

AUG. 27, 1921

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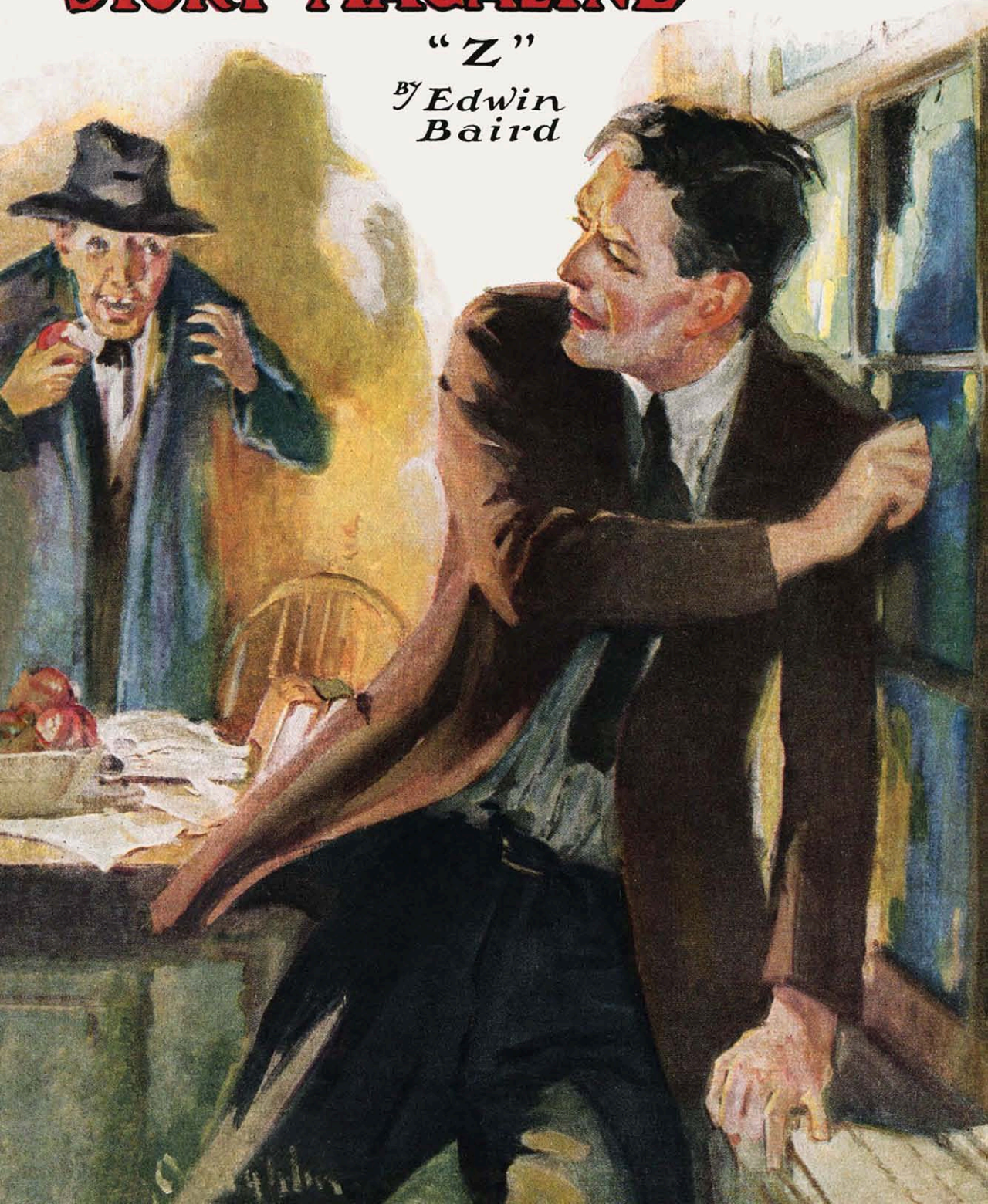
# DETECTIVE

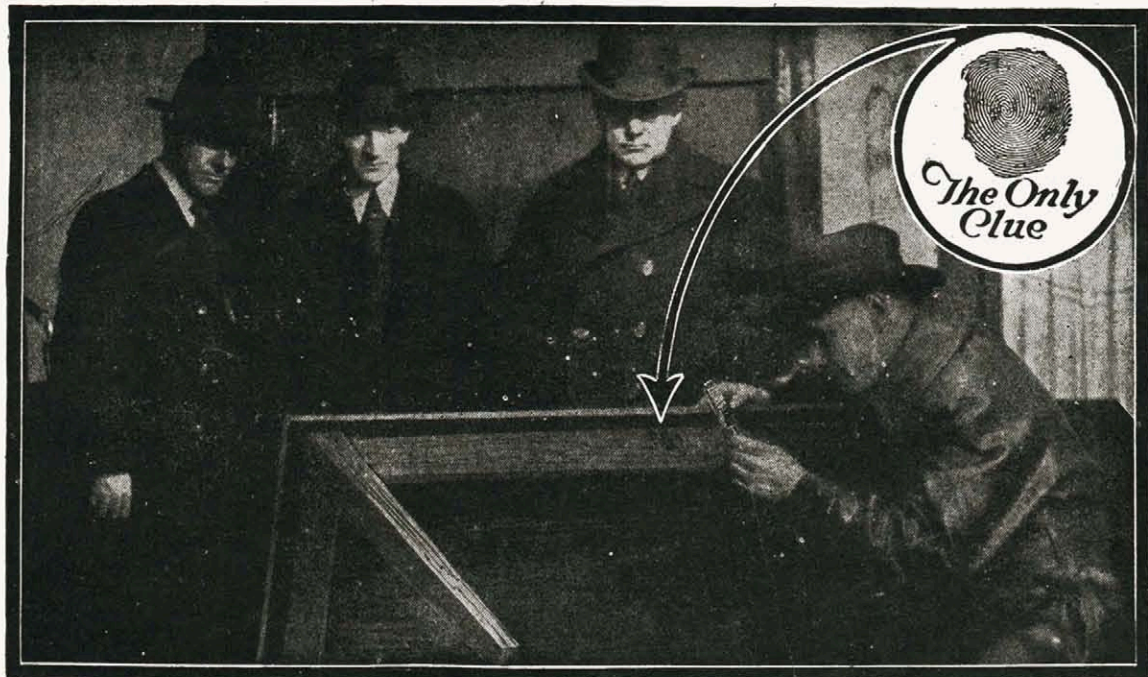
## STORY MAGAZINE

EVERY  
WEEK

"Z"

By Edwin  
Baird





# \$500 REWARD for TWO HOURS WORK

WARREN BIGELOW, the Finger Print Detective, was making his usual review of the morning newspapers. He had just finished reading the press reports of the daring robbery of the offices of the T—O— Company when the telephone on his desk rang. Central Office was calling, asking him to come immediately to the scene of the robbery.

Although he drove his high powered roadster rapidly and arrived very shortly at his destination, he had plenty of time to consider the main features of the case as reported by the press. The job had undoubtedly been done by skilled cracksmen and robbers of uncommon nerve. Sixty-five hundred dollars in currency—the company pay-roll—were gone. Not a single, apparent clew had been found by the police.

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

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

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

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

Almost immediately Bigelow turned his attention to a heavy

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

To make a long story short his prints were photographed and taken to Central Office, where they were matched with those of "Big Joe" Moran, a safe blower well known to the police. Moran was subsequently caught and convicted on Bigelow's testimony and finger-print proof. Most of the money was recovered. In the meantime the T—O— Company had offered a \$500 reward, which was given to Bigelow—his pay for two hours' work.

