched him. As he passed close by me I noticed that his hands were rather rough and red, like those of a man engaged in some gainful occupation, and I looked at him the closer.

Of a sudden I recognized him—the "Duke" was none other than the little French waiter in the restaurant I had visited, just off Broadway! Like a flash it all came back to me. I recalled the caption of the newspaper picture on the Society page, that had held his attention on that occasion:

Mrs. Amelia Tyson, one of the patrons of the Fifth Avenue Dog Kennels Dinner-Dance at the Ritz

This had me puzzled for a time. What could it all mean—a waiter here as a guest? Who is this Count, to be the friend and sponsor of a waiter? What is the relationship or connection between the two? Are the other "titled" guests also menials?

There was nothing left to do but to play the string out to the end. I spoke to my different operatives in turn and instructed each of them to shadow some particular one of the foreigners to his home and report to me next morning. I would then know where to pick them up in case I decided to investigate them further. It was difficult to tell what kind of a mess I had stumbled onto. But I was more firmly convinced than ever that it would be a mistake for Mrs. Tyson to marry the Count. And I was equally impressed with the fact that it would be difficult to dissuade her from her purpose unless I had evidence of the most positive kind, for all evening she had bestowed upon him her smiles and evinced her satisfaction and pleasure whenever he was near her, which was practically all the time. She certainly was deeply in love with him and mighty proud of him.

The following morning I was at my office early, as I was anxious to get to work on the case.

None of my operatives were down as yet, having worked, no telling how late the previous night, trailing the various titled individuals to their homes.

Regan, one of my hardest workers, put in an appearance just before ten o'clock. "What did you learn?" I asked, as soon as he entered the office.

"I TRAILED that Bolshevik guy with the whiskers after he left the party. The little 'Duke' and he left together, so Sam Durkin and I tailed them together, as the 'Duke' was Sam's quarry," he answered. There was a note of contempt in his voice as he added: "Cheap guys. Don't even use taxis. Took subway down-town to a little place known as Jacques' Lunch Room—a cheap place. Soon their pals arrived from the party and joined them in the place. O'Neill and Ryan, who had been tailing them, joined us outside the place. The Count showed up about an hour later. He must have been telling his sweetie a long 'good-night.' They talked a lot, but spent no money. The place seems to be a hang-out for them."

Just then Sam Durkin put in an appearance. I nodded a greeting, and turned again to Regan.

"When they seemed about ready to leave the place we decided that one of us should go into the restaurant and try to learn something about them. We knew you had the 'Duke' placed, and could locate him in that restaurant up-town where you first saw him, so we decided that all the rest of us should each tail his man until he put him away, except Sam. He turned the little 'Duke' loose, and entered the restaurant just after the crowd of titles left. That's the last I saw of him until just now. I tailed my man, the Russian, and put him to bed in a cheap lodging house down on the Bowery."

I turned to Sam Durkin. "I entered the restaurant and ordered coffee and some eggs, after these other fellows left," he began, without waiting for me to ask any questions. Sam knows how to report his activities. "Kidded the

French waiter a little while and then asked him if the bunch who had just left were not countrymen of his. He shrugged his shoulders. I commented on the fact that they looked like a sporty lot, and then he opened up just a little. 'All sports, but they have no money.' I suggested that they just come in to see him because they like him and want to patronize a countryman. 'Not all my countrymen,' he told me. 'Italian, Russian, French—all kind. They eat, they borrow—but they never pay.' I sympathized with him. 'Don't they work?' 'Sometime. Not often. Mebbe someday marry rich American girl. Then pay back what they borrow and owe.' That was about all I could get out of him."

My other operatives came in about that time and gave me reports as to the abodes of the titled gentlemen whom they had followed home. It seemed all the nobility was patronizing the cheapest sort of lodging houses.

FROM my own investigation I knew where the Count lived. After he began acting as escort for the wealthy widow Tyson he engaged a suite of rooms in a first-class hotel. The fact that he was not in a position to pay his hotel bills bothered him not in the least. He probably told the story of his prospects to his hotel manager, exhibited the newspaper notice of his engagement to the rich widow—and let the bill mount. It was to enable him to meet his bills that Mrs. Tyson had requested Mr. Zeamer to convert some of her securities into cash and turn fifty thousand dollars over to the impecunious Count. I wondered how he managed to secure the good clothes necessary to keep up an appearance, and learned that he had been enabled to open charge accounts at several stores because of his prospects of soon having plenty of cash at his disposal. It is quite the usual thing for these titled foreigners to come over here and run up enormous bills for lodging, food, clothes, taxis, flowers and all that sort of thing, and then have some foolish woman marry the title, bills, liabilities, and all. This is the game Count de Cham-Pough was working. His less fortunate pals would work the same as soon as they were able to win the favor of foolish, deluded women of wealth.

"Guess we have the low-down on this mob, Chief," suggested Sam Durkin. "Busted nobility."

"Probably. But what we have learned doesn't enable me to prove anything criminal against any of them. They are all four-flushing—going to a party in hired dress suits, and all that sort of thing. But it's no crime to try to win a rich wife. I've got to dig up something on this Count de Cham-Pough and do it soon if I'm to keep him from getting that fifty thousand dollars in his clutches. He's urging Mrs. Tyson to keep after Mr. Zeamer and insist upon him raising a lot of ready cash."

"Suppose I beat him up and put him in the hospital for a week or two," suggested the husky Ryan. "That will give us more time to look him up."

"Nothing doing in that direction," I immediately answered. "Even if we considered such a plan, it wouldn't work. The widow would feel sorry for him and probably rush down and marry him as soon as

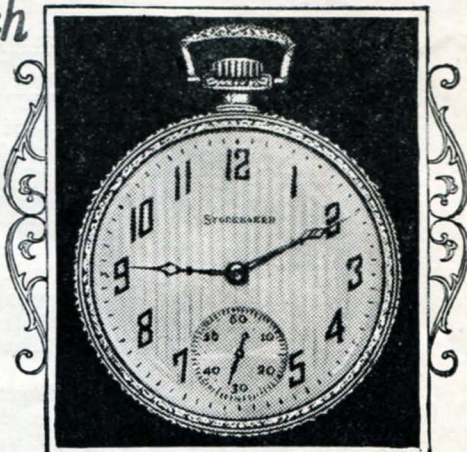
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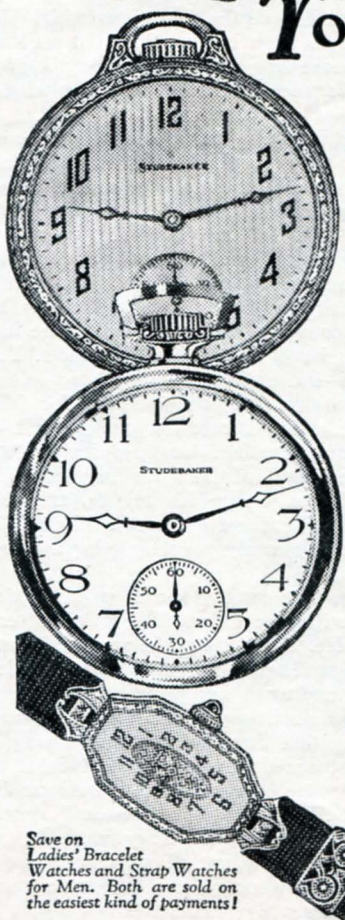
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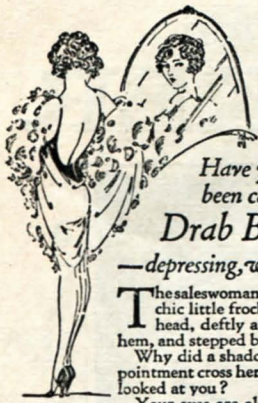
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she learned of what had happened. Then we'd have a real job trying to separate him from that fortune. No. That sort of thing won't do."

Then a messenger boy entered the office. "Cablegram, Mr. Thompson," he said, handing me an envelope.

Eagerly I tore it open, unfolded the paper and read:

"**T**HUMB-PRINT and photograph that of Pierre Martini, swindler. Was formerly valet to Count de Cham-Pough, and has frequently been arrested for impersonating him. Is competent valet; also works as barber and at pressing clothes. Married once in Russia and again in France. Many convictions against him." It was signed by the head of the Paris Detective Bureau.

"That's something like it," I declared, showing the message to my operatives. "It will not be necessary for you to give any more attention to this case. It's as good as closed."

But it wasn't.

"Think I have the Count's number, Mr. Zeamer. I have information that will no doubt cause him to fade out of the picture," I announced, as soon as I could get the banker on the phone.

"Fine! Fine!" he interrupted to comment at times as I told him of the latest development. "They've been at me to get this fifty thousand ready for them. Now I'll ask them to come in to see me at my office this afternoon, to sign the necessary papers and accept the money. You better be here at, say three o'clock. We may be able to convince Mrs. Tyson that she has made a mistake in trusting this fellow. I'm not sure—but we'll try."

Before time for me to leave for Mr. Zeamer's office I received another cablegram, from Scotland Yard, giving a quite complete record of the swindling activities of the bogus Count, his aliases, and the dates of his prison sentences. I read it and placed it in my pocket, saying nothing to anyone.

At the appointed hour I was in Mr. Zeamer's private office. The "Count" escorted Mrs. Tyson when she arrived, beaming and smiling, a few minutes later. Mr. Zeamer explained my presence by saying that I had just dropped in for a chat, and suggested that there was no reason why I could not remain during the few minutes it would take to complete the business in hand. Both Mrs. Tyson and the "Count" urged me to remain. They were seemingly both in the best of spirits and very happy—though for quite different reasons, as I could readily understand.

Mr. Zeamer wasted but little time in preliminaries.

"You may sign this document, which gives me authority to sell the stocks listed below, Mrs. Tyson, and empowers me to turn over out of the proceeds of such sale the sum of fifty thousand dollars to the Count de Cham-Pough," he explained, placing before the widow a legal document, and handing her a fountain pen.

She signed the paper.

MR. ZEAMER glanced at the signature, asked me to witness it, and then placed the paper in the drawer of his desk. Then he stared hard at the "Count."

"I will now draw a check for fifty thou-

sand dollars, payable to the Count de Cham-Pough," he said, speaking slowly. "If you are the Count de Cham-Pough—"

"Of course he is the Count de Cham-Pough!" interjected Mrs. Tyson.

The blood seemed to leave the fellow's face for just the fraction of a second. He sensed that all was not well, but he retained perfect control of himself except for that one instant. He merely smiled in a condescending manner and gave his head an affirmative nod.

"If you are the Count de Cham-Pough," repeated Mr. Zeamer, "you may endorse your name on the back of this check, and I will either place the amount to your credit in this bank, subject to your checks, or I will hand you the amount in cash, just as you elect."

The "Count" seemed reassured. He accepted a pen, endorsed the check and handed it back to Mr. Zeamer. He probably thought the banker's remark mere by-play, and felt that he was about to gain actual physical possession of what was to him a vast fortune.

I arose, walked over and locked the door, to avoid all possibility of him escaping—or possibly inducing Mrs. Tyson to leave with him and refuse to hear what I had to say.

"When you endorsed that check you committed forgery, as you are not the Count de Cham-Pough," I declared slowly, pointing an accusing finger at the now thoroughly aroused man. He stood erect, eyes flashing and breathing rapidly. It was evident he didn't intend to surrender the prize without a fight. But I continued: "Pierre Martini, you haven't a chance in the world of getting away with this."

"This man's actions are ridiculous—absurd!" he bluffed, addressing Mrs. Tyson. Then turning to Mr. Zeamer he added: "I'll thank you to let me have the cash, and then we'll be going."

The old man smiled indulgently.

"Yes, my dear 'Count,' you'll be going—but not where you want to go," he slowly drawled. "Mr. Thompson here is a detective whom I engaged to look up your past record. And he has done his work well. You haven't much of a future, but your past is remarkable, and—"

"**W**HAT does all this mean," angrily demanded Mrs. Tyson. She had stood as one in a daze when I first accused Martini. But now she recovered her speech and came to his defense. Both Mr. Zeamer and I endeavored to make clear to her that the man was an impostor and swindler, but he had so favorably impressed her that she refused to listen to reason. She really loved the man, and turned on me and began to berate and abuse me for interfering in her affairs.

I had thought the matter settled when I received that cablegram earlier in the day, but she soon showed me that she did not intend to be deprived of her social triumphs and her fiancé, even if he were a bogus nobleman.

"I don't care if he is penniless. It matters not to me if he has been previously married. Even if there is a question as to his title, I love him just the same," she dramatically declared, and then sought refuge in the arms of her lover. He petted her and whispered encouraging words to her. She seemed about to swoon in his

arms, but she retained control of herself and again released torrents of abuse for both Mr. Zeamer and me.

Martini was telling her how much he loved her, and suggesting that she demand the money from Mr. Zeamer when I produced my cablegrams and read them, in order to prove the truth of my statements.

"Come on, darling, we'll take this money and leave these people. We'll go away from here and be married at once," Martini suggested.

And the foolish woman immediately agreed to the proposition.

"I'll thank you to hand over that cash, Mr. Zeamer," she said, controlling herself as best she could. "The Count and I will be married to-day."

"If this fellow tries to leave this room, I'll arrest him," I declared coldly. I saw that she was determined to stick to him, regardless of everything we could say to her, so I decided to make him turn her down, although I knew this would deeply hurt her feelings and her pride. But if I had to break her heart to save her from her own folly, I was determined to do so.

"Come on, Pierre Martini," I said, placing a hand on his shoulder, and leading him a step aside. "You're no longer a count. You may serve as valet to the warden of Sing Sing when you go up there, or possibly work in the tailor shop, or serve as the prison barber, 'Count of Shampoo.' But you will not leave here with this lady, whom you have so shamelessly deceived, and you'll never get your hands on a dollar of her money. You can't marry her, for you have wives in Russia and France. I have your record and you can't bluff your way out."

HE saw that the jig was up, and was extremely vindictive and bitter. Losing a fortune just when it was almost within his grasp riled him.

Mrs. Tyson again approached him and moved as if to again place herself in his arms.

He knew his case was hopeless, so he had no further use for her.

"Keep away from me," he snarled at her. She stopped short, as he made a move as if to push her away. A look of painful surprise appeared on her face.

"But Count, dear, I still love you. I—"

"Forget all that stuff," he told her, his polished manner now entirely absent. It was a case of reversion to type. He was no longer the debonair and polished gentleman, but the common ruffian and thief. When he acted the part of gentleman he was merely aping the Count and others for whom he had worked. Now he forgot to act. He was himself. He scowled at the astonished woman, as he went on: "If it hadn't been for you I wouldn't be in this jam. Of course I made a play for your jack. You was easy. No one would want you, only for the money you have. And you can't even get that for me."

He continued to abuse her until my heart went out in sympathy for her, but I wanted her to be completely cured. I was taking no chances on a reconciliation.

She wept as if her heart would break when she fully realized that her dream was completely shattered. Then she begged and cajoled him to accept her caresses, but he continued to revile her.

Finally she turned on him. And a wom-

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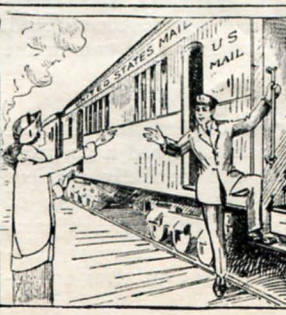
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an scorned is no pleasant little playmate. Her eyes flashed fire and her tears disappeared as she censured and upbraided him for abusing her confidence and, what probably hurt her far more, making her the laughing stock of her society friends, as she surely would be when all the details of her betrothal to a bogus count became known.

After they had said just about everything mean and unkind to each other that they could think of, she suddenly recovered her composure, turned to Mr. Zeamer and announced that she intended to sail to Europe in a few days. She bade him goodbye, then turned and walked proudly from the room.

"PIERRE, we'll just hold this check that you forged. If you ever show your face around Mrs. Tyson's home again we'll grab you and put you away for a

long stretch. We prefer to have no publicity about this matter, so we'll not prosecute if you do a fade-out. But don't go near Mrs. Tyson again."

I released him.
"No chance," he assured me, as he hurried away.
"I suppose that romance is permanently busted," I said to Mr. Zeamer, when we were alone.