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# DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

## E V E R Y W E E K

Vol. XLII

Contents for August 27, 1921

No. 6

### ONE COMPLETE NOVEL

"Z" . . . . . *Edwin Baird* . . . . . 34

### TWO SERIALS

The Unknown Seven . . . . . *Harry Coverdale* . . . . . 3  
 A Five-part Story—Part One

Masked Revenge . . . . . *Edward Wainwright Brunson* . . . . . 83  
 A Four-part Story—Part Three

### SIX SHORT STORIES

Mr. Clackworthy Goes to Jail . . . . . *Christopher B. Booth* . . . . . 24

Big-nose Charley's Dog Helps Out . . . . . *Charles W. Tyler* . . . . . 58

Private Lessons . . . . . *Hugh MacNair Kahler* . . . . . 69

When the Family Were Away . . . . . *Robert H. Rohde* . . . . . 104

A Study in Green . . . . . *Scott Campbell* . . . . . 114

A Blocked Get-away . . . . . *Frederick Ames Coates* . . . . . 122

### DEPARTMENTS

What Handwriting Reveals . . . . . *Louise Rice* . . . . . 132

The How, When, and Where of  
 Success . . . . . *Rutherford Scott* . . . . . 136

Under the Lamp . . . . . *Henry A. Keller* . . . . . 138

Missing . . . . . 139

### MISCELLANEOUS

Chinaman Accused of Shoplifting . . . . . 23	Automobile Bandits Defy Parisian Crowds . . . . . 82
New Railroad Cars and Safes to Foil Bandits . . . . . 33	Child Tried for Murder . . . . . 103
Would-be Murderer Forgot to Pad Rope . . . . . 57	Thinks Well of Man Who Robbed Her . . . . . 113
Convict Ship on Exhibition . . . . . 68	Secret Drawers in Old Casket . . . . . 128
Attempt to Revive Executed Criminal . . . . . 68	Intricate Robbery by Fur Thieves . . . . . 131
	Hid Dope in Hair . . . . . 137
	"So Long Pete," Sneak Thief . . . . . 138
Headquarters Chat . . . . . <i>The Editor</i> . . . . .	129

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IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

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## Run to Ground

To Avenge His Brother's Death, a Sheriff Goes A-gunnin'

By *JOHNSTON McCULLEY*

---

## Beneath the Brand

(A *Balbane Story*)

More Than Mere Magic

By *LEWEN HEWITT*

---

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# DETECTIVE STORY

## MAGAZINE

### EVERY WEEK

Vol. XLII

August 27, 1921

No. 6

## *The Unknown Seven*

*by Harry Coverdale*

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE WOMAN IN THE LIMOUSINE.

**S**TANDING in the dark doorway of a delicatessen shop, Kingdon Cole gazed, through the fog and drizzle of the October night, at a second-story window across the street. The brim of a slouch hat shaded his eyes and most of his face. His lean figure was draped in a mackintosh that reached almost to his feet. The upward slant of the cigar clamped between his teeth hinted at total absorption in what he saw.

The building that claimed his attention was an ordinary three-story structure of murky brick. Flanked by a warehouse on one side and a second-hand clothing store on the other, it presented a sullen and gloomy aspect to the watcher across the street. Yet

there was something in the very drabness of the house and the chill atmosphere which hung over it that might have appealed to the imagination of a man like Kingdon Cole.

A man's head and shoulders were dimly silhouetted against the lighted window shade at which he was looking so fixedly. For half an hour or longer the figure had not stirred. The rigid poise of the head and the stiff set of the shoulders suggested that the man at the window was engaged in a task that occupied his whole mind.

Cole struck a match and, holding it in his cupped hands, lighted his dead cigar. The flickering light shone for an instant on fingers that were long, slim, and finely tapering, the fingers of a man of great mental energy and a compelling personality.

"Wonder what the learned Professor

Carmody finds so interesting," he mumbled. "Some scientific treatise, very likely, or perhaps it is——"

He lowered his gaze, as he vaguely sensed that a pair of eyes was trying to pierce the gloom in which he stood. What with the wet night and the lateness of the hour that dreary section of Bleeker Street was all but deserted. Now and then a cross-town car jogged along at a lumbering pace, occasionally a taxicab passed on its way.

Cole looked up and down the block. The impression was more distinct now. Some one was watching him, just as he was watching the solitary figure in the window. His senses, sharpened by long training, told him he was under observation even before he could trace the impression to its source. Now he saw a limousine drawn up at the corner, less than twenty paces from where he stood. Its sides of burnt sienna gleamed in the blurred lights. It seemed to lend a touch of affluence to the squalor and dreariness of the scene. How long the car had been there he did not know, for the window across the street had claimed all his attention.

The car began to move, crawling snaillike and silent toward the point where Cole stood. It stopped opposite the doorway that sheltered him. He fancied that he saw the flicker of a face behind the curtains. Then the door opened a few inches, and Cole caught a glimpse of a beckoning hand.

Cole's eyes narrowed under their puckering brows. The monotony of his vigil was being broken in a strange way, and the slow twisting of his lips signified that the interruption was not altogether displeasing. Once more he glanced up at the window across the street, noticing that the shadowy figure had not stirred. Then he crossed the sidewalk, and instantly the door of the limousine was flung wide.

"Won't you step in, Mr. Cole?" asked a voice.

Though his life had inured him to surprises, Cole started a little. It was odd that the occupant of the car should address him by name. The interior was dark, but in the shadows he saw the figure of a woman.

"You are very patient, Mr. Cole," the voice continued. "You are wasting your time, however. It isn't likely that Professor Carmody will go out tonight, so you might as well jump in."

A sharp hunching of Cole's shoulders registered surprise number two. It was all very mystifying. Not only did the occupant of the car know his name, but she seemed familiar with his business as well. He liked her voice, a deep soprano with a faintly playful undertone. For a moment he studied the long, slender lines of her figure, faintly discernible in the dusk and melting, here and there, into a background of saffron-hued cushions.

"You hesitate? I happen to know that Professor Carmody is in for the night and that your vigilance is useless."

Cole looked at her intently. The mist, the drizzle, and the blurred sheen from the street lamps seemed to lend a touch of unreality to what he saw and heard.

"What do you know about Professor Carmody," he demanded.

"A great deal more than you do. It's quite possible that I am in a position to give you some valuable information. At any rate my car is more comfortable than a dark doorway."

She leaned forward slightly, and there was a trace of mockery on her faintly parted lips. "Not afraid, are you, Mr. Cole?"

He gave a low laugh at the implied dare. With a shrug he stepped inside the car and sat down beside her. She picked up the speaking tube and, turning her head away from Cole, said something which he could not hear. In an instant the car was in motion.

"You seem to know a great deal," he observed, trying to obtain a glimpse of her face under the billowing brim that shaded it.

"And you are anxious to learn how much more I know. Isn't it so, Mr. Cole? It was neither vulgar curiosity nor adventurousness that prompted you to accept my invitation to ride with me. You accepted only because you hoped to learn something. Having heard me speak your name and mention Professor Carmody you naturally thought it might be profitable to cultivate my acquaintance."

"Perhaps so," said Cole dryly. "What do you know about me aside from my name and my interest in the estimable professor?"

"A great deal," was the surprisingly prompt reply. "You are a student of criminology, a follower in the footsteps of Lombroso, Pinel, and Prichard, though you by no means accept their theories. You have written two books on crime and criminals. They are too scientific for the general reader, I have been told, but experts on the subject regard them as authoritative. Perhaps some day I shall try to read them."

"I fear you won't find them very interesting," replied Cole. "What else?"

"You live in a small apartment in Gramercy Park, which also serves as your office. Two years ago you did a very brilliant piece of work on the Wilmerding murder case, though you magnanimously, or for reasons of your own, let the police claim the credit for the results. You follow criminal investigations largely as a scientific pursuit. If you cared to devote all your time to it you could make a great success, but you accept only such cases as happen to interest you personally. As a result you lead a quiet and somewhat precarious existence, deriving your sole pleasure from your work and such inexpensive amusements as books, music, and, on rare occasions, the theater."

She paused. Though her face still eluded him, Cole felt she was smiling at his bewilderment. The car had turned south and was running at a leisurely pace. He glanced at the window, but the glass was studded with drops of moisture and permitted him to see nothing but drab stretches of office buildings.

"You seem to have taken considerable pains looking me up," he remarked.

"Oh, I haven't told you all I know yet. I have learned a number of things about your private life and personal habits, but we needn't go into those things now."

"Are you equally well informed in regard to Professor Carmody?"

"Not quite. The professor is a riddle. To all outward appearances he is interested in nothing but his experiments and his musty old books. He seems to be living in that kind of neighborhood by preference, because he isn't so apt to be bothered by meddling neighbors. His house is said to contain one of the best-equipped laboratories of its kind in the world. That's only a rumor, of course. The professor doesn't encourage visitors. To the few people who have talked with him he is what the novelists call a man of mystery. He comes and goes without speaking to any one, and his life is a closed book. As far as I know, only one person has been inside his house in a year, and that person never came out."

"Oh, you know that!"

"Yes, I am one of the very few who are aware of the fact. Let me see, it's about three weeks since Malcolm Reeves disappeared. His relatives, your clients, in other words, have reason to believe that he visited Professor Carmody on the night of his disappearance. No wonder the case fascinates you, Mr. Cole. Disappearances are always interesting, but especially so when

a mysterious person like Professor Carmody is involved."

Cole regarded her in frank amazement, but her head was now slightly bowed, and all he could see of her face was the curve of the chin.

"The relatives did well to put the case in your hands," she went on. "You are both capable and discreet and, as I presume you know, there were excellent reasons for not reporting Reeves' disappearance to the police. Are you making satisfactory progress?"

"My clients seem satisfied."

"You have not yet paid the professor a visit?"

"What would be the use?"

"You are right, of course. It would only put him on his guard. You prefer not to let him know that he is under suspicion." She laughed gently, as if amused at something. "Besides, it is doubtful whether a search of Carmody's house would reveal any clues to Reeves' fate. The professor is a chemist, and I understand there are certain chemical processes by which bodies can be made to disappear completely, leaving no trace."

"Then you think Reeves has been murdered?"

"Don't you?" she asked quickly.

Cole smiled. Instead of answering the question he asked another. "How can you be so sure that Carmody will not leave his house to-night?"

"Because he has the best of reasons for staying in."

"What are they?"

"One is that his engagement for to-night was canceled by telephone at four o'clock this afternoon."

Cole gave her a puzzled stare. "How do you know that?"

She laughed a little. "There are ways of finding out," she said mysteriously. "Tapped wires, for instance. But the professor's principal reason for staying in to-night is that he is well aware that you are watching him. You

see, Mr. Cole, he has more shrewdness than you have been giving him credit for. And the fact that he is staying in on your account shows that he has great respect for your ability."

She had raised her head a trifle, and Cole gave her a long, bewildered glance. He half expected to see a smile on her lips, but her face was grave.

"Are you one of Reeves' relatives?" he asked abruptly.

"Oh, no!"

"Then how——"

"I have certain sources of information. Sources so vast that you would be staggered if I were to tell you of them. Please don't look at me like that. I am not insane, neither am I subject to hallucinations. The fact that I happen to know more about the Carmody case than you do is no reflection on your ability as an investigator. It merely shows that your equipment is inadequate. Care to hear more?"

"What else do you know?"

"I know that the case you are working on is only one minor angle of a vast mystery. The disappearance of Malcolm Reeves is nothing but an incident. Reeves himself was only an insignificant puppet in one of the greatest games ever played. All you have seen so far is one of the minor threads in the woof. I am always mixing my metaphors, but I know you won't mind. Mr. Cole, this affair has ramifications that may some day rock the whole continent."

"I feel considerably shaken up already," admitted Cole. "You realize, of course, that you are using strong words?"

"No stronger than the situation demands."

"If it is as bad as all that why doesn't somebody put a stop to it?"

"Because——" She checked herself and regarded him intently. "Well, be-



cause the man who is big enough for the task has not yet been found."

Again Cole cast a glance at the window. The car had made several turns in the last few minutes. He caught only a blurred view of his surroundings, but he thought they were traversing one of the cavernlike streets near the southern tip of Manhattan Island.

"Have you heard enough?" she asked.

"Just enough to give me an appetite for more."

"In that case you must trust me implicitly and obey me without questions. I am taking desperate chances in confiding in you, Mr. Cole, and certain precautions are absolutely necessary. Will you promise me on your honor that you will not try to ascertain the location of the place I shall take you to?"

Cole considered. There was a flavor of mystery about the adventure that appealed to him, but the prospect of learning something more about the Carmody case was an even greater temptation. From what little the woman had so far told him he surmised that she must have unusual sources of information. Much that she had said coincided with what he already knew, so he had no cause to doubt her truthfulness.

"You have my promise," he told her.

The car made another turn, swung down a dark block, then veered again to the south. Cole caught a hazy glimpse of dark, towering skyscrapers.

The woman looked at him fixedly, as if in doubt. "I believe you are a man of your word, Mr. Cole, but promises are sometimes broken in spite of the best intentions. Please don't be offended."

She produced a scarf and with a deft touch covered his eyes, securing the bandage with a firm knot at the back. Cole chuckled amusedly. He might be walking into a trap, but it would not be the first time, and he had great confidence in his ability to take care of him-

self in any situation that might come up.

After continuing its zigzagging course a few minutes longer the car stopped. His mysterious conductress touched Cole's arm as they stepped out. She guided him across the sidewalk and up a few stone steps, and then they traversed what appeared to be a long corridor. Finally Cole found himself in a narrow inclosure which he guessed to be an elevator.

"We are in one of the tallest office buildings in New York," the woman whispered in his ear, "but you're not likely to guess its name."

The door clanked shut, and the cage shot swiftly upward. Cole felt a rush of wind in his ears. He maintained a languid composure, but inwardly he marveled. A modern skyscraper was the last place he would have expected the woman to take him to. He tried to estimate the number of floors they were passing. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty—

Still the cage darted upward, and then it stopped so suddenly that he caught his breath sharply. They stepped out, and the girl removed the scarf from his eyes. He gazed around him bewilderedly. All about him, with the exception of a single elevator shaft, was a vast expanse of blank wall. There was no sign of doors or windows, and the only illumination was a small electric bulb in the ceiling.

"We came up in a private elevator," the woman explained. "This is the top floor. To the public at large and to most of the tenants of the building it practically does not exist. This way, Mr. Cole."

She stepped to one of the corners of the triangular space, of which the elevator shaft formed the center, and Cole followed. In the dim light he could not see exactly what happened, but the woman's hand went out and then a narrow portion of the wall slid back. They stepped through an aperture, and

instantly the opening closed behind them. They were in a long corridor with doors on each side.

"Surprised?" she asked, starting to lead him down the hall.

"Rather. Never expected to find such mysterious contrivances in a modern office building."

Her only reply was a low laugh. The floor of the corridor was luxuriously carpeted; the doors on either side had a solid appearance. Cole's amazement grew. He wondered what was beyond the massive doors and what was the nature of this establishment that was hidden behind blank walls. He had little time for speculation, for his companion opened a door and bade him enter.

"Excuse me, Mr. Cole," she murmured when she had switched on the light. "I shall be back directly."

The door closed, and she was gone. Alone, Cole looked about him, and his eyes opened wide in astonishment.

## CHAPTER II.

### TEMPTATION.

FOR a moment Cole forgot that he was in a building devoted to the rather prosaic pursuits of commerce. The room in which he stood, bordered by walls of paneled walnut, was worthy of a Fifth Avenue mansion. It struck him as a bit grotesque. From an elevator he had stepped, through a blank wall, into a magnificence that fairly dazzled him. It was like an "Arabian Nights" adventure. As he looked about him he saw quiet elegance everywhere, without a taint of showiness. For some time he stood lost in admiration, then he noticed that the room had no windows. A moment later he discovered that the door was locked on the outside. Despite the splendor that surrounded him he was virtually a prisoner.

He sat down and smoked a cigarette, waiting for his strange conductress to

return. Evidently the walls were solidly built, for no sounds reached him. The air was fresh and pure despite the absence of windows, hinting that there was a concealed ventilator somewhere in the room.

The armchair was comfortable, and he stretched out his lean figure, slightly short of six feet. The man suggested mental force rather than bodily strength, but a great surprise awaited any antagonist who underestimated Cole's physical prowess. He was far stronger than the average man, and his endurance was phenomenal. His gray eyes, with a faint humorous twinkle in their depths, were fixed on the door. His dark face, slightly lined about the mouth and the outer corners of the eyes, bore a look of mild expectancy. In moments of repose Cole looked as though he had not a care in the world. His friends often wondered how he managed to maintain the freshness and sparkle suggestive of a recent needle shower. Perhaps it was because he was thoroughly in love with his work and had learned to shake off the minor frets and irritations of life.

In the midst of his musings the door opened, and he stared rather rudely at the vision that entered. It was the woman, and she had undergone an amazing transformation since he last saw her. He wondered whether the shimmering gown she wore had been designed by Poiret himself. Its delicate rose color afforded a charming contrast to her complexion, a sort of luminous white that somehow escaped being pale. Standing there, with a faint smile on her lips, her face fringed by an aureole of fine-spun gold, she was easily the most bewitching woman Cole had ever seen.

He rose, bowed, and gazed appreciatively at the simple, but strikingly effective, ornament she wore at her throat.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," she murmured. "Sit down, please, and

smoke as much as you like. I want to talk with you."

Cole sat down. He wondered if she had arrayed herself like this for the sole purpose of having a talk with him.

"You promised to tell me something more about the Carmody case," he reminded her. "I suppose you brought me to this charming place so that we might have a quiet talk without danger of interruption or eavesdropping."