"A whole flock of 'titled' individuals will be driven back to their old restaurant jobs—washing dishes, and waiting. This has been a bad season for fortune hunters," he commented with a laugh. "Yes, Mrs. Tyson's romance is busted all right."

"And after all, it was rather hard on her, poor woman."
"Maybe. As you said at the beginning, you had to break her heart, but for my part—I think it was a lucky break."
Then we both laughed.

The Curious Case of the Andrews Pearls

(Continued from page 64)

the stairs. Boards creaked. I'd have to be very, very careful.

I didn't want to gloat over my luck. Counting chickens before they are hatched causes more heart-breaks than any egg famine. Still it's well to be prepared for the chickens.

Somehow or other, I must gain access to Betty's room and make a search that evening. The waste-paper basket looked very promising to me. The stockings and handkerchiefs silently spoke of a hasty departure.

That afternoon I must secure a skeleton key, soft-soled felt slippers, a black frock, money for a quick follow-up, a couple of stunning evening frocks—and find out whether Gene Parker had a "record."

I mentally memorandumed these things as I left the house and hailed a cab at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Forty-seventh Street, ordering the driver to let me off at the building next to ours. Perhaps this was an unnecessary precaution, but "better be safe than sorry" is my motto.

Arlen was delighted with my success and immediately dispatched a man to Police Headquarters to look up the Parker man. He handed me a skeleton key, and a hundred dollars.

"You had better wait until to-morrow before you buy the frocks," he cautioned. "I don't see what's the matter with the ones you have."

If Mr. Browne had been there, he would have given me an order right away. I decided to act on my own initiative and select the gowns anyway. I hate to be hurried in buying clothes. After all, I could return them if I didn't need them. And, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the cage."

THERE are some bright high lights in a girl detective's life. I had a gorgeous time picking out two perfectly precious evening dresses: one a delicate tone of yellow chiffon simply dripping brilliants; the other an orchid georgette over pansy-purple charmeuse. Men operatives are re-

quired to wear evening suits rented at only \$3 per evening!

And then, again, we have our terribly dingy hours. . . .

It was around nine o'clock when I returned to the rooming-house. A dim light was burning in the hall. From the basement came voices: the affected, wheezy tones of Mrs. Grogan; the shrill wabble of her cronies. The rest of the house was dead still.

As I reached the first landing, the telephone rang. Again and again it shrilled before I heard the slow, heavy footsteps of the landlady mounting the uncarpeted stairs. I mounted another flight—stood still and listened.

"Hello. Yes, dearie. Sure. You'll be up within an hour to get her things? All rightee!"

The clink of the receiver snapped back on the hook.

I hurried up-stairs to my room. Turned on the single electric bulb, shaded in crinkled, faded pink paper, and opened my suit-case.

"Within an hour!" I thought, anxiously, as I tore off my suit and changed into the black dress. "That might mean anything short of an hour, and I'll have to go over every bit of the place before the girl arrives."

I am quite a quick-change artist. In a few moments I was cautiously descending the stairs dressed in black. On my feet were the soft slippers. Some of the treads squeaked alarmingly; I made careful note of which ones were sound.

Without mishap I managed to open the door of Betty's room. Once inside, I relocked it and put the key in my pocket. I may be harum-scarum and reckless in big things, but I'm a hound for detail.

The glow from a street lamp flooded the center of the floor with a dim light, but I was practically invisible to anyone who might happen to be looking across from the house opposite.

I sneaked around the shadows of the wall, until I reached the bureau. I opened the drawers and found the small top one

filled with a litter of odds and ends. The lower ones contained nothing but lingerie.

THE waste-paper basket was more fruitful. As rapidly as I could I selected torn bits of picture post-cards, letters and telegrams, from a conglomeration of department-store envelopes, pieces of wrapping paper, scraps of string, "customer's slips" and so on.

Just as I was thrusting the first handful of stuff into my pocket, I suddenly became aware of voices approaching. The landlady's wheeze; her heavy steps; others.

I sprang to my feet and quickly darted around the wall. I had barely time to roll under the big double bed when the door opened.

"See, it's a grand, big room, Maisie," I heard Mrs. Grogan say. "An' it would be right near your beauty parlor.

The lights had been flashed on. The women seated themselves and proceeded with a long, uninteresting conversation.

"Well, just look at that waste-basket," Mrs. Grogan suddenly exclaimed. "That no-count Amelia didn't empty it, an' I'll bet she didn't sweep under the bed, either. If I'm not after her every minute—"

The rocking-chair on which she was sitting creaked violently. I could picture her rising in her clumsy, fat way. Then, thank heaven, the door-bell rang!

"I guess that's Miss Morrison's friend now," she said. "Do you mind answering for me? My legs ache so. Gosh a mighty, ain't she the impatient one? Hurry, or somebody'll think we have a fire in the house. I'll just take this waste-basket with me."

By the time she had waddled across the room and picked up the basket, and aimlessly changed the position of the center-table, the woman she had addressed as "Maisie" had admitted the caller.

All chance of escape was cut off. I cautiously rolled back as near the wall as possible. Sincerely, I hoped that Betty's friend would pack up the things with dispatch. Although it was nearly the end of April, Mrs. Grogan was generous with the heat, and it was stifling under that bed.

"I thought Miss Morrison's week wasn't up until to-morrow," a cold, metallic voice said.

"That's so, Miss," Mrs. Grogan replied in a conciliatory tone. "I was just showing—"

"Well, it won't be vacant until to-morrow," Betty's friend cut in harshly. "I'm going to stay here to-night, myself. Good night!"

GOOD grief! I was in for it. I heard the door closed sharply and the key turned.

I had been in tighter corners before and encountered much worse before this case was finished. But nothing more disagreeable. I hoped Betty's friend didn't make it a practice to look under the bed.

You know the saying—"the wicked flee when no man pursueth"? Well, there were a lot of them very near me that were unpursued that night. Mrs. Grogan was right. The "no-count Amelia" had not swept under that bed. I didn't dare sleep for a moment, because I have an unfor-

tunate habit of starting to chatter immediately I "drop off." The girl above me was restless. She tossed in bed for hours, and at each turn, it seemed to me, a fresh cloud of dust descended. Towards morning, however, she breathed deeply.

Very carefully, inch by inch, I rolled out. Boards creaked, sounding in my ears like cannon shots.

One bit of luck was with me. Upon locking the door, the girl had taken out the key and laid it on the table. This enabled me to open and lock the door with my skeleton key.

I spent the remainder of the night examining the papers I had secured. The writing on an envelope which had an Atlantic City post-office stamp on it, resembled the signature "Gene" on a half-torn post-card. It was dated three days previous. Dollars to doughnut holes, Betty had done a buck and wing down there to see her sweetie.

When I saw Mr. Arlen later on in the morning, he agreed with me.

"This Gene Parker is one of the suspects in the May Carter and Alice Montrose murders," he said, fingering an operative's report. "He is a bad bird and you had better look out for him. His specialty is vamping women. Your spiel had better be that you have just cleaned up on a breach-of-promise suit settled out of court. Through Parker you'll probably make the girl. After that, let your impulse be your guide. Gaston Larson will leave for Atlantic City this morning and find out if the man is still there. You had better go right down this afternoon on the chance that he is. Put up at the Blackwood. Good-bye."

I dispatched a telegram to myself, calling me home. Then I called for the dresses at Claire's, packed them and had my trunk sent to the Pennsylvania Station.

All went well. Mrs. Grogan was volubly sympathetic about my sick aunt—especially when she learned that I didn't want a refund on my week's rent. Four-thirty that afternoon found me installed in a large room and bath, fronting the ocean where it washes the sands of Atlantic City.

At eight, Gaston, posing as a gallant son of the idle rich, called to take me out to dinner.

"Gene Parker is dancing with a girl who calls herself Iola LaRue at a cabaret near the Chelsea district," he told me in a low voice as soon as we were seated in one of the roller chairs. "You ought to make him easy, for he is paid extra to dance with the lady patrons."

IN spite of the fact that Betty Morrison had been earning a precarious livelihood on the outskirts of propriety for over three years, she had miraculously retained a certain sweetness and softness which reminded me vividly of the little girl who had clung to her mother eight years before and demanded: "What are they going to do to our Tommy, Ma? See, he hasn't shined his shoes, and I'll bet he's forgotten his hankie."

She was dancing with Gene Parker when we entered the Chat Noir around midnight. There was none of the synthetic gayety that usually distinguishes professional dancers. She was a thing of fire and youth

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and bubbling spirits. I could see at a glance that she was madly in love with her partner.

"When we get up to dance after this number is over," I told my escort, "I want you to do your worst. I have to 'make' Parker without waste of time. That's Betty with him."

What that man's worst was, is indescribable. Before the dance was half over, we were back at our table. Not only my poor toes, but even my ankles had suffered from his erratic steps. I dance well—that is one of my assets. And I can follow the most difficult leads. But that man had plowed over the floor like a hippopotamus.

The suave, too-well-groomed manager approached. We had ordered champagne at \$25 a quart. This was nothing else but California white wine and seltzer. We seemed to be good graft—just the type who helped to run the luxurious speak-easy, with its high-salaried entertainers and its big "protection" fees.

I bawled Gaston out good and proper—loud enough for the manager to hear.

"Would Madame, perhaps, care to dance with M. Garraboux?" he asked, nodding towards Gene Parker, who was piloting a heavyweight about the floor.

"What about it, Dora?" Gaston asked. "I won't mind. I'm no good at those fancy steps."

"You're darned well right you aren't, old dear," I said viciously. I was still wincing from the pain of my trampled tootsies. There's such a thing as being too realistic.

"I shall present him as soon as this dance is over," the manager promised. I noticed that his eyes were covertly examining my many and sparkling "gems."

Within fifteen minutes Gene Parker was bowing at our table.

Oh, boy! How that sheik could dance! For the time being, I forgot he was a crook I was engaged to "rope" and gave myself up to the pleasure of following his perfectly precious leading.

After the dance was over, I suggested that he and his partner join us at supper.

"I'm sure she'll be delighted," he murmured, his eyes positively glittering. Me and my jewels and my prosperous-looking escort with his fat wallet were irresistible. I felt a momentary pique.

A PLEASANT evening—or rather morning—was had by all, as our home paper used to put it. We left the Chat Noir around 3 A. M. and were whisked from one road-house to another in an expensive car which Gaston had hired in New York with a smart liveried chauffeur.

By the time we sat down to breakfast at Childs on the Boardwalk at seven o'clock we were all calling each other by our first names—or aliases, to be more correct.

Betty was a charming girl—witty, and as full of fun and mischief as an egg is full of meat. I had every intention, of course, of "roping her in"—and getting back that Sleazy Andrews' jewels. But that didn't prevent me liking the kid. I knew she had been given a rotten deal. And I knew also that though she seemed

to like me, too, that wouldn't prevent her helping her sweetie to "give me the works" if necessary. At least, I thought so at the time.

I moved to the small hotel where they were living as man and wife, though I could see with half an eye that they weren't married. In fact, "M. Garraboux" told me as much the first evening. He also suggested that he was quite ready then and there to transfer his affections. This, after I had naively related the details of my breach-of-promise case.

"Betty—I mean Iola—is a nice kid," he said, "but with a live wire like you—"

The unended sentence suggested unlimited possibilities.

Betty also confided in me, the second night when I dropped in to see her, that the couple weren't married.

"I'm mad about him, though," she said. "And he's promised to marry me when I get some money I'm expecting. Then we're going out to Hollywood and make a try at pictures. He isn't a bad boy, really. He reminds me of my brother Tommy—" For an instant, tears filled her eyes. She laughed nervously. "What is the name of that stone in your ring?"

She referred to an 8-carat fake cabochon emerald I was wearing. This was a decoy, for one of the most precious of the stolen jewels was a great 35-carat cabochon emerald.

"It's a cabochon emerald—my birthstone," I explained. "I'm going to get a bigger one soon. Did y' ever hear of Marx? He has some wonderful bargains. He picks 'em up. I never ask him where. He used to come around the Moonlight Nights Company and we girls got some marvelous things from him. Last week, he told me he could get me a 15-carat one for \$15,000 and I'm trying to hammer him down."

I didn't look directly at Betty as I said this, but I could hear her breath come fast.

"Why—it doesn't look like anything," she stammered. "I didn't know those green stones were worth so much. Cut emeralds I know are worth more than diamonds—"

"Oh, but these have to be absolutely flawless," I explained with a superior air. "And \$15,000 is really a bargain for a 15-carat cabochon."

"I think I know a man who has one of those stones you could get for less," she said slowly. "I don't know for sure, though. But I'll ask him."

I DIDN'T dare appear eager. Two more days passed before she brought up the subject again. I had a suspicion that some one was shadowing me. It might be the fence she was using, who was giving me the once-over. The trouble of having to appear in court occasionally is that the crooks get to know you.

"If you're still interested, I think the man I spoke of the other day has one of those cabochon emeralds you spoke of," she said to me the third night. "Do you want to come and see him? You'll have to come alone with me and my friend. You understand? And, you know, you might tell your friend that you paid more for the ring and have him give you the

money. 'Never spend your own,' is my motto. Not that I've had so much luck in grafting," she finished with a shaky little laugh.

"Sure," I agreed heartily. "I'll be delighted. And if he has any more bargains, my little bank-account will stand a dent."

After the Chat Noir closed, I bade Gaston an ostentatious "Good night." I had managed to acquaint him with Betty's plans, but couldn't give him an inkling of where we were going.

"Don't you want to take my car?" he offered, easily enough.

Betty somewhat curtly declined. She and Parker and myself piled into a taxicab and were driven towards Philadelphia.

Our destination was a rather shabby chop-suey joint, and although it was after four o'clock in the morning it was pretty well crowded.

A colorless-looking individual with shaggy, dusty hair and a two days' dirty beard on his face was waiting for us in one of the booths.

We were about to sit down and give our order when a girl dashed up to me.

"Hello, Rene," she exclaimed, cordially seizing one of my hands and giving me a resounding kiss. "What are you doing here? Still sleuthing? Or have you captured a millionaire husband?"

"Neither," I managed to say, calmly enough. "I quit the game some time ago. Found better pickings in another quarter."

The damage had been done, however. This girl who had worked with me in the department store, was a scatterbrain. She had been fired for pilfering and had evidently taken to the broad and weedy paths. After chatting for a moment or two, she rejoined her party.

Three pairs of hostile eyes blazed into mine. Parker's face was knotted into an angry snarl. The fence's was still uglier, his lips twisted over yellowed teeth in a sneer; Betty's face was white as chalk.

No one spoke for a full minute. I didn't need to look around the room to discover the sort of place I was in. I knew it was an underworld dive. I wasn't afraid for my life. Parker knew that Gaston would have him arrested if I "disappeared." But there was my assignment to consider. I had to get back the jewels. And I had no *proof* that Betty had taken them, though I knew she—

There was only one way out. I had to gamble on that.

"Iola, I would like to talk to you a few minutes alone," I said at last.

"Iola," Parker mimicked.

"I don't see the use of it," Betty almost whispered between white lips. "But, all right, we'll go to the dressing-room."

PERHAPS it was a foolish move on my part. By leaving the two men alone, I gave them an opportunity to plan mischief. There were plenty of rough characters present who would be only too ready to oblige a "pal," and permit him to establish an alibi.

However, desperation is the father of inspiration. There's a time for bluff—and a time for bargaining. This was no time

for bluffing. My knowledge of Betty and her family history guided me in what followed.

The dressing-room was a small place with scaling plastered walls and a narrow window opening on an airshaft. "Suicide's boudoir," it has been nicknamed, I learned later, because at least four young women of the underworld had taken their own lives there.

When we entered, Betty was inclined to be deaf to my explanations.

"But Betty, I'm not trying to get the jewels back for Mr. Andrews," I lied. "I am working for Mrs. Andrews. Andrews doesn't care whether she gets them or not. I'll strike a bargain with you. You have told me several times that you would rather marry Gene Parker—oh, yes, I know who he is—than anything else in the world. I think I can manage that for you. Do you really want to marry him, though? You know he's a bad egg—"

"He isn't!" Betty spat out angrily. "The police have hounded him. They're always after him. I know he isn't keen about marrying me. He thinks he can get one of those old fool wealthy hags to fall for him. But I know, if once we were married, he would forget all that nonsense. He's a good kid at heart. Women spoil him."

I couldn't agree with her, but after all it was her funeral. Since she wanted it that way, it helped me a lot. Briefly I outlined my plan. At first, she was skeptical—then interested—then enthusiastic.

"We can't hurt you. We have no authorization for your arrest," I concluded. "Can you meet me to-morrow in Atlantic City at ten o'clock with the pawn-tickets for the brooch and bracelet you hocked in New York?" She nodded. "Are those the pearls you have on?" Another nod. "That just leaves the emerald. Get that. Marx will be there and after the jewels have been examined, we'll turn over the money to you—and I give you my word, the ceremony will follow."

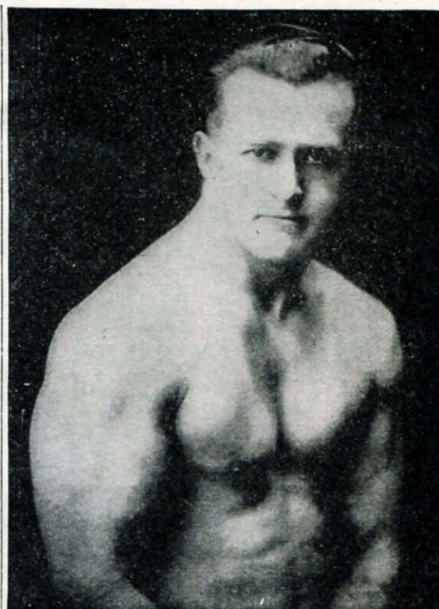
For a little while longer we talked about this and that regarding the arrangements. Two bright spots of color flamed through the rouge on Betty's face and her eyes sparkled with a glint of tears.

"I'll fix it all right," she declared. "Now you change your wrap for mine—it's darker and not so conspicuous. If you went out through the front entrance you might walk into a trap. You'll have to climb down the drain-pipe, outside this window. I heard a girl once say that she escaped that way when the cops broke in. The alley opens right on the avenue. You'll be all right. Gosh, if you put this over for me, I'll be grateful for the rest of my life!"

We exchanged wraps and bade each other an affectionate *au revoir*. I liked Betty, but I had to do what I had to do. Duty first!

My orchid georgette suffered a bit by the climb down the drain-pipe, but I escaped all right. I caught a night-prowling cab and was driven to the nearest hotel.

There, I got Mr. Browne on the long-distance phone. Thank goodness, he had returned from Pittsburgh by that time.



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Stop It!

Cut it out right now. Determine this minute that you're nobody's fool. If you only knew what a strong, robust, healthy body meant, you would have had one long ago. Take it from me, fellow. It's great to be healthy. I've been both ways and I know. Let's you and I work this thing out. What do you say? I'm a muscle builder. I'm a pep builder. I've taken the sickliest looking scare crows you'd ever want to look at, and I've built them up into real big powerful, virile men. Listen to this and I'll shoot you off a few things that are coming your way. In just 30 days, I'm going to add one full inch onto those arms of yours. Yes, and two inches to your chest in the same length of time. But that's nothing. Get this. I'm going to broaden your back and deepen your chest so that every breath you take will drag a full load of oxygen into your lungs, shooting life-giving red corpuscles into every nook and corner of your body. I'll broaden your shoulders and strengthen your neck. I'll put an armor-plate of muscle over that old tummy of yours. I'll shoot a quiver up your spine that will make you feel like turning flip-flops. Meanwhile I'll work on every muscle inside your body pepping up your vital organs and putting fire into your whole system. Good? You're dum tootin' it's good. It's wonderful. And the best of it is—I don't just promise these things. I GUARANTEE THEM. You take no chances with me. It's a sure bet. Well, what do you say? Let's ride.

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Tim Arlen never would have managed to put it over.

HE listened anxiously to the first part of my plan. He was a bit skeptical about Betty being able to keep Parker in Atlantic City until ten o'clock the following morning. But he agreed that I had worked out an amazingly original dénouement for the case.

Accordingly, he jumped on the six-o'clock train and met me at the Blackwood. With him was Marx.

There's many a slip between the glass and the lip. I was simply shaking with nervousness. I believed Betty would turn up, but how was she going to get the cabochon emerald from the fence? She assured me she would if she had to shoot him for it.

I was just about to voice these forebodings to Mr. Browne—though I hated to do it—when Betty arrived on the scene, a bit tired and wan-looking.

"Well, here goes," she said. "It's a gamble—and in gambles I'm usually the loser."

Marx examined the emerald and the pearls and declared them O. K.

Half an hour later, Mr. Browne called on the debonair Gene Parker and awoke him from the arms of Morpheus. I don't know what he said—but in a short while both descended to the hotel rotunda where Betty and I were waiting.

"Rene, you are going to be maid of honor at a wedding—and I'm going to give the bride away," the Chief grinned.

The bride and groom (or soon-to-be bride and groom) looked at each other a bit uncertainly. Then there was a clinch that would have done credit to two movie stars.

Had Mr. Browne managed to show Gene Parker the error of his ways? I don't know. He never told me what he said.

However, after both the two had been made one and had said their "I wills" as if they meant it, the Chief gave them a wedding breakfast at the Blackwood.

As he bade them good-bye, he handed the bride a roll of bills, much less than the amount Andrews had been willing to pay, and gravely admonished them:

"Now, you kids will kindly go straight!"

And they answered: "We will!"

Well, they meant it then anyhow. And we haven't heard of them getting into any trouble since.

"Well, Rene, that was one bright idea of yours thinking of threatening Parker with the Mann Act," Mr. Browne said quietly after we were settled on the train en route to New York.

I blushed at his praise, and let it go at that.

"At any rate," I murmured modestly, "it isn't often that our cases have two happy endings."

The Seven Who Died

(Continued from page 47)

over, Colonel. I believe I would like to make some additional experiments and improvements, if possible, before I go further into the matter."

"Of course," said the Colonel. "I don't believe there is any particular hurry. But come to me when you are ready, and we will take it up again. Will you promise me to give the French Republic the first refusal of the gas, if you can perfect it so that it works properly?"

I nodded. "Of course. Nothing would give me greater happiness."

WE took our leave soon afterwards, returning for tea to the house of Carmelita Perez. I was pressed to stay for the evening, which I did. Not that it required very much pressing.

The time passed very pleasantly. Carmelita related to her father what Colonel Gaveau had said about the gas which I had discovered, and it seemed to me that her father showed even more interest than the Colonel had exhibited. He excused himself shortly afterward, and went out. Carmelita and I spent an evening of talk and music—an unforgettable evening for me, for it was on that evening that I discovered that I loved her desperately and would soon have to ask her to marry me, if I was to be able to go on from day to day. And indeed, she was so kindly disposed to me, it seemed, that I felt I had a fair chance of being accepted as a favored suitor. I was not foolish enough to think I was the only man interested in her

—but the truth was that she really had shown a marked interest in me.

Before I left for the evening Carmelita's father returned with five friends, one of them a young man whose face seemed familiar to me, though I could not place him. I was introduced to them, and to tell the truth, I disliked them from the first moment, especially the young man, whose manner to Carmelita—to my surprise—seemed a trifle proprietary. What right did any man have to feel that way about her, even unconsciously? And yet, I noticed that his manner did not appear obnoxious to her. That did not please me very much, either.

I stayed for a while after that, and despite my dislike of the visitors, which I tried to cast off as unworthy, we became quite friendly. By this time Carmelita had taken to calling me by a nickname—Roulette—which had reference to my winnings at that ancient and very lucky game. There is nothing that draws people together more than a nickname—which is, often, a pet name—and in future weeks, when I was such a frequent visitor to the house of the Perezes, I met all these men often, singly or together, and it was not long before I was calling them by their first names and they were calling me Roulette. The name stuck to me, and after a while people hardly knew that my first name was Charles, I was called Roulette so universally. I mention this at length because it has some little bearing on my story and because, one day, Carmelita presented me

with a miniature roulette wheel, in gold, for my watch charm, which she had bought on the *Rue de Rivoli* in Paris. I wore the charm for some time, and its beauty and oddity were commented on by everyone I met.

BUT that happened some time later. The next day I went back to my experiments with the poisonous vapor. This time, of course, I was careful, for I was prepared for the deadly properties of the gas. For some weeks I worked very busily on this, for I knew I was on the right track, and that I had only to add the proper ingredients to make it even more deadly and to render it still heavier, so that it would float languidly and solidly, very close to the ground.

I was a constant visitor at the house of Carmelita during this time. Often I spent a pleasant evening alone with her, but sometimes I found that the young man of whom I spoke—who had regarded her with such a proprietary air—was there, monopolizing a great deal of her attention. His name was Emile Duval, and he spoke a perfect French, but somehow he did not look like a Frenchman to me.

Once I thought I had placed him—you remember, I thought I had met him before. It occurred to me that he was the very man in whose arms Carmelita had been struggling on that eventful night when she had jumped into my automobile and taken that ride to Paris. I put the question up to her squarely, as I am not given to subterfuge.

She answered with her charming laugh. "What a funny boy you are, Roulette! Of course it isn't so! Why can't you let well enough alone?"

"I'll have to, I suppose," I answered a trifle sulkily. "But I don't like him—and I don't like the way he looks at you, either."

She laughed. "Silly boy. He admires me. Why not? Don't you?"

I nodded. "Of course, Carmelita, but—"

"Well, then! Do you want to prevent all other men from even looking at me?"

"Yes," I said simply.

We laughed, and that ended it, though unsatisfactorily.

The next day I finished my experiments with the poison gas. I had perfected it so that it was satisfactory in every respect. I came to a decision on that day—a strange decision for one so young, but I have ever been an idealist, even though I am responsible for a million widows and a million deaths. I decided to throw away the fortune that had seemed in my grasp.

I decided, in a word, not to sell the secret of the poison gas to the French Government, nor to any other government. I visualized the wholesale slaughter that it would cause, the strong, brave men who would be cut off in the flower of their youth, and I found I could not go through with it. After all, there must be other ways of becoming wealthy than by the blood of one's fellow man.

I MADE up my mind to do nothing further with it. I was thankful that I had not committed a scrap of my formula, or method, to paper. It was all in my head.

That evening I told Carmelita that I had concluded my experiments with the gas, and that I thought it would be supremely effective. I said nothing of my determination to drop the matter, although I had intended to. She was so enthusiastic over my chance of becoming rich and successful that I did not have the heart to, at that time, though I intended to tell her about it the next time I saw her, which would probably be the next day.

I had met Colonel Gaveau a few days before, and I had told him that I was practically through with my experiments, and that they seemed to be successful. I was sorry I had done this, for the day after I had decided to drop the matter I received a visit from him.

He came to the point of his business almost immediately.

"I have been authorized by the military authorities to treat with you for the purchase of your poison gas formula, providing it is satisfactory—which I am certain it is. It will, of course, be a matter of a large sum of money . . ." He was silent, waiting for my outburst of gratitude.

It didn't come, much to his surprise. "I have decided to do nothing further in the matter, Colonel," I said.

He expressed his astonishment, and I explained to him my reasons for this seemingly radical step. He answered with the usual argument of the militarist—that I would be doing a really humane act by handing my formula over to the French Government, because that would make war so deadly that it would cease to exist on this earth. Thus I would be benefitting humanity. I declined to benefit humanity, because I could not bear to have on my conscience the thought of the millions who would die to make me wealthy. You may reply that I have changed since then. It is true. I am older, and I have been through a great deal. There is little altruism left in me.

Colonel Gaveau departed reluctantly, but before he left I promised him that if I changed my mind I would give the French Government the first chance at the poison gas.

My next visitor was even more surprising, and he came so close upon the heels of Colonel Gaveau that they passed each other in the corridor. I could see the Colonel stop and stare at him in a puzzled way, as though trying to remember where he had last seen him. Finally I could see remembrance breaking on the old warrior's face, and he went his way. Duval came in, for it was he, the man whom I instinctively distrusted from the first.

HE greeted me effusively, for superficially we had become very well acquainted, though I knew that at bottom he disliked me as much as I disliked him.

It appeared that he had come on business, also. It appeared, too, that his business was practically identical with that of Colonel Gaveau.

"I am authorized," he said, "to make you an offer for the formula of your so-called 'poison gas'."

I gazed at him in astonishment. "I did not know that you represent the French Government in any capacity," I said.



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He smiled at me, as though I were a naive child. "I do not represent the French Government," he said. "I represent the—" He drew his heels together and made a clicking bow that was not lost on me. "I represent—ah—private interests. The price, I guarantee, will be satisfactory."

"I'm sorry," I said coldly, "but I have promised the French Government the first refusal of the formula—though I ought to tell you that I have decided not to sell to anybody, and to do nothing further in the matter."

"So?" he said, a trifle musingly. "I see." He was lost in thought for a while before speaking.

"Let us be sensible about this thing," he said finally. "You and I are men of the world. You are not a French citizen—so it is not a matter of patriotism with you to hold yourself at the disposal of the Republic. It will resolve itself, then, to a question of who can offer the most money. You will have no fault to find, I can assure you, with the offer of my—ah—client."

I made him understand, finally, that it was not a question of money, and that I had no intention of doing business with him. He started to take his leave finally.

"You will regret this, I think, Roulette," he said, regarding me fixedly.

"I think not," I replied, "and I would thank you not to call me Roulette. I am not enough a friend of yours to warrant such intimacy."

I know this was snobbish and unnecessary, but the man annoyed me, and I disliked him more and more.

He bowed. "As you wish. We will meet again, perhaps," he said at the door. "Perhaps," I said.

"If you change your mind—" he began.

"There will be no change of mind, for you," I said quite firmly. "I have no wish to do business with your—ah—clients." I was quite pointed and sarcastic in my intonation, and he knew what I meant, for he had the good grace to color.

"Better men than you, my friend, will do business with them. And perhaps—who knows, you may change your mind." With that he was gone.

THE thing was quite plain to me, of course. The German Government also wanted my formula. As between Germany and France, there was no possible doubt as to which one I would do business with. But I didn't wish to do business with either—it was too bloody a business. However, the thing perturbed me.

A man was very liable to be crushed between two governments. I was thankful I had not committed the formula to paper, as I realized now that that would have been dangerous.

I slept badly that night. I dreamed that fiends were menacing me on all sides. That the cries of the wounded and the dying were in my ears continually. There was the roar of cannon, and the skies were red with the burning of the great cities, while the earth ran scarlet with the blood of young men.

In my dream a giant German soldier advanced on me, his red, dripping bayonet at my throat. In a frightened perspiration I awoke in my dark room.

There were hands at my throat, and

dark forms were going here and there, evidently looking for the electric light switch. The fingers tightened on my throat. It was difficult for me to breathe, and impossible for me to cry out. I knew that this was no dream, that this was reality, and that in a moment I would be a dead man.

My senses reeled, and there were red dots and dashes before my tortured eyes.

It is often said that in such moments you review your entire back life. That everything that ever happened to you, and everything that you ever thought, flashes in swift and ordered array before your mind's eye. That may be true of others, but it wasn't so of me—from which I come to the very human conclusion that the thing is simply the concoction of some fiction writer's fertile brain.

I was far from thinking of my past life at that time. What I really thought of was what a pity it would be for a bright young fellow like me, with such good prospects, to have no future life. Yet it was all like a dream, except that the fingers at my throat were very real, and I knew that this was a dream—if it was one—from which there was to be no awakening.

But I was wrong even in that instinct, for even before the shadowy figures that were circling my room had found the electric light switch there came a sharp command in French from one of them, and the fingers that were choking out my life were relaxed. A gag was shoved into my mouth, and despite my violent struggles three of them hurled themselves upon me and trussed me up with a portière cord as neatly as any one was ever tied.

THEN some one found the switch, and the light flared up brightly and garishly yellow, and there I was, with six men searching the room as though I did not exist—six men in short black silk masks that covered the upper parts of their faces, with their eyes glinting busily and evilly through the apertures.

Who were they and what did they want? As for the latter, I was not to be left long in ignorance. As to who they were, of that I could not be sure. But I will say that the men looked awfully familiar to me, and especially two of them—one a tall, dignified figure who seemed to be in charge of the party, and the other with an air about him that I was sure I recognized as belonging to Duval and no one else—Duval, whom I had that day turned down in a very important proposition—important to him, at least.