She sat down a short distance from him. By degrees the smile faded from her lips. A curiously solemn expression crept into her face. "Haven't I told you enough, Mr. Cole?"

"What little you told me was only a provocation. It gave me a taste for more. By the way, you have the advantage over me. Won't you tell me your name?"

"You may call me Miss Brown."

"The name doesn't fit you," he objected.

"Names never do fit. That's one of the ironies of existence. For the present, until we know each other better, it will have to be Miss Brown. I had to tell you a little about the Carmody case in order to get your attention. I hope I convinced you that it is quite useless for you to continue at work on a case that is so enormous in scope and presents such insuperable difficulties, Mr. Cole." A pleading note had come into her voice. "Can anything persuade you to drop the Carmody case?"

She bent forward a little. With hands clasped across her knee, she studied him intently, and Cole looked into the deepest, bluest eyes he had ever seen.

"Drop the Carmody case!" he exclaimed.

"You must drop it, Mr. Cole! If you knew more about it, what terrible things you are going up against, you would willingly drop it without further argument. You would recognize your

utter helplessness in the matter, not to mention a number of other things."

Cole was momentarily speechless. He found himself strangely impressed by her big, sorcerous eyes, full of mute pleading and entreaty.

"I don't understand. You don't realize what you are saying. Why should I drop the case?"

"Because of the things I have told you."

Cole laughed. "They are only an added incentive for me to go on with it."

She drew a long breath. "That's your man's way of looking at things. The greater the dangers and difficulties the more determined you are to forge ahead. You don't stop to consider the price, or estimate the cost. The wreckage you scatter about you means nothing to you. All you think of is the gratification of your boundless ambition. Mr. Cole, won't you forgo your foolish pride and do what I ask?"

Her eyes held him despite his will. There was a look of terror in their depths that exerted a subtle appeal upon him. He got to his feet and tried to shake off the fascination of her beauty and her magnetic personality.

"Impossible," he declared. "If you brought me here in the hope of inducing me to drop the Carmody case, your time and effort are wasted."

"Please, Mr. Cole! Forget that you ever heard of this terrible case. Tell your clients in the morning that you will have nothing further to do with it."

"That wouldn't alter matters. They would promptly accept my resignation and engage somebody else."

"There is only one Kingdon Cole."

"That's a very neat compliment, but it won't bear analysis. I haven't accomplished anything very wonderful, and another man could finish what I have begun."

She was silent for a time, her big,

luminous eyes regarding him imploringly. "If you won't drop the case for your own sake, because of the terrible dangers involved, then I beg you to do so for my sake."

"For your sake? Really, Miss—er—Brown, I don't understand. What is your interest in the Carmody case?"

She stepped up and clutched his hand. The touch of her fingers sent a thrill through him. Her eyes were moist, and the curve beneath her throat rose and fell with accelerated rhythm. "Yes, for my sake. I can't explain, except to say that awful things will happen to me if you go on. Death would be as nothing in comparison. Doesn't a woman's soul mean anything to you, Mr. Cole?"

Cole looked down into her eyes, while her fingers spasmodically clutched his hand. Far into their blue depths he gazed, and suddenly his face underwent a change. His lips curled a trifle, and a hard glint came into his eyes. Somewhat roughly he released his hand.

"Very touching," he dryly remarked, "but I don't see the connection between the Carmody case and a woman's soul."

She drew back with a little sob of bafflement.

"If you meant your own soul, Miss Brown, you mentioned something that doesn't exist," he went on sarcastically. "Trickery and pretense are poor substitutes for soul."

"What do you mean?"

He shrugged disgustedly. "Your acting is superb, but it won't bear close inspection. You were splendid at a little distance. Despite the fact that I am the only Kingdon Cole, as you so charmingly phrased it, I am rather susceptible to the tears of a beautiful woman. With your sobs and your loveliness you could have melted a stone, if such a feat were possible. As soon as I got a close view of you, however, I knew you were only shamming. Your

eyes gave you away when you sprung that choice line about a woman's soul. Perhaps you realized you were laying the pathos on too thick. Anyway the illusion is shattered, and all that remains is the gorgeous gown you are wearing. It is really stunning."

"Thank you," she said coldly, dropping the rôle she had been playing, as easily as she would a wrap. "No doubt I should have known better than to try such methods on you."

"Yes, you should," said Cole. "For, despite the little slip you made, I believe that you are really a very clever woman. Now that we are off the subject of women's souls won't you tell me your real reason for wishing me to throw up the Carmody case?"

She shook her head, but he thought he detected a gleam of unwilling admiration in her eyes. Motioning him to follow, she stepped to the door and opened it, then preceded him down the hall. Cole guessed that his little adventure was over, and he felt a twinge of disappointment at the thought that, in all probability, he would never learn the meaning of her puzzling behavior. No doubt she would try to blindfold him again before conducting him away from the place, and he was prepared to raise strenuous objections.

But it appeared Miss Brown was not yet ready to let him go. She stopped before one of the massive doors that had already excited his curiosity, and knocked twice. It opened quickly and noiselessly. In a moment, before he realized what he was doing, Cole was inside, and the door closed at his back.

The room was so dimly lighted that at first he could distinguish nothing but bare, gloomy walls. Miss Brown, who had followed him into the room, hastened forward and seemed to melt away in the dusk, leaving him to wonder what new turn his adventure was taking. Gradually, as his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he was able to

see objects with some degree of clearness. He was in a long, narrow room, and what he saw was in keeping with the other strange things that he had witnessed and experienced in this surprising establishment.

A number of shadowy figures were seated around a circular table in the center of the room. He counted seven of them, and at first he had a ludicrous impression that there were only blank spaces where their faces should have been. Then, as his pupils continued to respond to the strain imposed by the dim light, he saw that each man wore a mask. It was only a strip of cloth, with tiny slits over the eyes, but in the dusk it was the only covering that was needed to make recognition impossible.

Again Cole was struck with a sense of unreality. The men, sitting stiffly erect in their chairs, caused him to wonder whether he was in the midst of some ghostly séance. He felt their eyes searching him through the vents in the masks. The gloom and the silence gave an added illusory touch to the scene. Cole had to shake himself before he could realize that he was on the top floor of a modern skyscraper.

Miss Brown stepped behind one of the chairs and held a brief whispered conversation with its occupant. The latter nodded, and the girl slipped away toward the door. A moment later it closed behind her, and the man, with whom she had been talking, indicated that Cole was to step forward. With a shrug he complied, and the masked faces stirred slightly as he approached. For a full minute nothing was said, and again he felt the sharp and steady scrutiny of seven pairs of eyes. Finally the man who had beckoned him spoke. "Mr. Cole, how much will you take to drop the Carmody case?"

Cole could not help but laugh. The words, spoken with a directness and a matter-of-factness that left nothing to the imagination, had shattered the illu-

sion completely. In an instant the spell of unreality was broken. He knew he was dealing with practical men who were in the habit of reducing everything to terms of dollars and cents. A blunt reply came to his lips, but his desire to learn more of these strange men caused him to hold it back.

"Suppose we put all the cards on the table," he suggested. "I don't like to talk business in the dark. Who are you, and what is your objection to my connection with the Carmody case?"

"We are not here to answer questions," declared the one who seemed to be acting as spokesman for the others. "All I care to say is that, because of a peculiar combination of circumstances, it is to our advantage to pay you liberally for withdrawing from the case. What's your price, Mr. Cole?"

Under ordinary circumstances, Cole would have been indignant at this cool assumption that every man has his price, but now his dominant emotion was curiosity. He could not understand why they seemed so intent upon persuading him to sever his connection with the affair, but what Miss Brown had said about the vast ramifications of the Carmody case suggested that they had ample reasons for what they were doing.

"Let me get this straight," he said evenly. "You are willing to pay me my price for withdrawing from the Carmody case. Are there any strings to the proposition?"

The other chuckled dryly. "I wouldn't call them strings, exactly. They are only gossamer threads. In addition to retiring from the case you are to give us a full and veracious report of what you have discovered to date in connection with the disappearance of Malcolm Reeves."

"I see," said Cole. "Anything else?"

"Just one thing more. In addition to withdrawing from your present connection with the case and turning the in-

formation you possess over to us, you are to come over to our side and put your ability at our disposal. We are ready to pay you handsomely for your services, either on a contingent basis, or in the form of a weekly salary."

"Very generous," declared Cole, with a faint trace of sarcasm. "Your proposition is that, for a consideration, I am to betray my present clients and——"

"Betray is a harsh word," objected the spokesman for the group.

"Truthful terms are usually harsh," Cole remarked. "Let's not quibble over words. In addition to the amount, which you are willing to pay me for betraying my clients, you offer to reward me liberally for certain services that you require. May I ask what they are?"

"You will learn soon enough if you accept our proposition. Let me state that we have unlimited funds at our disposal and stand ready to pay you well. It would be no exaggeration to say that in a short time you should be a rich man if you accept our offer. In view of our liberality don't you think it behooves you to be less squeamish and ask fewer questions?"

"I suppose it is in deucedly bad taste for me to argue with a man who offers me a fortune on a silver platter," Cole admitted. "Just the same I can't help wondering why you are offering such a glittering bribe to one who is practically unknown in his profession."

The man gave an amused chuckle. "Don't worry about that, Mr. Cole. We are not in the habit of buying pigs in a poke. You have been under observation for some time."

"So I gathered from what the bewitching Miss—Brown told me."

"We have learned that you have a great deal of ability. You are fearless and persevering. You have qualities that the average professional detective sadly lacks, such as tact, polish, and a magnetic personality. In short, you are

precisely the kind of man we need. We have reason to believe that you have discovered certain interesting facts in connection with Malcolm Reeves' disappearance, facts which would naturally become our property if you came over to our side."

Cole marveled at the extent of the man's knowledge. It was true that he had picked up several stray facts which, when considered in conjunction with the known circumstances of Reeves' disappearance, made a fairly interesting showing. His glance wandered over the circle of veiled faces. Each of the seven men was watching him intently through the slits in the masks.

"We are waiting for your decision, Mr. Cole," remarked the spokesman after a pause. "If our proposition appeals to you, name your price."

Cole pretended to hesitate. He hoped to learn a little more before he closed the interview. He wondered how far these men would go in their efforts to induce him to betray his clients and transfer his allegiance to themselves. "Aren't you forgetting something?" he asked. "Do you realize that a man who has been bought once will probably sell himself again?"

Though he could not see, he fancied the spokesman's eyes were twinkling behind the mask.

"We have considered everything, Mr. Cole. You wouldn't sell yourself except to a higher bidder, and it isn't likely any one will outbid us. If such a situation should arise, however, we would know how to handle it. What is your price?"

"Suppose you name the price you are willing to pay?"

There was a craning of necks, and nods and subdued whispers passed around the circle. Evidently the seven construed his words as meaning that he was yielding. The spokesman unlocked

a drawer in front of him and placed a small package on the table.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars," he remarked impressively. "If you are in doubt as to the amount, or if you suspect that I am handing you stage money, you will be permitted to examine it in the light."

He handed the package to Cole. "Remember that this is only your retaining fee, so to speak. There will be lots more coming to you if you decide to throw in your lot with us."

Cole felt the crisp fiber of the bills. He did not doubt that the money was genuine, or that the package contained the exact amount mentioned by the spokesman. Whatever else these men might do, he did not think they would stoop to petty cheating. An odd sensation surged through him as he weighed the currency in the palm of his hand. It was more money than had ever before come within his reach. Of a sudden he remembered some of the things he had been compelled to deny himself because of his slender and uncertain income. Until this moment, when he held the wherewithal in his hand, it had not occurred to him that he was missing any of the good things in life. He had accepted his privations, as a matter of course, with a smile or a shrug, according to his mood of the moment.

For a few seconds longer he gave himself over to thrill of possession, and then he tossed the bundle of currency down on the table. "It isn't enough," he declared.

A chorus of murmurs went around the circular table. The veiled faces strained forward a little. Once again Cole fancied the spokesman's eyes were twinkling through the orifices in the mask.

"Splendid, Mr. Cole," said the man approvingly. "I didn't think twenty-five thousand would satisfy you, but I wanted to make sure. As a matter of

fact, if you had accepted such a paltry amount, we would have broken off the negotiations instantly. We don't want a man who holds himself cheap. Here"—again he opened the drawer in front of him—"is another twenty-five thousand. That makes fifty. Quite a neat sum for a man whose income last year was only a trifle over four thousand."

"How did you know that?"

"Income tax reports," said the man.

Cole took one bundle of currency in each hand. He was no longer marveling at the surprising sources of information that seemed to be open to these men. For the moment all his senses were centered on the wealth that lay in his palms. A flash of self-revelation came to him, and he was surprised and frightened by it. He had never known that mere money could give him such a delectable sensation. In the past, as a passive onlooker, he had smiled tolerantly at other men's scramble for wealth. With philosophic eyes he had watched the money-mad procession sweep by him. Now he found that the sheer touch of the currency sent a contagion through his veins, awakening strange emotions within him.

The sensation put an indefinable fear into him, fear of himself and the weakness he had just discovered. Of a sudden the currency seemed to scorch his palms. He shrugged, and the spell was broken. With an inward paroxysm he flung the money down on the table. "Not even that is enough," he announced in slightly dazed tones, like one just awakening from a dream.

The spokesman's head came up a little. With a shrug and an indistinct mutter he once more opened the drawer, but Cole laid a detaining hand on his sleeve.

"Wait!" he said quietly. "You are going ahead on the idea that every man has his price. You're mistaken. There isn't money enough in the whole United States treasury to buy me."

There came a hush, and then a ripple of commotion went around the table. It died instantly as the spokesman raised a silencing hand. He tilted his head back, and through the holes in the mask his eyes bored into Cole's face. For a time not a sound was heard in the room. Finally the spokesman gave a short, contemptuous laugh. "I see," he declared. "You're a weakling like most men. You're a slave to the absurd thing we call conscience. I had hoped that you were one of the rare exceptions."

"Wrong again," said Cole, smiling. "It isn't conscience. Anyway, I wouldn't call it that. It is only pride, a foolish pride, perhaps. I want to go through life knowing that I can look every man straight in the eye and tell him to go to the devil if necessary. I couldn't do that if I were to sell myself. I should become a despicable thing in my own eyes, and life wouldn't be worth living after that. I don't suppose you understand, but that's just how I feel."

Seven pairs of eyes were leveled at Cole's face as his short, crisp sentences fell on the tense air. Then came silence, a long and oddly vibrant silence during which Cole experienced an unaccountable feeling that his life hung in the balance. He could neither understand it nor trace it to its source, but the nameless sense of danger grew more distinct with every moment.

By instinct his hand went to the hip pocket in which he always carried a small, but reliable, pistol. Before his hand could touch the weapon a strange thing happened. The spokesman's arm described a slight movement in the dusk, and in a twinkling utter darkness fell. Cole stood in blackness so intense that it seemed as though he could touch it.

His fingers found the handle of the pistol, but in the next instant his hand fell to his side. In that impenetrable

darkness the weapon was of no more avail than a toy. He heard a faint scraping of chairs, then a patter of feet. He groped for the chair where the spokesman had sat, but it was empty. Gradually the faint sounds ceased, and then came an engulfing silence. It was as if every manifestation of life had been drained out of the blackness that surrounded him.

Silence — darkness — solitude. Cole, as he dropped into the spokesman's chair, felt as if the three words had suddenly acquired a new and more powerful significance.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TEMPTRESS SPEAKS.

**F**IVE minutes passed. Cole could no longer control his restlessness. He got up from the chair and went gropingly across the heavily carpeted floor. His footsteps made scarcely a sound, and he had a queer sensation that the darkness and silence were insinuating themselves into his very pores. It was as if a magic spell had fallen over him. He could no longer trust his reason or his senses.

He stopped short as a faint whisper went through the dead silence. With head thrown back and straining his ears he listened. Again the whisper came, trailing through the blackness like a disembodied breath. Some one was calling his name. He groped in the direction whence the sound came, and now he could hear it quite distinctly.

"Mr. Cole!"

Tracing the sound vibrations, he crossed the floor and brought up against a wall. Again his name was spoken, and now he had an impression that the speaker was only a few feet away. He thought he recognized the voice.

"Mr. Cole!"

His highly sensitized ears gauged and dissected each small fraction of a syl-



lable. He knew he was not mistaken. The voice belonged to the woman who had introduced herself by the absurdly inappropriate name of Miss Brown.

"Where are you?" he asked. He fumbled with his hands in the dark, but found nothing but emptiness. He turned and ran his fingers up and down the wall until he encountered a metallic object imbedded in the paneling. Again his name was called, and he gave a short laugh as he realized that the sounds were coming to him through the mouthpiece of a speaking tube. The touch of the cold metal against his fingers seemed to shatter an illusion. Simple though the contrivance was, it smacked of up-to-dateness. A sense of reality broke the spell which the weird events of the night had cast over him.