I thrashed around on my bed, and the dignified man turned and looked at me, his piercing eyes glaring through the holes in his black mask, almost boring holes in my body.

"Be quiet, you!" he growled at me in a low voice which he was evidently trying to disguise.

I continued in my thrashing around, cursing myself for not having put up a stiffer resistance when they first appeared, but the fact was that I had been awakened from a sound slumber and the whole affair was over before I was much more than half awake.

The leader of the band gave a crisp order to one of his men. I saw then that I had better lie quiet for the present, for this man nodded and pulled from his belt



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as wicked looking a stiletto as it has ever been my ill fortune to see. He approached me with it, and for the second time within a few minutes I was at the very portals of death.

The point of the stiletto hovered over my throat for a split second, and to say I regretted not having been more tranquil and composed would be putting it mildly. The knife was halted, however, by a word from the leader, who turned to me.

"Will you be still now, or shall we have to force you to be still?" He jerked his head in the direction of the wicked looking stiletto.

I indicated by a motion of my head that I would cause them no further trouble at that time. The leader growled that it was a very good thing for me that I was going to be a good boy, or words to that effect, and he and the men went on with their search.

I NEVER saw any place so carefully and thoroughly searched as was that room. They not only looked over the papers in my desk; they actually took the desk apart, in order to make sure there were no secret panels. They looked among my instruments and paraphernalia, among my books, among all my papers. They tapped the walls, turned the chairs upside down and examined them from that angle, looked in all my clothes, and between the pages of every book in the place. They moved me from the bed to a chair and took the bed apart to see whether there was any secret hiding-place there, and then they subjected all the other rooms in the apartment to exactly the same treatment.

I lay there, following their movements with my eyes, knowing full well what they were looking for, and being aware, of course, of the futility of the search.

Finally I indicated by thrashing around a bit that I had certain information to communicate to them, and the leader of the band ordered that the gag be removed from my mouth.

"If you would be so kind as to inform me as to the purpose of this—ah—visit, I think I might be able to be of assistance to you," I said, heavily sarcastic, but he disregarded the tone of my voice and answered my question.

"Don't you know what we want here, then?" questioned the dignified one.

"So far as I can tell," I answered, "I don't seem to have been in your confidence. How should I know?"

"Do you really want to know?" he asked.

"Certainly," I said. "I might be able to save some of my furniture from further damage, if you—"

He silenced me with a gesture.

"What we intend to get from you tonight," he said, and his words came slowly and evenly, yet one could gather the deadly intent behind them, "is the formula for a certain gas, or vapor, which we happen to know has been discovered by you in your chemical experiments. I am not asking you to give it to us—I am telling you that you will have to do it."

"And if I don't?" I asked, sparring for time.

"You would not be so foolish," he replied, looking at me significantly.

"But suppose I was so—ah—foolish, as you call it," I persisted.

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"Well, there are ways to compel men to talk, you know," he retorted quickly, and for a while there was a silence between us, as he permitted this to sink in. Then he spoke again.

"We are bent on this mission—and as you can see, we are not men to be trifled with."

"SUPPOSE I tell you that there is no such formula in existence—in fact, that I have never discovered the formula you claim that I discovered?" I asked.

"You are simply wasting our time—and yours," he replied slowly, "for we know the contrary to be true."

"You haven't found it, have you?" I asked sarcastically.

"No, we haven't. But we shall—if it's here."

"If it's here," I echoed, low, but he heard me. He turned on me at that.

"Is it here?" he asked fiercely.

I did not answer.

"I will give you one more chance to answer. If you don't answer, I will be able to have it arranged so that we can search the place leisurely—without fear of interruption by you." He was silent for a moment, and so was I. "Do you understand?" he said at last.

I nodded. "Ask your question again."

"Where is the paper with the formula?" he asked.

"It is nowhere," I said.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that it does not exist," I said.

"It does not exist! You mean—"

"Exactly," I smiled at him.

"You mean that it has never been committed to paper?" He gazed at me searchingly, in an attempt to determine whether or not I was telling the truth.

"Just that. I mean that if there is any such formula—which I feel it necessary to deny, of course—it has never been committed to paper."

"Then you are the only one who knows it?" he asked, persistently.

"Yes, I think so," I said, and recovered myself instantly, having answered too quickly. "I mean, of course, that there is no such formula, but if there were, I would be the only one who knows what it is."

"You are playing with words," he warned. "I warn you that it is dangerous. We are not to be trifled with. If you have the formula in your head, we shall get it from you to-night, before leaving here—of that there is no doubt."

"Just how do you propose to do that?" I asked.

"There are several good ways of making men talk with which we are familiar. We will apply them in your case."

"And if they fail?" I inquired.

"Ah, then, it will be unfortunate, for we shall be compelled—much against our wishes, you understand—to slit your throat." He looked fixedly at me, and I knew that the man meant exactly what he said. My blood turned cold for the moment, and the shivers that ran up and down my spinal column and nestled at the roots of my hair were very real indeed.

"WELL, what good would that do you?" I inquired, seemingly quite calm and nonchalant.

"How do you mean?"

"Why, if you kill me," I went on, "the formula will die with me—conceding, of course, which I don't, that there is a formula."

"Of course it will die with you," acceded the leader of the band quietly.

"Well, it will hardly do you any good, under such circumstances, I imagine. You won't secure this secret formula of mine by killing me," I said.

"No, we won't," agreed the leader of the gang. "But then, neither will anybody else—and that's very important."

I was silent for a space.

"I see," I said finally. "You want it yourself—and if you can't get it yourself, you are undertaking to see that nobody else gets it."

"Exactly," he bowed.

"But what difference does it make to you whether anyone else gets it or not, just so long as you don't get it?" I inquired.

"I think it won't be necessary for me to explain that—I shall not bother, in any event," he said. "We have wasted a great deal of time as it is, in this rather fruitless conversation. You understand, I believe, just what the situation is?"

I nodded. "I think so. Either I tell you the formula—if there is one—or you—"

"Exactly," he said. "It won't be pleasant."

"Well, what guarantee have I that after I tell you the formula you won't dispose of me anyway?" I inquired.

"You have the word of a gentleman," said the leader of the band, drawing himself up to his full height.

I couldn't repress a sneer. "The word of a gentleman!" I jeered. "That's really a little too good to be true. A gentleman—and engaged at this moment in—"

"It is difficult for an outsider to comprehend these things," interrupted the leader quickly. "I—or rather, we—are doing what we are doing because it is necessary. It is not a matter of choice with us. There are things that a man can do and still remain a gentleman—"

"Such as?" I put in sarcastically.

"Such as this I am now doing," he replied calmly. "I will have to ask you to be content with no more explanation than that. I do not expect you to feel the same way about certain things as I do. And, moreover, it is not necessary. You will not only have to give me the formula, but you will have to give me your solemn word of honor to divulge the formula to no one else under any consideration, especially—"

"Especially the French Republic," I broke in.

He bowed. "You read my thoughts in an uncanny fashion," he said, slightly sarcastic. "That is it, exactly. Now, what have you to say to that?"

NOW, I don't want to pose as being heroic beyond the ordinary—for this is certainly not a story of my heroism, but a story of why I did what I did. As I say, I don't want to pose as being heroic, but there was something about this matter that aroused a certain obstinacy in me, a certain wish to withstand this man's coercion, regardless of what the cost was to me. And, as I have said, I was younger then than I am now, and far more idealistic.

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He represented something that I hated; he represented, to me, the militaristic idea of government, regardless of the individual members of that government, regardless of the human beings that go to make up any society. He represented to me a ruthlessness, a determination to get what he wanted, brushing aside whatever stood in his way. All this was an attitude and a viewpoint that I instinctively detested. My gorge rose, and I resolved that this man, so quiet and so assured, with his friends and assistants with him, should know that here was one person who could tell him to go to hell. Which is just what I did—in so many words.

I spoke after a pause. "You won't consider it amiss, I hope," I said, looking directly at him and at his assistants, who were ranged on the other side of the room looking at me, "if I tell you that as far as I am concerned you can go plumb to hell? Nothing impersonal meant, I can assure you."

The last was just a bit of bluster, of course, but I couldn't help it. He seemed not to notice particularly, however, at least for a moment or two. I took advantage of the silence to add a little more to the insult, for I might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.

"And that," I added, "applies also to the gentlemen who have come with you—in order to see fair play, I suppose."

"Your words," he said, "do not mean anything to us, I can assure you. It is not a matter for words with us; it is a matter for action. We will see, then, if there is any way that you can be induced to speak."

He motioned to two of his men. "Unbind him, and stand by on either side of him, with your guns covering him. If he starts to get out of the bed, or makes any overt move at me, shoot him at once. And shoot to kill. But first, you will kindly get that poker for me. In the meantime I will be heating it over this alcohol flame."

THE poker was handed to him, and the men unbound me. The leader leisurely lighted the lamp and inserted the end of the poker in the flame. My blood ran cold at the sight, for I knew that this man would stop at nothing—that my agony would mean nothing to him except a means of getting the information he wanted. I lay there, with guns trained on me from either side, breathlessly watching the end of the poker glow a faint pink in the fierce flame, and then a darker rose pink, and finally a deep and beautiful red—though it was not beautiful to me.

The leader of the band bent over the flame as impersonally as though he were conducting an experiment. When the poker was bright red he turned to me.

"Once more—before we proceed with this—I ask you for the formula of your poison gas."

He waited courteously for my reply, as coolly as a serpent waits to strike. In my anticipated agony the drops of perspiration stood out on my forehead like dew on the morning grass, and I came as close as it was possible to come to ending my resistance without actually doing so. I did not answer, but turned my head away. In imagination I could already feel the sear of the red-hot iron, and smell the pungent



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odor of burning flesh—my own flesh. It was a test, and I resolved to meet it.

"Ah!" said the leader of the band. "We will proceed, then."

He lifted the glowing poker from the flame, while on each side of me stood two men. Four guns were pointing at various parts of my anatomy, the triggers cocked. I looked from one to the other of the brigands, but could detect in none of them any sign of relenting, any sign of human pity.

Nearer and nearer came the red-hot poker to my face. Warmer and warmer became my skin, shriveling and shrinking from the intolerable heat that came implacably closer . . . still closer! Now it was in front of my eyes. Did he intend, then, to put my eyes out? I involuntarily raised my hand as the ruby tip of the poker came hovering in front of my eyes.

Finally it was too much for human endurance, and I screamed. I shrieked at the top of my voice! Through the night reverberated and re-echoed my scream of fright and anticipated agony, cutting the silence of the apartment like a knife.

He took the poker away.

"I see we should have replaced the gag," he said to the men. There was a swift order and the gag was forced between my chattering and resisting teeth, the while the poker was once more being heated over the licking, persistent flame.

"ALSO bind him," instructed the leader. "I don't like the way he moves around on the bed. It's inconvenient for me in applying this hot poker to the proper spot."

Again he asked me whether I would abandon my resistance and tell them that which they wanted to know, and again, though the fear of the hot poker had entered my very soul, I could not for my life assent. There was something that was stronger than I, and it was holding me back, at the peril of my life. I shook my head, as the gag held me mute.

Once more the poker, glowing at white heat, approached my face, searing the skin with its heat. Everything appeared to be over. I saw no hope, and was about resigned to this terrible agony and death, which seemed inevitable.

And then the impossible happened, and my good fortune, which was not to desert me actually so soon, was once more in the ascendant, as it has ever been in such moments.

With the poker glowing in front of my eyes, not more than six inches from my face, there was a hurried running in the hallway, and a thunderous knocking on my door, like destiny hammering upon the portals of life.

"Open the door!" came a commanding voice, and we knew from that, all of us, I who was bound and the others who were free, that the police were here.

"Open it before we break it in!"

The leader of the band gave a swift order.

"Through the back!"

It was whispered, yet all heard, and, forgetting about me for the moment—though I do not yet know why they did not kill me quickly before leaving—they extinguished the light and melted away by way of the kitchen, with the silence of shadows

sliding off a wall into darkness deeper than themselves.

And I was left alone with my gag and my cords and my thoughts, the while the police and my concierge hammered on the door, and finally broke it in with a thunderous crash, and burst into the room to find nobody there but me.

When they had removed the gag from my mouth and unbound me, I told them how I was about to be tortured by thieves, and that seemed to satisfy them. After taking voluminous notes and a deposition from me and one from the concierge, they departed, promising to take swift action at Headquarters.

IT appears that my concierge had noticed the men stealing in, and had gone after the police at the time. When he returned with the squad that finally burst into the room, they were greeted by my single and piercing scream, which guided them instantly to the floor and apartment that the thieves had attacked.

Needless to say, they hit on no trail of my midnight assailants, either then or later, and it was as if they had never existed—at least, so far as the police were concerned. I had expected nothing more on that subject from the police, and I was not disappointed. I did not want to tell them the actual state of things, for I wanted my invention of poison gas to be dropped, and I wished no more public or private speculation on the matter—all of which speculation had simply the result of being dangerous to me.

The next day I considered the matter from all angles. If I appealed to the authorities, I might get protection, but I would put myself on the suspect list—that is, on the list of people who had to be watched, to say nothing of the persistent inquiries I would receive from the authorities if it actually became known that such a gas existed. Of course, Colonel Gaveau knew of the existence of the gas, but he was friendly to me, and I thought I could rely on his discretion not to say anything more of the matter.

On the other hand, this gang that had attacked me last night—how could I know that I was safe from them in future? Might they not make a similar attempt once more—a similar but more successful one? From what I had seen of them, I was very far from thinking that they had dropped the matter. In fact, it was nothing but a miracle that my life had been spared in that moment when there came that knock on the door. Why they had not dispatched me then and there, in order, as they said, that nobody else should know the secret, I had no means of knowing, though I could surmise several things. Either they had been so intent on their own escape that the matter had entirely escaped their minds—an explanation that I would have liked to believe but couldn't, owing to my observation of the quality of the leader—or, they had spared me merely for the time being, expecting to take up the matter again and gain their ends later. I will admit that the latter explanation was, to me, the more plausible, though decidedly the less welcome.

I was to live, then, with a sword of Damocles continually hanging over my head, waiting to fall at any moment and cut the slender thread that was my life.

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It was not a pleasant situation for a young man with everything to live for, and full of the zest for life.

NO doubt many of you will say that I was foolish, not to say stupid, in that I did not go immediately to the French Government and give them my terrible secret, but you must remember that you say this only in the light of later and subsequent events—that since that time Germany became our deadly enemy and France our friend and ally. At that time there was as yet no war at all, and even presupposing a war, nobody knew who would be in it—certainly nobody expected the United States in it. It was, so to speak, a private war—or rather, it was so intended, but the other countries would not have it so.

But in those days it was not so much a matter of patriotism with me as it was public and humane policy. I knew that a war impended—everybody in Europe knew it, of course, and I shrank from putting such a terrible weapon into the hands of any government. A whiff of my poison gas was enough to snuff out the lives of a whole battery—a cloud of it, such as could be sent over by a few well placed shots, could put out of existence a whole battalion. These soldiers were not soldiers to me—not pawns to be knocked over at will, as a child knocks over his toys. They were human beings, men who were fathers and husbands, and sweethearts and brothers, and to kill them so was too much for me. I could not have that on my conscience.

Of course, in later years we became accustomed to that sort of bloodshed and mortality, if one ever can become accustomed to it, and it appeared more commonplace, but you must remember that up to now no war of this magnitude, nor anything like it, had ever been waged, and it was considered impossible for such a thing to happen. In fact, there were many fools going around saying that the last great war had been fought—that this earth would never see another hell of death and bloodshed—just as there are fools who say the same thing now, in spite of the fact that Europe is once more becoming an armed camp, seething with hatred, and the desire for revenge of people who can never, in all this world, become reconciled so long as there is such a thing as a national boundary.

Those were my reasons for doing as I did. I did not want France or any other European country to come into possession of my secret—and still less did I want any private concern or individual to come into its ownership. That would have been still more deadly, it seemed to me. If I had been willing to give it to any power at all, that power would have been the United States—the only power, I believed, that would have made an almost wholly altruistic use of it.

OF course, I knew that the chemists of every nation were experimenting along these lines, and that both France and Germany had formulæ for the manufacture of poison gas, but I also knew that, despite this fact, they were dissatisfied with what they had, as the results of the gas were nowhere near what these countries considered necessary for effectiveness

in modern warfare. Alas! I think no country knew what modern warfare could be until they actually embarked in this last great war—this last charnel house of youth and hopes. However, I am quite off the track, and I must get back to the point of my story.