"Hello," he spoke into the mouthpiece. "You, Miss Brown?"

A brief pause, and then her voice came to him in hurried tones that bespoke intense excitement. "Yes, Mr. Cole. I must warn you. I feel responsible for your predicament. Awful things will happen if you persist in your headstrong course. You must abandon it and accept the proposition that was made to you. Otherwise——"

Her voice quavered and broke. The suspended sentence and the words she had left unspoken impressed Cole grimly. He could almost see her, white and shuddering at the other end of the speaking tube. Though he knew she was a clever actress, there was an earnestness in her tones that gave him pause.

"You mean these men will kill me unless I accept their vile terms?" he asked.

"Oh, they will do worse than that! They are terrible men, Mr. Cole, and they are in a desperate temper. Death, a hundred deaths, would be preferable to the thing they intend doing. Won't you come to your senses before it's too late? Oh, please——"

Cole laughed into the mouthpiece. "Compose yourself, Miss Brown. Don't worry on my account. I've been in tight corners before, and I always wriggled out of them somehow. I shall do so this time."

A sob sounded at the other end, and then all was quiet. Cole drew away from the speaking tube. It might have been only another bit of clever acting, but Miss Brown's warning had left him in a state of tingling suspense. She had hinted at dire things that were to happen to him, and Cole tried to tell himself that she had only been exercising her imagination. Such things belonged in the realm of romance and melodrama. It was laughable to think that they might happen on the top floor of a skyscraper, located close to the world's financial nerve center. The incongruity of it struck Cole as quite amusing.

He chuckled, but in the next instant he sharply caught his breath. A sound resembling that of a clicking lock reached his ears. He heard nothing more, but he had a feeling that some one had entered the room, that he was no longer alone. Instinctively he braced himself to resist an attack. His ears were keyed to catch the slightest sound; every muscle in his body had the tension of a cocked trigger.

He stood with his back against the wall, all his senses quivering alert. He could neither hear nor see, but he knew some one was steadily approaching from the farther end of the long room. Presently he could hear sounds of breathing, but the prowler's progress was still muffled by the heavy carpet. Now a little thud signified that the intruder had walked up against the circular table, so he could be no more than a few feet from where Cole stood. The fact that he could not see who it was that was coming toward him made the suspense nerve-racking.

Suddenly he thought of matches. He

searched his pockets, but the little case in which he usually carried them was empty. Somewhere in the room there must be an electric-light switch, but it was not likely he could find it in the dark.

He peered sharply into the blackness. Now his ears caught a pawing sound, like that of some one crawling on hands and knees. He bent forward a little, shoulders squared, for he knew the prowler was only a foot or two away. Evidently he hoped Cole was unaware of his entrance and expected to take his victim by surprise.

A fumbling hand swept Cole's knees, and he kicked out his foot with great force, foiling the attempt to trip him. A startled yell testified to the effectiveness of the kick, but in the next instant Cole knew that his adversary had risen to his feet and was changing his tactics. His fist struck out, but it landed on a body hard and firm as rock, and the only apparent result of the blow was a stinging sensation in his knuckles. He tried to strike again, but now his shoulders were seized in a powerful grip that pinned his arms to his side and rendered him helpless.

Cole's mind worked quickly, while the enormous weight of his adversary bore him down. Evidently he was a huge man, and his arms were hard as flails. Even if Cole's hands had been free, his fists would have made no stronger impression on the man's body than on a wall of brick. Though nimbler and more wiry than his opponent, Cole knew he could not match him in brute strength and physical endurance. His only hope lay in releasing his arms and, striking at the fellow's face, batter him into insensibility.

He writhed and wriggled in the powerful embrace of the gigantic arms, resisting the downward pressure till he felt as if his spine must snap. Inch by inch his opponent was bending him to his knees, and all the while his arms

felt as if they were caught between metal springs. In vain he put every ounce of strength into the struggle; the mountainous body of his adversary was constantly forcing him downward. Already his knees were touching the floor, and his neck felt as if it were being gradually wrenched out of shape.

His breath grew weak and fluttering. His heart pounded against his ribs like a trip hammer. In the blackness tiny specks whirled before his eyes. He knew the struggle must end soon, and the realization seemed to kindle a flame within him. An idea shot like a flash through his reeling mind.

Suddenly he grew limp in the sturdy arms of his opponent. With a grunt of satisfaction the latter let go his hold, and Cole lay flat and inert on his back. For a few moments he drank huge gulps of air into his straining lungs. Then, with the elastic swiftness of a spring suddenly released, he leaped to his feet. With one hand he located his adversary, with the other he drove a savage blow straight into the man's face.

A short cry of pain and rage broke from the other's lips. His hands fumbled at Cole's throat for a strangle hold, but the merciless hammering of the latter's fists drove him steadily backward. Whenever his fingers tightened around Cole's windpipe a rain of smashing blows to nose and mouth forced him to relax his hold and retreat a little farther toward the wall. Cole, his strength electrified by the joy of battle, did not notice that his knuckles were bruised. Time and again, with a sureness of aim that surprised himself, he drove them into the other's torn and mangled face. Already a stertorous breathing told that his adversary was becoming groggy. Cole summoned all his strength for a final knock-out blow.

He flung his arm backward, and in the same instant the other uttered a loud yell. Cole cut it short with a

crashing thrust of his fist. With a gasp his opponent went to the floor. For a moment he gave himself over to the thrill of victory, but in the next instant he was all alertness. A faint click signified that the door had opened, and now several pairs of feet were stealing swiftly across the floor.

Cole whirled around on his heels, but a stalwart form collided with him, nearly sweeping him off his feet. Another hurled himself upon him from behind, and a third jerked his legs from under him. With a sharp sense of bafflement, Cole fell headlong to the floor. He struck out with hands and feet, fighting with desperate vehemence, determined to inflict all the injury he could on his opponents.

But he was outnumbered three to one, and something of his strength had been spent in the earlier encounter. Defiantly he met the onslaught, but he was overpowered by numbers. Eventually they had him on his back, and then his adversaries shackled his hands and feet with stout cord. He thought they were handling him with strange gentleness, and he wondered if they were saving him for another ordeal. He remembered, as he was picked up and carried, that Miss Brown had said something about a fate worse than a hundred deaths.

In silence the little procession passed through a door, and presently Cole was placed on a cot. In a few moments the men walked out, and once more he was left alone in impenetrable darkness. Not a word had been spoken by his captors, and he had not obtained a single glimpse of their faces. The whole episode had been enacted in silence and under cover of darkness.

The door opened just as Cole's mind was shaking off the numbness that had seized it when he fell. Some one walked up to the cot where he lay. For a few moments no sound was heard, save the slow breathing of the two men.

Finally the other spoke, and Cole recognized the voice of the one who had acted as spokesman for the group around the circular table.

"You're an obstinate man, Mr. Cole. We have made you a very flattering proposition, and you have seen fit to reject it. I have come to offer you one more chance to comply with our wishes."

"And if I refuse," said Cole evenly, "you will kill me, I suppose. I am beginning to think you are quite capable of it."

"Oh no!" The other man laughed softly. "We know you are not the kind of man that's afraid of death. Something stronger than fear for your life is needed to bend you to our will. But we will bend you sooner or later. Make no mistake about that."

The words were spoken in a tone of calm assurance that impressed Cole against his will.

"How, if I may ask?"

"By a form of persuasion that is far more powerful than the fear of death. After all, death is nothing. Only a dip into a void. A little suffering, perhaps, and then nothingness. There are things that are far worse. Mr. Cole, did you ever stop to consider what your life would amount to if you should suddenly lose your mind?"

"What?" Cole gave an involuntary shudder.

"Suppose that keen mind of yours should become a blank. Suppose that your wonderful mental faculties were to desert you, that you were to become a leering, tottering wretch, inspiring loathing and horror in your fellow men. Can you picture such a fate, Mr. Cole? Death would be a thousand times more merciful, yet you would lack the incentive to kill yourself. What could be worse?"

Cole was silent. The darkness gave free rein to his imagination, and the

picture he saw sent a cold shiver down his spine.

"All that life means to you would be blotted out," the other went on with remorseless eloquence. "Instead of matching your wits against a man's problems, as at present, you would probably be devoting your time to childish amusements. Imagine yourself placing buttons in a row and building houses out of blocks. You would be dragging a useless and broken body through life until——"

"Stop it!" said Cole. "You're in more danger of losing your mind than I am. Yours is already a bit twisted, unless I'm mistaken."