I decided to say nothing about the matter of my discovery to anyone, and to keep my eyes open and to beware of traps. I bought a revolver that day, and thereafter I slept with my windows barred and the gun under my pillow. I was taking no more chances along those lines.

I renewed my visits to Carmelita Perez the next day, and was troubled to find her a trifle cold and preoccupied. I could not understand the reason for it, but it fired my senses and my imagination. It is a commonplace to say that the thing that you cannot get—the thing that is unattainable—is what you want more than anything else in all the world, but that is what was happening to me.

I had never known a girl like Carmelita, and she stimulated and fired me as good wine does. The sight of her went to my head. I wanted to tell her all about what had happened to me, but was unable to because, at the time, Duval, her admirer, was there. Although I had no evidence in the matter, I had a sort of feeling that in some way Duval was connected with the assault on me and the attempt to learn my frightful secret. I also thought that Carmelita's father was involved in it. To be perfectly frank, it would not have surprised me in the least to know that he had been the dignified leader of the desperate band, the one who had been about to torture me with a white-hot iron. And that was the man whose house I was visiting.

I thought all this, and yet I could not keep away from the house of Carmelita Perez, whom I had discovered I loved more than life and—yes, more than honor. As I say, Duval was there, and her father, and they were warm as usual in their greeting, yet I do not think it was my imagination that led me to believe that they regarded me significantly and curiously.

"AH, good evening, Roulette," said the elderly man. "I hope you are well as usual?" he inquired solicitously—a trifle too solicitously under the circumstances.

"Certainly I am—why shouldn't I be?" I inquired pointedly.

"No reason at all, no reason at all," said the older man suavely.

"Of course" not—no reason at all," chorused Duval, with the crooked and smooth smile that I disliked in him.

I did not like his being there. He was more intimate with Carmelita than I liked—and though she disclaimed anything further between them than a light friendship when we were alone together, yet when they were together it seemed to me that there was an intangible something that lay between them—a deeper and closer degree of intimacy than showed on the surface.

Her father withdrew early, and Duval went soon after, and I was left alone with Carmelita. While I liked his going, yet there was an aspect of it that struck me as odd. A man who leaves a girl to a rival does so for one of two reasons. Either he is sure that he has no chance with her, and consequently does not want



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to take up his or her time any further—or he is so certain of her that it does not matter a great deal whether he goes or stays. I would have liked to believe the former of Duval—yet the latter kept intruding itself upon my mind. And this in spite of her first words to me after we were left alone.

"How nice, Roulette, that they have all gone and left us alone together!" She came over to where I sat and patted my shoulder, and immediately all logic and all reasoning were gone, and I longed only to crush her in my arms and to press my lips on hers. Such is the way of a maid with a man.

We talked for some time, and in a few moments I was telling her about what had happened to me the night before. She was still as death until I had finished, except for an exclamation of horror when I told her about the heated iron.

"Oh, how terrible, Roulette!" she had said, and it was sweet and comforting to feel that she felt sympathy and terror for me. If I was a fool—well, I am not the first sane man who has been a fool because of the red, red lips of a beautiful woman.

"How brave you are!" she breathed when I had finished.

"NO, it wasn't bravery, I guess," I said modestly; "just fool stubbornness. I just happen to have an obstinate streak in me, that's all."

"But yes, it was heroism, my Roulette!" she said. "You shall not belittle yourself." And the look that I got out of those luminous eyes! It was as much reward as any man ever wants on this earth. Her color was high, with the excitement of the tale, and her breath came in quick, excited gasps as she sat there, her small, flowerlike hands pressed to her breast and her eyes sparkling with the beating of her pulse.

"And this awful secret, my Roulette," she breathed, leaning forward to me; "you did not tell it them, *n'est-ce pas?* The beasts!"

I shook my head. "I did not," I said. "Perhaps it would have been better if I had."

"You mean because it is so dangerous for one man to know this thing?" she said, and I nodded. "Perhaps you're right, Roulette. I should be wretched if anything happened to you."

"Would you, really?" I asked, reaching for and holding her little hand in mine.

"How can you ask, foolish boy!" she breathed, patting my hand with her free one. "I should cry!" I was silent, enjoying the sensation of having my adorable one make much of me. She herself broke the silence at last, holding tight to my hand.

"And yet, it is such a dangerous secret, such a tremendous thing, I feel as though you would be safer, perhaps, if—if another knew the secret also, so that these desperate thugs would know that it is useless doing away with you. Oh, Roulette, I am so afraid for you!"

"There, there, there's nothing particular to be afraid of. I don't think there is anything much more to fear," I soothed her, taking delight in the ready tears of sympathy and fear for me that sprang into being in her eyes.

"But yet—but yet— Roulette, how would it be—how would it be, do you think, if you told your secret to me?" asked Carmelita softly.

There was a long silence between us as she sat there beside me on the arm of my chair, her arm about my shoulder, her eyes shining as she waited for my response. It was I who broke the silence finally.

"No, Carmelita," I said, and I shook my head; "I think it would be better not to."

A HURT look came into her eyes, as of a wounded animal, almost, and she drew her hand away from mine, sitting upright.

"Very well," she said, "if you had rather not— If you don't trust me—"

"No, dear, it isn't that," I said, trying to take hold of her hand again, but she eluded me and sat uncompromisingly cold. "It's just that—just that I don't like—" I was quiet.

"What don't you like?" she asked, more softly, seeing that I was penitent.

"Well, if you must know, I don't like Duval—although you know that already," I said.

She nodded. "Yes, I know you don't like him, but what has he got to do with my knowing the formula for this wretched gas of yours?"

"Why, I told you that he made an attempt to buy the formula from me. He wants it—wants it desperately. I don't think there is anything he wouldn't do to obtain it."

"He?" She laughed shortly. "He's the soul of honor. Why, I would trust him as quickly as I would my own father—"

I laughed, and she looked quickly at me to see what made me laugh, but I gave no sign. "Imagine him doing anything dishonorable!" she repeated, with a reassuring smile.

"Well, I can imagine it," I broke in on her. "And very easily, too. I tell you, Carmelita, I don't like your intimacy with him—nor with the rest of that gang of his that, come here."

"They come here to see my father—not me," she cut in. "And if they did, what of it?"

"Well, I don't think they're right companions for you. I don't trust them."

"Since when have you been picking companions for me, I should like to know. I knew all of them before I ever knew you."

"Yes, I know, dear," I said more softly, because I certainly did not wish to quarrel with the person I cared more for than anybody else in the world. "But now, you and I—"

"Now!" she echoed. "What is this 'you and I,' anyway? I thought it was so, and *voilà*, you don't even trust me enough to tell me a miserable little chemical formula, which I only wished to know because I thought it would be helpful to you. I don't really want to know your old formula—I wouldn't even listen to it if you told it to me now!"

AND she went off into a fit of the sulks which it took me all of the rest of that evening to rouse her from.

She was back in her usual good humor by the time I had left, and we did not mention the matter of the formula again that evening, but it was to be referred to

more and more as time went on. It was hard to withstand her. I am not sure that I would act in a similar manner now, but I was younger then, and in love. That, you must remember, accounts for a great deal that I said, and which I did—foolishly.

How shall I tell you of the things I did after that, of the stupid things that happened? It is easy enough now to see where I made my mistake, but it was not so easy then. It is always easy to see how a mistake could have been avoided—after you have made it—just as it is easy for anyone to stand an egg on end—after he has seen it done.

What happened was this: I became more and more in love with Carmelita. At the mere sight of her I turned white, and my heart-beat went up. The touch of her hand was enough to turn me dizzy, and it became less and less possible for me to obtain any permanent satisfaction from her in the way of turning her attentions to me alone. I had difficulty seeing her. Duval was with her a great deal, and when I did see her she would tell me that I was a fool, that I did not trust her, and that my love—for I had expressed it—could not be very strong, in view of the circumstances.

This went on for more than a month. I was desperate. I could not work, I could not sleep or eat, I could not think of anything but Carmelita. I received another visit from Colonel Gaveau in that time urging me to divulge to the French Government the secret I was so jealously hoarding. I declined, obstinately and angrily. I received another visit, this time from Duval, making me the same proposition as before. I threw him out. This, of course, did nothing to add good-will to the feeling between me and his faction, which included everybody but Carmelita—and sometimes I thought it included her.

And then the incredible began to happen. Carmelita began to fall in love with me! They say that any man, if he is kind and—above all—patient can win a woman. It is merely a question of being persistent. And that is what was happening to me. She began to thrill at the sight of me. She would see me seven nights a week, and call me on the telephone during the day.

AND I began to feel that the world was mine. What did I care that in my head was a secret that was to send millions of men to their graves. I had almost forgotten it. It did not seem so important to me. What was important was that Carmelita loved me. Nothing else mattered.

I wanted to marry her right away, but she kept putting me off for some reason which I was unable to fathom.

But I was persistent. I will never forget one scented summer night when we walked along the Lake of Enghien, under the overhanging trees which bordered the lake front. We stood for a while and gazed over the wall into the quiet waters, and over us the sickle moon cast a golden radiance that I can still see in my dreams.

Her nearness sent my head whirling, turned me almost crazy. I tried to put my arms around her, and she evaded me, but not too decidedly, and I knew that now was the time to win her.

"When will you consent to marry me, Lita?" I begged, seizing her hand.

She laughed. "I don't know whether we should, Roulette." She sighed.

"You love me, don't you?" I breathed in her ear.

She shrugged her shoulders, but I could see her bosom heaving in her emotion.

"You want to marry me—you want me to be your wife—and you don't even trust me," she said.

"Why, what do you mean, sweet?" I asked, but I remembered at the moment of asking. "Oh, that!" I laughed shortly.

"Yes, that," she said. "Two people as close as we are—"

"It's nothing," I said. "I do trust you, Carmelita—nothing else matters. I will tell you, if it means so much to you."

"It doesn't mean anything, in itself," she said; "but oh, Roulette, don't you understand how much it means as a symbol of faith and trust to a woman—can't you see into a woman's heart like mine, and—"

I took her into my arms then, and our lips met.

Before I left her that night we had decided to go off the next evening to a small village she knew about, where we could be married in secrecy. She did not dare to tell her father, for she thought he favored Duval, and she wanted nothing to stop us.

Also, I told her the formula for the poison gas.

THE next night, after dark, Carmelita and I set off to be married. I had hired an automobile, and was driving it myself. We were going to the small village of St. Marcelle, about fifty miles from Paris, where Carmelita had friends who would be witnesses, and a friendly civil official who, she felt sure, would officiate.

How shall I describe that drive? I was on the way to marry the one person in all the world who mattered to me—the one person who occupied all my waking and my dreaming moments. All the way she snuggled up close to me, on my arm, the wind whipping her hair into my face, my eyes, my lips. . . .

We arrived at the mansion of her friend, and drove up a winding driveway into a gorgeous *porte-cochère* that jutted out from a large, luxurious-looking but forbidding mansion. I jumped out, helped her to the ground, and we advanced to the doorway. We were evidently expected, for a white-coated individual opened the door, and as we entered I saw that behind him were four other white-coated individuals—big, burly, brutal-looking men, strong as oxen.

I turned to Carmelita in amazement, but she addressed the first individual, the one who had opened the door.

"What is this, Lita—" I began.

"This is my husband, Doctor. He is quiet and calm now, but he is liable to get violent at any moment—" she was saying.

"Well, we'll take good care of him, and have him cured in no time at all," the Doctor replied in a kindly, suave voice.

I saw it all in a flash. I was not to be married—I had been double-crossed—double-crossed by the one person who was dearer to me than all else on earth.

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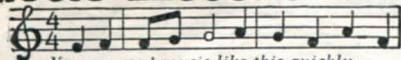
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This flashed through my brain in a moment, and I leaped for the door.

It was too late. I was pinned down by the four white-coated giants and dragged off, kicking, screaming, vowing vengeance through my curses of rage and disappointment. I was roughly pushed into a barred room, and the iron door clanged on me as I stood there beating on it with my fists and tearing my nails against its impregnability.

Carmelita Perez has at last shown Roulette where she stands. She has tricked him into imprisonment in an asylum for the insane, and what torture the gang of thugs who are back of this move have in store for him he can but guess at. Had he known, he might well have tried to commit suicide and end it there. Read in June **TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES** what Roulette has to face within those dark walls. It will be an experience you will not soon forget. June is on the news-stands May 15th.

"Bring in Buckner, Dead or Alive"

(Continued from page 39)

permit the compliment he deserves. But as this is not written for the purpose of eulogy, it will suffice to say that those people in the hill country have implicit confidence in Newt Lindsey. "Newt's a square shooter," they say of him. And they might truthfully add that the white marble slabs in more than one graveyard on the hill-sides and in the valleys mutely testify to the fact that in years gone by he was a straight shooter, too, when occasion demanded.

I DON'T know how many men have fallen before Newt Lindsey's gun. He is a much older man than I. But I have enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with him for almost a dozen years, and I've had the pleasure of working with him on several occasions. However, he has never given me the details of those thrilling escapades in his earlier career.

Newt Lindsey could go among the worst of them and get his man. And, in view of his past record, only a fool or a very desperate man would dare challenge him—then, if resistance should be encountered, I could wish for no better man in an emergency. I got out of bed and telephoned him at his home.

It was rather late for a social telephone call, so I didn't waste much time in getting to the point. The newspapers had already informed Mr. Lindsey of the situation at Cleartop, thereby eliminating much explanation. When I told him we might need his assistance, there was no hesitancy in his decision to go with me. Now, if Inspector Griffin's answer would only be as favorable, I believed we would be able to offer the Sheriff at Cleartop the combination he needed to crash the domain of murder and moonshine.

When I talked to Inspector Griffin, early next morning, he said: "Yes, Homer, if it will be a favor to you, I'll gladly tackle the case. However, it will be necessary to get permission of the Police Commissioner."

"Leave that to me, Inspector," I interrupted. "They need you up there in the worst way, and if you have no work of great importance to hold you here I'll get it arranged with the Commissioner."

That afternoon found me in conference with Sheriff Caldwell and Attorney General Sherrod, at Cleartop. I was soon convinced that there had been but little exaggeration in the newspaper stories describing conditions in that territory. While we were conferring, one of Sheriff Caldwell's deputies came in with his report. It seems the deputy had entered a certain

store in Cleartop and found two men, members of the lawless clan, buying buck-shot shells and high-power rifle cartridges. The opinion was expressed that these emissaries from the liquor province were preparing for war, in event of an invasion of their lair.

THIS information did not deter Sheriff Caldwell. I later learned that he had made daily and solitary visits to the storm country, since the day Burt Richards was slain, in search of clues to the identity of the murderer. His efforts, though untiringly persistent, had been fruitless. When he presented the information he had been able to amass, it had to be conceded that sufficient legal evidence to warrant arrest of any of the numerous suspects, of whom he told the Attorney General, was still lacking.

Neither was there proof of an overt act upon the part of any individual—notwithstanding the ominous threats which had seethed forth from those at the base of that volcanic, craterlike human inferno.

At the termination of our conference, only one definite decision had been reached. That was to accept the tentative proffer of Inspector Griffin's leadership—give him the men he would choose—give him every possible legal support—and then hope that he might again exemplify his traditional prowess in the art of practical criminology.

Attorney General Sherrod and Sheriff Caldwell, at my request, wrote to the Honorable Mayor of the City of Memphis, asking that Inspector Griffin be assigned to handle the investigation at Cleartop. The letters were turned over to me for personal delivery.

Then came the mass meeting, attended by approximately twenty-five hundred people. One of the speakers, a fiery and fearless orator, the Reverend J. H. Buchanan, World War veteran, said: "There are twelve men in this immediate section ready to stand 'four-square for the right,' and there are twenty-five men over there, and I might be able to name them, who are banded together to protect and promulgate the liquor interests. The remaining citizens in this district are in the middle of the road—either in sympathy with the devil's gang, or they lack the courage to say where they stand. To those who represent the moonshine clique, who may be among this audience—go back to your lairs and tell your crowd that if another innocent citizen meets harm at your hands, all hell can't restrain the good citizens of Kane County from running your gang to earth and seeing justice done!"

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Four hours were required for me to cover the ride back to Memphis. I waited in the outer office while the Mayor's secretary took the letters into the inner sanctum. The Mayor conferred with the Police Commissioner, and Inspector Griffin was called to the Mayor's office. Finally it was arranged for him to go.

"Take good care of the Inspector," the Mayor admonished me. "He's too good a man to be made a target for those crafty marksmen in the hills." I had no doubt that the Mayor's apprehension caused him to be reluctant to release Inspector Griffin for this arduous undertaking.

AFTER hasty preparations, Inspector Griffin, Special Agent Newt Lindsey and myself caught a night train for Cleartop. Arriving there in the early morning, we were joined by Inspector Thomas W. Allen, of the North Carolina & St. Louis Railroad force. We all welcomed Mr. Allen's co-operation in this case, for we knew him to be a keen-minded detective and absolutely fearless—a useful man for the work that was ahead.

Sheriff Caldwell summoned fugitive members of the vigilantes' committee, late residents of the lawless district, but now refugees taking shelter in Cleartop, and a pow-wow was held.

When they had related all the details to Inspector Griffin, describing the location of the murder scene, and accounting, as best they could, for the whereabouts of parties known to have been hostile to the slain man at the time the murder occurred, the intrepid Inspector was ready to make the first move.

"From the information gathered," he said, "it is my opinion that this man Dickerson, and probably Bouton, of whom you have told me, know who killed Burt Richards. They may not be the actual murderers—but I'll wager they hold the key to this mystery."

"What is your plan?" Sheriff Caldwell asked.

"Let the murdered man's widow swear out warrants, charging these two fellows with 'accessory to murder' and we'll bring them in to jail! Maybe that will give us a starting-point," the Inspector answered.

There was a shuffling about of those assembled at the caucus. They realized that action—the action they had been waiting for, was about to occur.

Perhaps some were thinking of the grapevine warning: "If any man is arrested for the murder of Burt Richards, nine more will die." But now—in defiance of this terrible threat—warrants were being issued for two men. Did that indicate that if those moonshiners were to make good their boast, it would require eighteen human lives to appease their thirst for blood? Was the reported fortified fastness of the hills soon to awaken with a roar of battle? Was there even a possibility of effecting the arrest of Dickerson and Bouton without bloodshed? There was plenty of room for conjecture.

Mrs. Richards, widow of the murdered man, promptly appeared before the magistrate and executed the required oath. The warrants called for the arrest of Bill Dickerson and Mel Bouton, and the charge they contained was an open defi to the threats of those rusty old human rattlesnakes in the brush.



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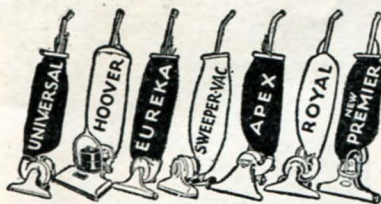
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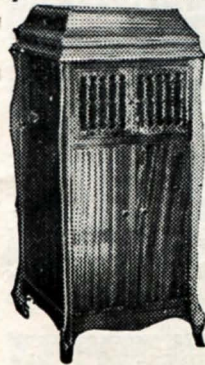
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UPON the broad shoulders of stalwart Dick Caldwell, High Sheriff of Kane County, rested the duty of serving the murder warrants. It was unthinkable that he would go out alone, single handed, and attempt to capture two men, facing such odds. Most men would have wanted the state militia along. But not so with this fearless officer.

Avoiding the slightest pretense of bravado, and with his characteristic modest mien, the Sheriff said he thought it would be better for him to go alone, or to take only one of his deputies along, on the trip after Dickerson and Bouton.

“It is like this,” he explained; “this district is comparable to a hornets’ nest. I may be able to go over there and take two of them out without stirring up the others—by being friendly and easy with them—but a posse would be sure to provoke them and start trouble.”

This was a startling announcement. However, his decision, despite the hazard he was taking, was not without logic.

“Suppose they should get stirred up anyway, with you alone over there, or with only one man with you?” someone countered.

“Well, in that event,” the Sheriff spoke calmly, “it will be up to somebody else to finish this job, if we are not back here by midnight.”

There was but little room for further argument. We all knew the Sheriff was not ungrateful for our assistance, but we

regretted the conscientious adherence to principle which forbade him to make full use of the facilities at his command.

One of his deputies happened to be out on a call. Another had to be excused on account of the illness of his wife. Probably through courtesy, and to avoid further protest against his going alone, Sheriff Caldwell turned to me.

“Homer,” he said, “how about you going with me on this trip?”

“I’m ready, Sheriff,” I replied.

To placate any disappointment that the other officers might feel at not being chosen for this trip, the Sheriff offered a plausible explanation to them, and we were soon off.

The Sheriff proved himself an excellent chauffeur over the rough roads we encountered. And the late afternoon found us in the heart of the moonshine domain.

It is unnecessary to state that Homer Wells and Sheriff Caldwell are on a hazardous undertaking. “Bring in Buckner, dead or alive!” was the cry that went out a little later—but, was Sheriff Caldwell alive to hear it? Any moment now he and Wells may be made the target of moonshiners’ rifles, from ambush, in that hornets’ nest of lawlessness in the Tennessee hills. Read in June TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES the amazing thing that happened when Sheriff Caldwell finally located Dickerson and Bouton. June issue will be on the news-stands May 15th.

The Man Who Courted Murder

(Continued from page 51)

something even though I was unable to think up something sensible, or at least less commonplace.

“Ye-e-es,” she replied, with a Frenchy shrug, “I suppose so, if anybody ever looked in them. Mr. Mondak seldom comes here—and never to read—”

“Of course not,” I blurted, like the fool I felt like, but in the goodness of her heart she made believe she hadn’t heard the bad break. “I mean,” I went on, trying to smooth it over, “I suppose he hasn’t time for—”

“For anything but business,” she completed the sentence. Then, with a miserable little sigh: “Well, let us get on with our bookkeeping. You’d be surprised at the amount of time it takes to look after things in a house like this.”

“But you have plenty of servants—”

ANOTHER sigh floated ceilingward. “I am still very strange to it all,” she admitted. “I was a very poor girl when I met Mr. Mondak and, while I labor over my accounts religiously every morning, somehow I always seem to forget half the things I had purchased the day before.”

“Oh, well,” I consoled, “you’ll get used to it.”

“I hope so. But then there are the servants. We have more than we need—Mr. Mondak wants it so. But they never seem to satisfy him, and he blames me for that—says I must learn to enforce discipline and manage the household. He had me discharge the housekeeper—she was such a comfort to me—and things have been topsyturvy ever since. Last month I

went more than \$500 over my household allowance and still these horrid bills keep coming—nearly \$200 from one merchant alone, that I didn’t even know about—or maybe I’d forgotten. You see, sometimes the chef does the ordering, or the second chef, and Parker, the butler—”

She gave a little gasp. “Oh, dear, I don’t know what makes me rattle on this way, telling you my troubles, but you can’t imagine what it means to step from a little flat where mother and I did all our own work, into this grandeur—it’s all so cold and—well, lonesome—”

She glanced across at me, pitifully. Tears almost came to my eyes. My soul went out to this ill-treated child-wife and instinctively I put my hand to my heart as if to prevent her hearing it hammer through the sudden silence. She read my thoughts—trust a woman for that—raised her eyes frankly to mine and dabbed at a pearly drop that glittered at her lashes.

From that moment I was her faithful slave.

Suddenly her eyes telegraphed a warning and we bent over the figures in her book like two school kids caught soldiering, and I had to think quickly when Mondak’s growl came from the shadows near the door: “Taking your time, you two, hey? What seems to be the trouble, Joe?”

“Why—er—” I replied in my best school-teacher voice, “I think we’d better begin all over, with the first day of last month, Mrs. Mondak.”

She nodded. “Just as you wish, Mr. Gibbons.”

“See you get it straight, and check up

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all the bills and receipts," rasped Mondak. Then he strode to the table and glowered at her. "Didn't you forget something?"

SHE looked up bewildered. Of a sudden she reached out with one little foot and put a French heel so sharply on my instep that I let out an involuntary "Ouch!"

The little woman was horrified. "I beg your pardon," she quavered. "I tried to step on the foot bell, but these chairs are so high—"

Mondak muttered something about "Damned stupidity—never learn—" while my foot located the push-button on the floor, under the table. As I stepped on it, the butler appeared as by magic.

"Please, Parker, serve something in the music room," she said courteously. "Some chocolate—and sandwiches—"

Parker bowed from the hips like a mechanical doll and soft-shoed out, not without lifting a contemptuous eyebrow at yours truly.

I felt sure it was not a sudden fit of hospitality on Mondak's part, but only one of his rotten tricks to humiliate the inexperienced girl he had chosen to make his wife.

I realize I have pictured him as a brute, and I make no apologies. That's what he was. But his cruelty was not that of an emotionless creature. On the contrary, he was a man of passion, gross, swollen with a lustfulness that mere contact and possession were unable to quench. The only pleasure that really satisfied him was the twofold ability of making and breaking whatever person, animal or thing came in his power. He was abnormal. Farsighted and successful in business, he yet had the mind of a moron and the lechery of a maniac.

Once, when I happened to see him at lunch in a restaurant, I caught him smacking his purple lips, not over the taste of a chicken, but over the act of tearing its limbs.

He made no secret of being a Broadway rounder, but when at last he decided that a man of his position in the business world ought to be at least officially married, he treated the matter as a cold business proposition and went at it with his customary penny-paring deceitfulness, employing, as a sort of marriage broker, a bill collector who had made a reputation as a hounder of poor debtors.

Aileen's father was a pharmacist by profession. After clerking many years, he opened a small drug-store of his own, in Brooklyn. He got along fairly well until one day fate dealt him a joker that the gamest player in the world could not have bucked. While compounding some drugs, an overheated retort exploded and a sliver of glass destroyed his right eye and so affected the other that his days as a pharmacist were ended. Selling out at a loss he started a tiny stationery store and was at the mercy of every tough kid who chose to swipe a penny pencil or a handful of cheap candy. To make out at all he had to keep open evenings, so that Aileen's mother, after working all day keeping house for a blind husband and three daughters, had to mind the shop from six to ten in the evening, and Saturdays until nearly midnight. Aileen was fourteen then, the eldest child. The little store went from bad to worse, the debts accumulated, the wholesalers refused further credit, her

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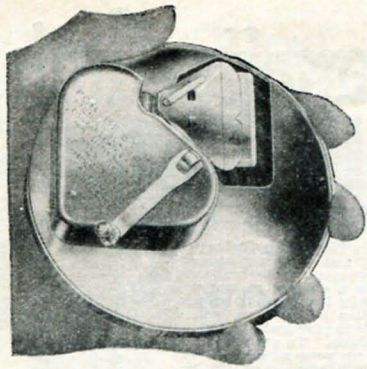
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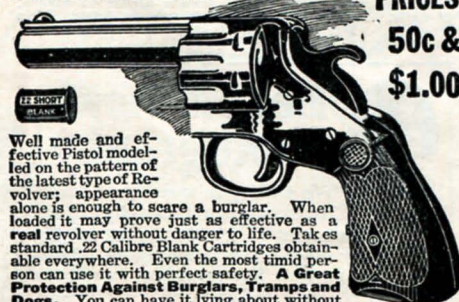


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father's health cracked under the strain and finally, when they examined him at a public clinic, the doctors said that nothing short of complete rest, preferably in the dry altitude of Colorado, could prolong his life. In plain English, "get money or die."

THAT is the condition in which Mondak's scout discovered them, four years later. Aileen was eighteen, perfect from the tips of her dainty feet to the golden hair that fluttered in silky filigree about her beautiful head. Mondak's envoy, cunning and shifty, began his campaign of chicanery by buying up some of the overdue bills against her father and, particularly, the one for unpaid rent. Then he camped on their doorstep, dunning, threatening to have them thrown on the street and gradually driving them to distraction with worry and anxiety.

Aileen would have gladly sacrificed her life to help her parents and it was this filial affection that the trickster chose to work upon. Craftily he approached the subject, told her that a very dear friend of his, a gentleman worth over four millions, had seen her in her father's store where he stopped one day to buy a paper, had become deeply enamored of her and only craved an opportunity to be properly introduced.

The crafty envoy went into ecstasies about that wonderful Romeo—Mondak, "such a good man, so true, so democratic, so kind and generous, so ready to give her and her parents and sisters all that benevolent love and money could furnish—" The poor girl, thinking mostly of her father, took in all that bunk for sterling coin.

For a short while Mondak played the rôle of a lovelorn suitor, brusque but respectful. Aileen did not like him and her mother almost worried herself sick over the idea of her daughter marrying a man of Mondak's age and looks. "I am almost glad your poor father can't see," she cried. But Aileen steeled herself to the sacrifice. There was not a mercenary bone in her body. It was not herself she considered, but her father's life, her mother's health and her sister's future.

Mondak, she believed, had already proved his generosity by settling all the small bills—two hundred dollars' worth—as much to him as a cigarette would be to me. He had won her esteem and this, she persuaded herself, would undoubtedly crystallize into love—marital love—God save the mark!

She accepted the offer—and found herself tricked! The honeymoon had hardly begun when she discovered that he had not married her as a wife to love and honor, but as an ornament to gloat over and display to his cronies as part and parcel of his establishment. In that spirit he hung jewels and expensive clothes on her and set aside a large monthly allowance for the household—but only a small dole for her personal expenses and nothing for her relatives.

THESE things Aileen confided to me the third evening I saw her. That may seem indiscreet, but friendship sometimes ripens quickly in the warmth of sympathy. "And your father?" I inquired. "How is he?"

"A great deal better, thank you," She looked at me searchingly a moment, then planted her pink little fist on the table, and said: "I know I can trust you. I'm not quite the silly fool my husband took me for. He saw fit to act a part before our marriage. I've been acting one ever since. I have managed to send my people to Denver, Colorado, and to support them decently—out of my household allowance.

"That's what I thought," I said and grinned. "But how about the servants?"

"Oh, the chef and the butler, Parker, are in the secret. They are dears. They have helped me—call it cheating if you wish. Parker, the butler, for all that he looks like a mourner at a state funeral, is simply adorable. Actually refuses to accept a penny from me over his wages. Only—I hope you won't be angry with him—he's had his suspicions about yourself. He thinks you are a sort of bookkeeping spy for my husband."

"A spy? Well, I like that!"

"I am telling you this because I know you are bound to find my accounts in bad shape. I've been cheating, if I must use that word, to the tune of at least \$200 a month and naturally Mr. Mondak expects you to report to him exactly what you discover."

"Well," I said quickly, "he has picked the wrong man."

We shook hands on it.

A week later, while waiting for Aileen in the drawing-room, Parker whispered: "I want to hask your pardon, sir. I mistook you for a sort of detective for Mr. Mondak, sir, but now I knows as 'ow you're 'elping Mrs. Mondak and—we all think the world of 'er—"

"Put it there, Parker," I said. "You're a man!"

Think the world of her? My God! Day and night I thought of her, adored her with all the love pent up in my heart since I was born. Merely to press my lips to the little note-book that her fingers had touched sent a glow through my body as of physical warmth and the consciousness that I was actually of service to her submerged me in waves of gratitude.

THOUGH I had never dared to mention it, I knew my love was no secret to her. She could read it in my eyes, feel it in the tremble of my hand when accidentally it touched her own or so much as the hem of her dress. To be away from her was physical pain and to be with her meant being in the glory of truth and purity. And so our friendship grew and glowed until it flamed into seething love of soul and body.

One evening, in that dreary, dimly lighted library, her gold pencil rolled off the table. She bent to pick it up—so did I—a lock of her hair brushed my cheek, her little hand rested briefly on mine. I sprang to my feet, my pulses tingling. She rose, held me spellbound with a long, wistful glance; there came a struggle in her eyes, a question, a dare. I saw her lips part as if to speak, her bosom rise and fall rapidly; huskily she breathed my name—

"Joe—Joe—say it—"

I burst out passionately: "I love you, I love you, you wonderful, beautiful dear!"

With a cry of delight she flung herself in my arms and through panting lips we

reached each other's soul in a love-sealing kiss of unforgettable rapture and devotion—

Again and again I pressed her to my heart, again and again we were plunged in alternating waves of happiness and misery; one minute flooded with the joy of a crisis met and vanquished, the next instant deluged by a sense of the unattainable; until finally her clear, far-seeing mind brought my dizzy brain back to a grasp of the realities.