"Don't fool yourself. Unless you give us a reasonable guarantee that you will comply with our wishes, you will be a grimacing lunatic by morning. A very simple operation on the brain will do it. Among those seven men whom you saw around the circular table is a noted surgeon. Everything, including the ether and the instruments, will be ready in a few minutes. There is still time for you to come to your senses."

In the back of Cole's mind was a hazy suspicion that he was dreaming, but the other's calm and softly penetrating tones gave him a feeling of reality.

"You wouldn't——" he began.

"Ah, wouldn't we? Just wait and see. Perhaps I can convince you."

Cole heard his footfalls cross the floor, and then a door opened and closed. For a few minutes he was alone, trying to arrange in an orderly process the odds and ends of the night's amazing happenings. His mind staggered before the task, and suddenly the door opened again. He had a vague impression that two men were entering, and that they were carrying a burden between them. They moved about quickly in the darkness, and now and then they whispered in tones so low that Cole could not hear them.

A light flashed on, and in the same instant the door closed. After the long period of utter darkness, the sudden glare had a blinding effect. Cole blinked his eyes, but after a little he opened them wide in astonishment, and the sight that met them drew a long, trembling gasp from his lips.

There was only one other man in the room, a shivering, gibbering wreck of a man whose grimacing features and hollow cackle sent a series of chill shivers through Cole's body. For a long time he stared into the leering, slowly twitching face before he was able to realize that the wretch, seated a few feet from his cot, was Malcolm Reeves.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### "YELLOW."

WHEN he first went to work on the case of Reeves' mysterious disappearance, Cole had been shown several photographs of the missing man. Along the numerous twistings of the trail he had carried with him a mental picture of a fine intellectual face, deep and rather somber eyes, a long nose, whose slenderness hinted at aristocratic breeding, a clean-cut jaw that denoted a great deal of aggressiveness, and lips that were a trifle too full and might have suggested sensuality, if the broad slope of the forehead had not conveyed a dominant impression of the student and the thinker. The picture in Cole's mind had represented a man about fifty years old, with a virile personality and quiet tastes.

The contrast, between his mental image of Malcolm Reeves and the miserable creature now sitting a few feet away was so sharp that the comparison gave Cole a profound shock. His clothing hung loosely over his bony frame, and he seemed to have aged decades in the three weeks that had elapsed since his disappearance. His shoulders were hunched down a little,

his head was bent forward, and the eyes stared rigidly into space, as if he were seeing something in the distance. His lips were twisted into a fixed, vacant smile that impressed Cole as the most hideous thing he had ever seen.

He tried to spring from the cot, momentarily forgetting that his arms and legs were bound. He sank back with a mutter of exasperation. Not much imagination was required to guess that the men who had brought about his own plight were also responsible for the condition of Malcolm Reeves.

Again something drew his glance to the insane man. The revolting picture seemed to hold Cole with an uncanny fascination. "What's happened?" he inquired, realizing a moment later that he might as well have addressed a wooden image.

Reeves was still gazing fixedly at the opposite wall. There was a look of insane glee in his shrunken eyes. He bent forward a little more, and then his lips began to move. "Yellow," he said. "Pretty yellow!"

The soft-spoken words and the giggle that followed caused Cole to shudder. He could see that Reeves' mind, or the pitiful remnant of it, was reveling in some childish fancy. The wreckage of a once splendid intellect was horrible to behold.

"What do you see?" he asked, wondering whether the man was capable of any form of response.

The other's face brightened, but Cole thought it was only an external glow, a reflected light rather than one kindled from within. He recoiled inwardly as another stream of giggling mirth flowed from the insane man's lips.

"Yellow," said Reeves again. "Pretty yellow!"

His expression became more rapt. His smile grew broader and deeper, but to Cole it seemed nothing more than a contortion of facial muscles. He won-

dered whether the two words were all that was left of the man's vocabulary. He felt a desire to test him and see if there was not a remaining scrap of intellect that could be aroused.

"Listen, Mr. Reeves," he said sharply. "When did you last see Professor Carmody?"

The giggling ended in a quick intake of breath. Reeves' smile faded as abruptly as if an invisible hand had blotted it out. Watching him intently, Cole could see that his question had touched a slumbering chord in the man's mind. Fear and something akin to hate blazed in the shrunken eyes. It was a startling transformation, and Cole observed it in wonder. He had mentioned Carmody's name on the spur of a vagrant impulse, wondering whether it would awaken a recollection in the débris of Reeves' intellect. The effect was far beyond his expectations.

"Carmody!" said the insane man, and each syllable cut like a knife through the silence. "Carmody!"

He drew a shaking hand across his brow, and Cole fancied something was stirring in the dark corners of his mind. His face took on a strained look, as if he was trying to exercise the shattered remnants of his intellect. There was a flicker of returning sanity, a feeble ray of awakening reason.

It did not last long. Reeves gave a little shudder, there was a trembling gleam in his eye, then the fatuous grin came back to his lips, and once more he mumbled in rapt tones: "Yellow. Pretty yellow!"

Cole turned his head away with a shiver. His experiment had shown the hopelessness of the insane man's condition, but it had also suggested several things to Cole. A recollection of a terrifying nature seemed to be buried in the wreckage of Reeves' mind, and evidently it had something to do with Professor Carmody. Cole had felt certain for a long time that the professor was

responsible for the man's disappearance, but he had not cared to jeopardize his case by taking action before he had sufficient evidence in his possession, as a premature move on his part might have brought disastrous results. At that time he had not been sure whether the missing man was dead or alive. If still living, his safety might be endangered by hasty action, for Carmody would not hesitate to kill him if he thought it advisable. So Cole had waited, patiently biding his time and slowly, but surely, strengthening the meshes in which he hoped to entangle the professor.

Now Cole wondered to what extent his course had been correct. The maniac's startling reaction to the mention of Carmody's name seemed to confirm at least a part of his theory. What he could not understand was how Reeves, granting that the professor was responsible for his abduction, happened to be in this place of dark intrigue and baffling mystery. Evidently there must be a connecting link between Professor Carmody and the seven masked men who had sat around the circular table. Likely as not they were accomplices, banded together for the attainment of some secret object. That would at least explain why the seven men were so determined that Cole should drop the Carmody case, though it explained nothing else.

A slight sound interrupted the speculations with which he had tried to relieve the tension he felt. He turned his head a little and saw that the door had opened a crack. A hand was inserted through the narrow opening. For a moment it fumbled over the wall, then came a faint click, and once more the room was dark. Men were moving about in the blackness for a time, and then all was quiet. The silence seemed to indicate that Cole was alone in the room, but he had an indefinable feeling that some one was standing beside his

cot. In a moment his impression was confirmed.

"Mr. Cole," said a voice, and he recognized it at once, "I trust that what you have just seen has put you in a more reasonable frame of mind. Unless you comply with our wishes we shall do to you what we did to Malcolm Reeves."

Cole strained spasmodically against the cords that fettered his hands and feet. In the darkness his imagination sketched a picture of Reeves' hideously grinning face. For a moment he could almost hear the maniac's insane cackle. He banished the vision by sheer force of will.

"There's a great deal of finesse about your methods," he ironically observed. "I guessed, of course, that Reeves was brought in here to serve as an object lesson to me. It was quite impressive."

"And you have reconsidered?" asked the other hopefully.

Cole lay absolutely still on his back. It was all he could do to exclude the disturbing pictures of Reeves from his mind. Whenever a glimpse of it came back to him he felt a weakness that put him in fear of himself. "Not exactly," he managed to say in steady tones. "I have merely been taking my own measure, as it were, trying to determine whether the loss of pride and self-respect is worse than the loss of one's sanity."

"And what is your conclusion?"

"I am still in doubt. There are so many ways of looking at the situation. For instance, one thing to be considered is that lost self-respect may be regained, while insanity is in most instances incurable."

"Excellent," murmured the other. "That's a very rational way of looking at the proposition. Such being the case it should not be difficult for you to choose between the two alternatives."

"But it is," protested Cole. "There is still another thing to be considered.

Suppose I were to accept your terms. All I could give you would be my word of honor that I would live up to them."

"Quite sufficient," the other put in. "We know you are not the kind of man who goes back on his word."

"Thanks," said Cole sarcastically. "Just the same one's word of honor is a rather intangible thing. You can't bind me with a contract. It would not be legal, no matter how ingeniously worded, and it might incriminate yourselves. I am not in position to give you any pledges. You would have to be content with my bare promise. It would be sufficient in any ordinary case, but circumstances alter everything. I realize I am at the mercy of a gang of unprincipled scoundrels."