"I want you, Joe. I love you and I want you!" she said in broken sentences. "But I want you fairly. I've not truly been a wife to my husband—never since the minute I found he had lied to me. But we must wait until I have divorced him—"

"Then you have proof?"

She tossed her head. "Mondak has been untrue right along. I have plenty of proof. I have had a man trail him and I am only biding my time. It takes money to get a divorce, even for the innocent party—"

"I have a few hundred saved, dearest."

She said she might use that, if she had to, but meanwhile there was another plan. No, she wouldn't tell me just what. Not yet. I told her that, under the circumstances, I would of course leave her husband's employ at once.

There was a heartache in her voice. "Why, Joe—then we couldn't see each other—"

SHE rose on her toes; ten pink little fingers crawled up and twined around my neck— "Not yet, Joe. Not yet. Wait—a month—two months—"

Two days afterward Mondak stopped at my desk. "Oh—er—Gibbons, you needn't trouble those household accounts any more. I've made other arrangements."

I was tongue-tied; my heart almost stopped beating. Did he suspect? He had spoken so quietly—he was so crafty—just the sort of fellow to take his fury out on his wife, a defenseless woman.

Work was out of the question. I made a bluff at it, worried through two hours of hell, trying to figure out some way to warn Aileen. Suddenly just before one o'clock, my lunch hour, the girl at the switchboard said a man wanted me on the phone but refused to give his name.

"All right," I said, forcing myself to seem indifferent. "Put him on my wire."

I recognized Parker's voice. He asked me to meet him immediately in the lobby of the Waldorf. I rushed for a taxi, found Aileen and Parker in the corridor of that ever crowded Mecca of the out-of-town element. Quickly she told that Mondak had without warning cut off her household allowance entirely, had instructed the merchants to charge all purchases and send the bills to him directly. Parker, she added, had reason to think that Mondak had bribed her personal maid.

"Well, I'll face him," I said. "We have done no wrong."

She replied that, as far as she was concerned, she was prepared for anything. "I am having my pearl necklace appraised by a jeweler. I'm going to sell it. Yesterday my attorney filed suit for a full divorce. I've got evidence a-plenty—"

The next day was pay-day, always a hectic time with over 200 skilled workmen and common laborers to be paid off—about

\$9,000 in all. Mondak always went to the bank himself for the money. It was but a step around the corner from the office, but he was careful never to go twice at the same hour, nor did he ever have a guard. "That's the safest way," he used to say. "You can't trust anybody."

I had charge of the pay-roll.

The morning started with a thunder-clap. About ten o'clock two men, evidently detectives, called on Mondak and remained closeted with him until nearly noon. When they had gone he strode to my desk and barked at the top of his voice: "Gibbons, there's been a robbery at my house!"

ALL work stopped. A gasp of surprise ran through the office. I resented the way he glared at me and gave back stare for stare. "Well, what about it?" I snapped.

"There's this much about it," he belated, losing the last bit of self-control. "My wife's pearl necklace is gone. It's worth \$6,500. I've had the cops in and they have been questioning the servants half the night and just now they told me it was an inside job, but that the servants aren't in on it. That means my wife sold it. You put her up to it and you're two crooks—you damned thief, you!"

I shoved my fist under his nose. "You take that back, or I'll—"

Lawton, the old bookkeeper, pussy-footed quickly between us, with a soda cracker in one hand and a milk bottle in the other. "Now, now, please," he sputtered. "There are ladies present."

Mondak shoved him aside. "Ladies be damned!" Then, thumping my desk with a horny fist: "And as for you, I don't know if I can have the law on you or not, but you're through. Hear me? You're through!"

Lawton, for all that he was over sixty and had a mortgage on his hands, did not lack pluck or loyalty. Making peaceful gestures with his milk and crackers, he stuttered: "Now, now, Mr. Mondak, don't be hasty. Gibbons has been with us going on fourteen years and—"

"Keep your damned nose out of this, you old fool," shouted Mondak, beyond control. Then, to me: "Turn over your accounts at once to Lawton. And the pay-roll too. And don't let me see you around here when I come back from the bank. We'll know how to find you when we want you. You're through!"

He stalked out, I yelling after him: "I'm through—but not with you, you rotter!"

A hundred questions crowded in my mind. I was in a white heat with anger, but took a firm grip on myself, turned the pay-roll over to Lawton and began clearing my desk.

There was a loaded 38-caliber revolver in the right-hand corner. On pay-day, by Mondak's orders, I always kept it within easy reach.

"You'd better take this gun, Lawton," I suggested.

"No, no," he replied, backing away. "I wouldn't know what to do with it."

God, how I wish he had taken it!

Suddenly I heard my name called. Aileen's voice! Tommy, the office boy, was scraping: "Yes, ma'am. This way, ma'am." I started to leap up but quickly restrained myself and greeted her with a nod and a smile, but kept my chair.

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SHE advanced suddenly and with a quick motion, unnoticed by anyone, she slipped a fat envelope across my desk, toward me.

"There is \$4,000 in this," Aileen whispered. "Put it away for me. I am being watched, and so is Parker. It is the money I got for the necklace. I'll see you soon, dear—Parker will phone you—"

I slid the envelope in my inside pocket—her finger-tips touched my hand—she was gone!

As in a dream I remained staring, seeing only her sweet face still engraved upon the retina of my eyes. I fondled the envelope that her hands had made sacred. This money would help free her from that scourge of a husband—

Suddenly there came Mondak's voice from the hall, then a pause as if someone were answering, then his voice again, cursing, then the blow of a fist and Aileen ran in, panting: "Quick! Help! Joe! He struck—"

Blood was on her lips! Instinctively I grabbed the revolver, flew to the hall, pushed her inside the office, slammed the door behind me—and was thunderstruck to see two men, guns in hand, rush at Mondak from the head of the stairs, diagonally across the hall from our office.

I heard a sharp, "Stick 'em up!" One of the gunmen clutched the leather money bag while Mondak, standing between me and them, struck at them with his free hand and I, immediately dashing forward but too excited to aim, fired one shot at the nearest robber at the exact instant that the other fired point-blank at Mondak's head.

The two flashes mingled into one, a single crash rolled deafeningly through the hallway. Then, through the acrid smoke I caught a glimpse of the two robbers racing down the stairs—saw Mondak stagger, fall—a red stain oozing stickily to the marble floor.

A mob of men and women were pouring out of half a dozen doors, milling around me. Policemen broke through. My head was swimming—something clamped my wrists—then Aileen at my side, sobbing, "Joe! Joe! Why did you? Why did you?" and my own voice saying something—I don't know exactly what. Then came confused shouts of "Here they come!" "Stand back!" "Look, that's the fellow did the shooting!"—and between lanes of blurred faces I was led away.

In the police station the \$4,000 was found on me. Mondak, a detective stated, had died instantly from a bullet wound through the temple. Witnesses had heard only one shot. The bullet that tore through Mondak's brain had been fired from a 38-caliber revolver—and the still-smoking revolver which had been taken from my hand was a 38-caliber.

I REFUSED to tell how or where I had got the \$4,000—and was charged with murder and robbery!

It developed that Aileen, after putting the \$4,000 in my care, had met her husband near the elevator at the far end of the hall where Mondak, finding himself alone with her, had started a row, dared her to face me, and called her an unprintable name. She had flung the lie in his teeth and he, coming out at the small end of the argument, had violently struck her on the

mouth. She had fled into the office. The other clerks, stupefied, hesitated to interfere, and in the brief instant it took me to rush to her defense the two gunmen, seeing the coast clear, had attacked Mondak as he passed the stairs.

The hold-up and shooting took but a second or two. It was all over ere anybody had recovered from the shock of the shots. By that time the robbers had made a safe get-away through the lobby and Mondak lay dead on the floor of the hall.

The evidence, though circumstantial, was very strongly against me. I had been heard to threaten Mondak when he discharged me and had been seen running, revolver in hand, into the hall a second before the shooting. There was nothing to prove that the hold-up had not been planned by me.

The detectives had a score of people to testify that they had heard only one shot fired and, though I insisted that every effort be made to find a second bullet, the only bullet found was the one that had killed Mondak. It was badly mushroomed but easily proved to have come from a 38-caliber gun.

My frantically repeated statement that both shots had been fired exactly at the same instant found no belief, even among many of my friends. Only my mother and sisters, Aileen, Parker, Lawton and a few others in the office stuck by me.

Lawyers, engaged by Aileen, urged her, against my strenuous objections, to tell the authorities how I had come by the \$4,000. To some extent, this disposed of the robbery charge, but only partly. For certain distant relatives of Mondak, in an attempt to prevent Aileen's inheriting any of his money, put her maid forward to besmirch her character and perjure herself to say that there "was something" between Aileen and myself. Under such circumstances some of those who were interested in the case claimed that Aileen's testimony was unworthy of belief.

DURING those terrible days, those endless nights while I was caged like a beast behind bars, I saw my dearly beloved but a few times for brief interviews in the presence of guards and lawyers.

My mother and Aileen! Brave, loyal, loving hearts—so tender in their sympathy and yet so strong in their trust, so brave at the very brink of the abyss—

Out of utter dark came a tiny ray of light. Tommy, the office boy, had located a newsboy who, on the afternoon of the hold-up, had seen two strangers throw a leather bag down an alley three blocks from the office. The newsboy had taken the bag home and, two weeks afterward sold it to a second-hand man on the lower East Side. This tallied with my story of a hold-up. The jeweler who had purchased Aileen's necklace identified the four \$1,000 bills found on me, it being his custom to note the numbers of all large currency he handled.

Parker and the doorman and others of the household swore that Mondak had tried to bribe all the servants to perjure themselves about Aileen and me, but that he had succeeded only with the maid who, Parker testified, was also in the pay of Mondak's relatives. All these things developed before the trial. The robbery charge was dropped.

But the murder charge remained.

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If two shots had been fired, said the prosecution, where was the second bullet? Every inch of the hall, floor, walls and ceiling, likewise of the stairs, had been searched time and again. There was not a bullet mark anywhere.

The trial was set for a Wednesday at ten in the morning. Between two deputies I marched into the crowded court-room straight to my lawyers' table, tossing my head to belie the cold despair in my heart. I scanned the buzzing benches, meeting many a smile of good cheer, but also many a steely glance or prejudice.

My attorneys had not yet arrived. For some reason inexplicable to myself, I resented their tardiness. I thought it showed indifference.

"Strange," I thought, "Mother isn't here—nor Aileen—to-day of all days—"

At the District Attorney's office two assistants were busy, making memoranda, sorting papers—getting ready to destroy me. It was their duty, of course—still, why couldn't they take my word, my oath that I was innocent—

At the court clerk's desk jurymen were trying to be excused, and the silly idea struck me: What if none of them served? But I knew that was nonsense. They would hear the testimony, they would think I lied—I could hear the verdict: "Guilty!" Then the shame, the horror of being sent to prison. Would the truth ever come out?

A COURT officer hustled up to one of the assistant district attorneys. He whispered a message—something very important, I felt sure, for the latter dropped what he was doing and excitedly hurried out at the heels of his informant through the door to the Judge's private chambers.

Another delay, five, ten, twenty minutes—unbearable! Would they never begin? Suddenly a turmoil, a scraping of many feet, everybody rising—the Court Crier's voice: "This court is now in session!"

Then abruptly the clerk called my name. The Judge looked down at me. Was he crazy? Or was I? Or wasn't that he, smiling? And all those lawyers, what was the matter with them, slapping me on the back, grabbing my hands, talking fast—"What is it? Why don't you—so I can— Is it good news? Tell me! For God's sake speak up so I can understand. Don't you see I'm—"

They were trying to reach me, all at once. The Judge spoke, but I couldn't hear well. Suddenly, through a misty, crazy mass of humanity I saw Aileen and Mother running to me, felt their arms about me and they were hysterically laughing through tears: "Joe! Joe! You're free! Free! The charge—withdrawn!"

When I got so that my ears and my brain could string phrases together, those two loving, adored women told in breathless sentences that my lawyers, urged by them to a final effort, had called in several experts from the factory where the revolver which I had used was made. These men, tracing the probable course of the bullet from my gun, had caused the marble flagstones in the hall to be pried loose and raised, one by one, in the presence of lawyers, witnesses, detectives.

The work, begun Monday morning, had lasted all day and night, and all Tuesday and Tuesday night, and not 'til one hour before court opened had the missing bullet been found!



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It had first struck the marble mop-board with such a glancing blow as to leave only the faintest bluish mark, like a vein in the marble. From there it had ricocheted to the opposite side of the hall and buried itself deep under the edge of an iron ventilator at the far end of the floor.

The bullet was clean as a whistle and, examined under the microscope, was proved beyond the possibility of doubt to have been fired from my revolver!

The Judge congratulated me. The next case was called. Through the hushed court-room I tottered into the street, into God's free air with the arms of my dear ones about me and my faithful friends

babbling in triumphant gratitude—but of the thousands of strangers and the scores of acquaintances who had read the glaring head-lines that I have quoted at the beginning of my story, how few, I wonder, saw the little ten-line notice that the papers printed on inside pages, telling in perfunctory sentences that the charge against me had been dismissed?

That is why, as soon as Aileen and I were married and settled in Denver, I made up my mind to send my story to this magazine.

I didn't murder Mondak, and it was proven that I was innocent, but the man certainly courted murder for a long time before he "got his."

Confessions of a Confidence Man

(Continued from page 54)

Before him on the table were the half-shells of three walnuts. And under one of the shells, now exposed to view as he manipulated the shells, now hidden, was a small green pea. He was a worker of the well-known shell game.

While we stood there, the gray-hatted shell man turned, as did most of the rest, to see what had caused a commotion on the platform of the snake-charmer. The noise was the rattling and banging of the boxes containing the snakes as they were being shifted around on the platform. This was relatively unimportant. What did matter was that while the shell man's head was turned, one of the men in the crowd lifted each of the shells in succession until he found the one that covered the pea. He showed it to two others in the group, and winked. He and the other two had an edge on the shell game, and they knew it.

One of the other two was a local barber. I recognized him because I had been in his shop. When the shell man turned his attention back to the table, the barber spoke up:

"Here's a dollar that says I can find the pea."

"A dollar it is. Come on, men—anybody else?"

The barber had laid a dollar bill on the table to one side. This was covered by another bill of like denomination by the shell man. The other observer stepped up close and laid a five-dollar bill on the table. This likewise was covered. According to the "game," if either player picked the shell containing the pea, he took the money. If the players failed, then the shell man collected.

The pea had been under the shell at the extreme right. While he talked, the shell man kept moving all three shells back and forth, in and out, up the table and down—slowly. The gaze of the two players was riveted on the shell with the pea. I watched it also. When the shell man stopped and removed his hands as a signal to the players to make their choice, I could have sworn that the pea was under the shell in the center.

Quick as a flash the two players pointed to the center shell. This was raised—and beneath the shell was only "blue sky." No pea was there.

"Wrong, gents, wrong," said the shell man as he gathered up the money. "It's a game of skill, gents—a game of skill, showing that the hand is quicker than the eye. Here's the pea. Right here, gents," and he raised the shell at the left of the row of three. As he raised the shell, a pea rolled a couple of inches across the table.

THE barber and the man who had played with him turned scarlet. They thought they had a sure thing, and they had been beaten. Indeed, I was fooled myself.

"Anybody else, men? Anybody else? A little game of sci—"

"Fifty dollars I can find the pea," came a voice next to me. I was so surprised that for a second I couldn't credit my hearing. It was Gil who spoke.

My impulse was to check him, to tell him I thought the game couldn't be beaten—tell him I had watched the shells that last play, and was fooled. But I caught myself in time.

I saw Gil place a 50-dollar bill on the table, and saw the shell man smile. He drew out a roll of bills, counted off \$50, and covered Gil's money.

The shells twisted around the table once more, now this way, now that, in and out, up and down the table. I'd swear no human eye could have followed the shell that had covered the pea when the play started.

The shell man stopped. In a row were the three shells, about two inches separating them. It would be by a miracle that I would pick the right one, if I had been in Gil's place.

Gil's hand came up. He took the shell nearest him, the one on the right end of the row, between the finger and the thumb of his right hand. Sure enough, there lay the pea on the table. Gil's left hand reached for the \$100.

If a tornado had hit that tent, it could not have caused more stir than immediately followed. The shell man had made a grab for the money at the same time Gil did, but Gil had somehow managed to slip it from under his hand, and had shoved it into his pocket. Then the shell man cupped his hands and shouted, so that he might have been heard half a mile away: "Hey rube! Hey rube!"

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Instantly circus hands, the peg drivers and wagon men and helpers in the cook tent—everyone connected with the show, it seemed, who wasn't already working, came on the run. Under the flaps they scrambled, through the entrance, two dozen or more of them—and the shell man kept up his yelling: "Hey rube! Hey rube!"

"Where's that old gink? Get the white-head! The old guy—get him!"

The shell man started the cry, and the others took it up. I knew they meant Gil, and I sailed right in. I landed a stiff uppercut to the jaw of a husky I knew drove the lion wagon. To my surprise he made no move to return the blow, although I knew he could down me nine times in ten. "Not me, kid—not me. Get the old guy that took Bill's money. Get the old guy!"

BUT the "old guy" had disappeared. Gil was nowhere to be found. I looked all over the lot for him, keeping up the search until time for the act to go on, but I failed to find him. After the show I went to the Lakeview House, where he was stopping, on the way thinking that he must have made himself a man of vapor to have slipped past that mob without injury.

I found him in his room, stretched out on his bed, calmly puffing a big cigar. He smiled when he saw me.

"Not a scratch, son, not a scratch. I was ready for it. I had picked my hole in the side of the tent before the play started. I hid in an empty wagon 'til the hue and cry died down, and here I am."

I was relieved, of course, and burning with curiosity.

"I suppose you noticed how the shells went up and down the table, as well as across and in and out? Well, when the shell with the pea was at the upper edge of the table, that is the edge nearest the goof running the game, he brought the shell over the table-edge and dropped the pea to the soft dirt beneath the table. Go there tomorrow morning and you'll find fifty or more peas buried. When the players lift the shell of their choice, of course they don't find a pea because there's no pea under any of the shells. When the shell man lifts a shell to show a pea, he has it in the bend of his little finger, at the first joint. His vest pocket is filled with green peas. He raises the shell, drops the pea from his little finger, and the pea rolls onto the table, all so quickly that the players think the pea was under the shell he raised all the time. There you are, son. I had to tell you all of a breath, or you'd lose your eyesight."

I flushed, and grinned at his kindly thrust. I suppose my eyes were popping near out of my head in my eagerness to know.

"I simply beat that man at his own game," Gil went on. "He works for the show—splits his sucker money with the management. Did you hear him cry 'Hey rube?'"

"Did I? You'd have heard him clear down to the gas house, I'd say."

"Well, that's a cry that you as a good circus man should know." Here he took a long inhalation of his cigar and winked at me. "That means that one of the circus people is in trouble, and every man on the payroll is bound to answer the cry and help out the man in trouble. I knew that, and I

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was quick enough to get out before the trouble could get started."

THAT accounted for the lion driver's action. He knew I was one of the circus people, and took it for granted that I was there to help, the same as he.

"In another week I'll be the shell man of the Shelby-Alter outfit. And you'll be my schill.

If Gil had told me that he would clean out the United States Treasury single-handed, and that I would drive the currency he got to the planet Mars on a chariot, he couldn't have surprised me more.

"I've about fixed it now. The shell man we took tonight doesn't know me. But he's been getting letters offering him a good job with the Rider-Hastings Combined Shows for several days. The Rider-Hastings is a show a lot like this one. Those letters all crack him up to the skies, and offer him more than half again what he's getting here. He'll fall for it before the week is out. He's too greedy not to. But—when he reaches the Rider-Hastings people, out in Illinois, they will give him the cold turn-down, because they never heard of him." Again Gil winked at me.

He didn't need to tell me more. He himself had written to the shell man these glowing offers, unquestionably on the stationery of the Rider-Hastings Show. I learned later that a card man, a good friend of Gil's who lived in Illinois, had remained the letters Gil had sent to him, and so they had come to the shell man as authentic in every way.

"The Colonel and I are cronies already. I showed him a few tricks with marked cards, and got his ear. When the shell man quits, it'll be a cinch for me to land the place. That, son, is where the money lies for you and me."

"I have to compliment you, Gil. This is surely slick work. But I don't see where I fit into the scheme."

"You'll schill for me. Do you remember the noise across the tent, when the shell man turned his head?"

"I remember."

"And one of the men in the crowd lifted the shells until he exposed the pea? Well, the man that lifted the shells didn't bet any money, did he? Of course not. He was the feeder, the schill for the shell man. He simply showed those two suckers that they could bet on a sure thing—but the sure thing lost for them anyway. That'll be your job. And sor etimes you'll really find the pea. Then you'll pocket the money and walk away—until a new crowd gathers. We'll arrange signals, and all that." Gil chuckled. "Wait 'til the Colonel hears that I beat his shell man at his own game. He can't refuse me the job then."

AND so it worked out. Within a month after I had joined the circus, I had been a rider in parades, tumbler, heavy, and trapeze artist. I had been replaced at all those posts by new men, for Gil joined the show himself as shell man on the Friday of the week in New Brunswick, and when he started I started with him at the shell game.

We now began to play one and two-day stands. During those stands circus folk

live a flying life. They sleep on trains more often than not; and eat between jobs, often appearing in parades in costumes thrown on over sleeping togs, to save time. But with circuses, big and small, the movement from town to town is orderly. Every "prop," every tent-peg, every animal water-pail, has its place in the pack wagons and freight trains; every man has his duties, and all pull together like an army moving to battle on ground that means death to the man or woman who makes a slip.

Within the prescribed time, and on scheduled date, the show was to open in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which is about 20 miles from Dover. We would open on a Monday, and play two days. I had made up my mind to go home and see Mary that Sunday.

I left the show and Gil, to make Dover by trolley. I left early enough so as to be in Dover about one in the afternoon. I had told no one the time I was due in, in fact I had mentioned my homecoming to no one except Mary, trusting to her natural caution—in case there was trouble of which I knew nothing—to keep quiet.

In Dover the streets were practically deserted, for it was the hour of Sunday dinner, when the wealthy and the poor, true to their good sturdy Dutch tradition, gathered round the family table for the weekly feast. But I took no chances. Charlie Higgins had made one attempt on my life, and I expected him to keep on until he or I won out. I didn't know whether I'd get a shot in the back from some doorway, or whether a posse, led by the sheriff, was waiting to clap me into jail on some trumped-up charge, or what.

But I encountered nobody that meant anything to me the whole way to Mary's house. Mary! I felt my heart pounding in my chest. In another minute now I'd see her face, have her in my arms, murmuring all the sweet nothings lovers have murmured since history began.

I TURNED in at the gate, stepped briskly along the flagged walk leading to the porch of her home. I didn't need to ring the doorbell. She was on the porch waiting for me.

"Mary!" I cried, when I saw her. "Mary, come—"

"Stop right where you are. You're not welcome here." Mary—it was Mary's voice. "Don't touch me. You and I are strangers, Mr. Kendall. I can have nothing to do with a liar, a card-cheat—or with a man who'll lay in ambush in the dark to shoot another man from the rear. Good-by. Mr. Kendall—"

She turned toward the house, hot tears in her eyes.

"Mary, it's not true. Mary, wait—"

But I was too late. Before I could reach the porch steps, she was in the house, the door closed.

Then all my suspicions were correct! The man who thought he had cause to blame me for the loss of a fortune had taken this means of retaliation. He had poisoned the mind of Mary—my Mary, my life—against me!

Something snapped inside me. I went cold, numb.

I waited for nothing. I turned and left the place, one idea only enveloping my

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mind, one emotion only in my heart: I would lose no time 'til I found Charlie Higgins and choked the life out of him.

Black murder in my heart, I stormed through the streets of Dover till I came to Luke Connors' "Haven of Rest." Although it was Sunday, and although few people were on the street at the dinner hour, I was reasonably certain to find Charlie Higgins in Luke's back room, drowning his imagined wrongs in cheap liquor.

I pushed open the swinging doors, and the only person I saw was Luke, standing behind the bar.

"Well, if it ain't Jim Kendall! How are y', Jim?" he asked.

I was in no mood to talk to him. I wanted to get my hands on Charlie Higgins, nothing else. Blacken my character to Mary, would he? Tell her a pack of lies and turn her against me, would he? All right—he'd settle with me, and right now.

I strode through the main room, back to the rear of the place. One glance showed me it was deserted. I could have driven my fist through the door-jam, so great was my disappointment and rage.

"Where's Charlie Higgins?" I queried of Luke, when I had returned to the bar.

"Why—why, don't you know? Charlie's taken a tumble to himself, and he's gone South. Left here a couple weeks ago for some lumber camp in—lemme see—"

"Where?" I flung at him, ready to reach behind the bar and choke it from him.

"Steady, Jim. Lemme think. . . West Virginia. That's it. But for the life of me I can't remember the town."

I swore under my breath and left the place. Reason told me it would be futile to try to find out Charlie Higgins' whereabouts from somebody in Dover. Charlie had not been popular; he had had no friends and few acquaintances. I doubted if any one was sufficiently interested in the derelict to allow them to pay heed to where he said he was going. I carefully made a note in my mind of the West Virginia reference Luke had given me, and went on my way.

I knew my mood, and rationally determined to walk off my rage. I took a turn about town, circling it three times, I'm sure I must have covered nine miles. Then, the physical exercise taken at a rapid pace having brought me nearer to normal, I set out once more for Mary's house.

I made up my mind to talk to her, explain all I could, and convince her that I was the victim of a frame-up.

AT the house my ring of the door-bell was answered by her father. "Mary's not home, And don't come pestering around here, young fellow, if you know what's good for you."

If I had followed my impulse I'd have taken a swing at him where he stood. But I remembered who he was, and checked myself in time.

"But," I said, "I must see her on a matter of vital—"

The sentence was broken by a swift

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slamming of the door. I knew that now was not the time to press my point further.

I was in no mood to go home. If Mother or Dad saw me, they'd surely know something was wrong. I suppose my emotions showed plainly in my face. Mary was the only one who knew I was coming to Dover; Luke Connors wouldn't know anybody he could talk to who'd carry the news of my presence to Dad. So it would be simplest all round for me to go back to Gil and the circus, and leave matters where they stood until I had a fighting chance with Mary.

On the way back, it was brought home to me sharply that if I lost Mary I lost myself. It's all very well for the moralists to say that there should be sufficient pride in the individual to sustain him in any situation, no matter how adverse or unpleasant. But my answer to them has always been: You can't lay down laws that apply to everyone. The individual is governed solely by what's inside himself.

I knew that if I lost Mary, I would have no incentive to try to build up a fortune, no incentive to achieve the things I had set my heart on. I loved Mary too deeply, my love for her was too unselfish, for things to be otherwise.

When I met Gil, I was silent and morose. He saw that something was wrong, but with characteristic thoughtfulness and good sense, he didn't press me for an explanation. No doubt he was wise enough to know in a general way what had happened.

I sat down at once and wrote Mary a letter, telling her all I meant to tell her had I seen her. And I ended by asking her to see me, so that I could tell her myself she was making a mistake that would be ruinous to both of us. I got no answer. Again I wrote, and this time my letter came back unopened. I telegraphed; once I tried long-distance phoning—all with no result. Then I saw clearly there was only one thing left me to do: I would hunt for Charlie Higgins until I found him, and bring him back to face Mary and deny the foul things he had said about me. My score with him could wait until I was set right with the girl of girls for me.

I QUIT the circus, parted from Gil. That was one of the hardest things I have been called on to do. I told him, before I left, enough for him to get the reason behind what I was doing, and in his undemonstrative way he showed he approved the course I was taking.

"So long, kid," he said, when I left him; and I noted a thickness in his voice I seldom had detected there. "Good luck. You an' I'll meet up again one of these days."

"So long, Gil. And may that time come soon."

I didn't attempt to thank him for all he had done for me. He hadn't done a thing for me in the hopes of getting a return for himself, even as little as my thanks. He was too real, his liking for me and mine for him, were too deep-rooted for that. But for me, parting from him was like losing my right arm.

Then followed a long period of wandering, from camp to camp in West Virginia and Virginia, that covered eight years of my life. To chronicle the details of that period would require too much space to be printed here. It perhaps is sufficient to say that my one aim was to find Charlie Higgins and through him successfully win back Mary. No effort of mine had been able to get so much as a hearing from her.

Loss of Mary fired me with an intoxicating sense of recklessness during those years. For expense money I played poker and shot craps in lumber camps, always with marked cards and loaded dice. And in those days my "suckers" carried revolvers that were ready to fire instant death, had I been detected. At one camp, where I played poker every month the night after pay-day, with the same group, one raw-boned husky said: "I know damned well Kendall is cheatin' us—but I can't prove nothin'. Let me ketch him at it an' there won't be no court trial." I only grinned, and kept on dealing.

Once on a dare I went to the sawmill that was run by old Anse Hatfield, the most feared of all the participants in the notorious McCoy-Hatfield feud. I had been told that he was ready to shoot a stranger on a sight. For pure devilry—maybe to show my nerve, maybe because I didn't care—I went. I hailed him at the mill, walked right into the place—and before I left him the next morning he and I were on the basis of close acquaintances of a year's standing.

That period did many things to me, naturally. I will carry to my grave a bullet wound I got in the leg just below the knee, acquired in a gun-fight following a card game. I learned to take a chance on any adventure that carried a risk. I learned that a man is never licked until he admits it. And I learned patience; for as the years wore on and I still failed to locate Charlie Higgins, I steeled myself to continue to hunt if it took the rest of my life. I wanted nothing till I had Mary.

Jim Kendall, however, can't stop in his career as a gambler and sport. On the contrary he is just entering it. Read in June TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES of his hectic experiences at a well-known race-track near Washington, D. C., and even more thrilling—what happened to him when he undertook to square accounts with a very clever woman, herself a crook, who fell desperately in love with him. Don't miss this—in the June issue—on the news-stands May 15th.

YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS:

"If He'd Let the Other Fellow's Girl Alone——"

A Powerful Story of Human Emotion and Clever Detection

IN TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES FOR JUNE

The Sins of Her Forebears

The Story of a Girl Who Inherited a Bad Name

BROUGHT up by three strait-laced, narrow-minded, elderly spinster aunts, Ethel was never permitted to forget the sins of her mother and her grandmother on her mother's side.

Both had abandoned their husbands for the men they loved, and into Ethel's ears was constantly dinned the thought that she came of a line of "undependable women," and that in due time she would probably follow in their footsteps.

Then, when she was eighteen, in order, so they said, that she might be under the protection of a good and steady man, they prevailed upon her to marry Douglas Murray, much older than herself and whom she did not love. But down in their sanctimonious, scheming hearts they knew that the real reason why they coerced her into marrying Douglas was because he was a millionaire.

Thus at an age when she should have still been in the midst of happy girlhood, Ethel found herself an unhappy wife with almost unlimited wealth at her disposal.

And so, when Ashley Holmes, champion of her childhood days, came again into her life, the stage was set for tragedy.

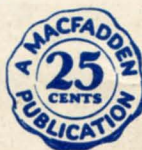
She tells the story of that terrible period of her life in True Story Magazine for May. The agonized cry of a soul winnowed and harried by fate, it is a tale such as you have rarely had a chance to read. If every girl and every parent of girls would read it, could be made to realize, as she now realizes, that wealth without love can bring only misery and regrets, that true and enduring love is the greatest wealth that life can bestow, many lives would be saved from ruin. Entitled "Love's Redeeming Power," it is a wonderful story and a great life lesson. You will find it on page 32, True Story Magazine for May. Do not fail to read it.

The Magazine That Holds A Mirror Up to Life

True Story Magazine, the remarkable publication that is written by its readers, holds a mirror up to life as does no other periodical. Every page in True Story is a page torn from the book of life. Because every human, absorbing story it contains is from the daily life of men and women like yourself, nearly two-and-a-half million readers go to the news-stands each month to buy it. By all means get your copy from the nearest dealer to-day. If his supply is exhausted, use the coupon below, which will assure you of the current issue and the next four as well without further trouble on your part.

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Ethel

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