"Your epithets don't hurt us in the least," remarked the other man icily.

"Didn't expect they would. But don't you see that, under the circumstances, I would have no hesitancy at all about giving you a promise that I didn't intend to keep? I am not a bit quixotic, and I am too practical to indulge in cheap heroics. I have no ambition to become the hero of a tawdry melodrama. In order to escape a fate like the one you inflicted on Reeves, I would promise anything, and so would every other man whose head isn't full of moonshine. You follow me?"

"Perfectly. You are trying to make out that we have no hold over you. Your reasoning isn't bad, but you forget one thing. As it happens, we are in a position to exact a pledge from you, one that will hold you to us for life."

"What is it?"

The other gave a soft laugh. "You saw what a hopeless case Reeves is. There's no reason why he should go on living any longer. The merciful thing to do is to put him out of his misery."

"You mean——"

"Exactly, Mr. Cole. You are to seal

the promise you give us by hustling Reeves off to a better world. We have planned it so that we will be able to prove that you killed him. Having incriminated yourself to that extent, and with the evidence in our possession, we need have no fear that you will go back on your word of honor. And now that we thoroughly understand each other, I must ask you to decide promptly. Our time is valuable."

A few moments passed in silence, but to Cole they were like weeks. Never before in all his life had so many thoughts and emotions been crowded into such a narrow space of time. He felt weak and shaken when it was over, but his voice was clear. "My answer is no," he declared. "If I were able I would give it to you in a more emphatic manner."

"Sorry, Mr. Cole," replied the other. "I won't accept your decision as final, however. I trust you will reconsider before you become unconscious under the ether."

With that he went out, leaving an ominous silence behind him. Cole tore frantically at the cords around his wrists, but they only cut the deeper into his flesh. He could see no escape from the awful fate that awaited him. Time and again the picture of Reeves' fatuously grinning face came back to him, causing him to writhe in mental torment. A tempting voice seemed to whisper in his ear, turning his thoughts into strange channels. To end a life that was worse than a living death appeared not such a dreadful thing to do. Cole himself would have preferred to die rather than suffer a fate like Reeves'. If he should ever fall into such a condition he would consider the man a benefactor who ended his misery.

He shook himself violently. A clammy perspiration was bathing his forehead. With a mental and physical paroxysm he brushed away the tempta-

tion to which he had nearly yielded a moment ago. Footsteps were approaching the door, and he knew a critical moment was at hand. Something within him that was stronger than reason and logic shrank from the mere thought of taking Reeves' life. He wondered if there was no other alternative.

He tried to take a calm view of the situation. Though his hands and feet were tightly bound his persecutors evidently had not thought it necessary to strap him to the cot, since he would soon be under the influence of the ether. By experimenting he found that he could turn over on his sides and, thanks to the fact that his hands had been tied in front instead of behind, he was able to move his arms up and down and in a horizontal direction. Since he could not use his hands he did not see how he could turn this circumstance to his advantage, yet it continued to tantalize his imagination.

The door opened, and his ears told him that several men were entering the room. For a time they moved about in the darkness, as if making preparations of some sort. After a little the footsteps receded, and then the door opened and closed once more. Cole guessed that all but one or two of the men had withdrawn. After another brief delay, the lights flashed on once more, this time illuminating a different scene.

Reeves was back in the room, occupying the same chair in which he had sat the other time, but now his limbs were as tightly manacled as Cole's own. He moved his head slowly from side to side, as if sensing something unusual in the air, but his vacant stare showed that he had not the faintest inkling of what was going on.

After a glance at him, Cole looked away. Not far from the cot stood a tall man with a black beard that covered nearly his entire face. He was holding a number of surgical imple-

ments to the light, giving each one a critical inspection before he placed it on a small table with a glass top that stood beside the cot. Cole could not restrain a shudder as he saw how calmly the man examined the sinister-looking little tools. There was a professional air about him that in Cole's mind stamped him as a surgeon.

Again his glance moved to the insane man, whose dull gaze seemed to be taking in each detail of the scene. The meaning of the little knives and the presence of the black-bearded man was terrifyingly clear.

The surgeon placed the last of the knives on the table beside the cot. They lay there in plain view, so close to Cole that if his hands had been free he could have reached out and touched them. The long, slender metal blades gleamed diabolically in the electric lights, and he wondered if they had been placed like that for the sole purpose of impressing their hideous significance upon him.

The black-bearded man came closer to the cot, and Cole caught a full view of his face. He had seen it once before, though only dimly, for the surgeon was one of the seven who had sat in the dusk at the circular table. He had worn a mask then, but the black beard, the high forehead and the bald spot on top of his head were unmistakable. Now his features were unveiled, and in this circumstance Cole saw a grim significance. The surgeon no longer had any reason to fear that Cole might recognize him if they should meet again.

He stopped beside the glass-topped table and, with hands clasped at his back, fixed a tranquil gaze on the reclining man. "You have one more chance, Mr. Cole," he remarked in a casual tone. "Hadn't you better reconsider your refusal?"

Cole looked up into the bearded face with a feeling that there was something peculiar about it, but his mind was too agitated to analyze the impression. In



a playful manner the surgeon picked up one of the knives, holding it so that the light flashed against the keen blade.

Cole was trying to frame an answer, but just then something drew his gaze to the insane man. Reeves was straining forward in his chair, bending his weight against the fettering cords. From where he sat he had a clear view of both Cole and the surgeon, and his eyes were fixed with wild intensity on the knife in the latter's hand. Time and again he opened his lips, but the only sound that came was a hoarse rattle in his throat.

"Well, Mr. Cole?"

The surgeon, paying no attention to the lunatic, looked impatiently at Cole. Reeves, with mouth gaping and features horribly distorted, continued to stare at the knife.

"You refuse?" The surgeon waited a moment longer for an answer; then, with a shrug, he replaced the knife and stepped aside. Cole felt a sudden rush of blood to his head. If he was to escape a fate worse than death he must act at once. He spurred his wits to think of something to do. A tinkling, like that of a jar or a bottle being moved, sounded in the room. Again he bent his mind to the seemingly hope-

less task of finding a way out, but, even in this moment of desperate peril, he could not take his gaze from the insane man's face.

Reeves sat with shoulders hunched up and head turned a little to one side. Now and then his mouth twisted at the corners; from time to time a shudder broke the tension of his figure. A series of slight gurgling sounds fell on the stillness at intervals. All the while his eyes, with a smoldering something in their depths, were fixed on the knives spread out on the glass-topped table.

Suddenly Cole's body executed a little writhing motion. His nostrils sucked in a strong, sickening odor. With a sponge in his hand, the surgeon was coming toward the cot.

Once more, in a delirium of suspense, Cole glanced at the insane man. The quick dilation of Reeves' nostrils told he also had noticed the ether. The chair creaked as he bent his weight against the cords. There was a look on his face that Cole felt would follow him through the night of madness that threatened to engulf him. Reeves' chest heaved violently, his whole body seemed to be rocked by a tumultuous emotion, and finally a long and oddly vibrant cry broke from his lips.

**To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.**



## CHINAMAN ACCUSED OF SHOPLIFTING

**T**O Lee Sing, a Chinaman, twenty-five years old, must be given the unenviable distinction of being the first of his race to be arrested in New York on a charge of shoplifting. Lee Sing, who was dressed in well-fitting American clothes, was accused by Miss Emily Frawley, a department-store detective, of wandering from counter to counter and taking several small bottles of perfume, some cutlery, and a pocketbook. She followed him from the store to the street and had a police detective who was near arrest him.

# Mr. Clackworthy Goes to Jail

by Christopher B. Booth

Author of "What the Bank Messenger Planned," etc.

**R**ELAXED comfortably in the depths of a big leather chair in the luxurious lobby of the Achmore Hotel, Mr. Amos Clackworthy sighed in deep contentment. He had just finished a meal which exactly suited his epicurean tastes. The Early Bird had shared the same delicious meal, but food could not appease his gnawing appetite for an adventure; it had been some weeks now since the master confidence man had engaged in that always interesting pastime of dollar hunting.

"Ah, James," murmured Mr. Clackworthy, "that filet of sole was ambrosia fit for the gods."

"Huh!" grunted The Early Bird. "Th' kinda fish I'm interested in right now is—suckers. Come on, boss; bait th' hook an' let's give some dollar-grabbin' goof th' chance t' nibble."

Mr. Clackworthy smiled tolerantly.

"James," he complained good-naturedly, "you are certainly a restless soul. It seems that you can never declare a truce with careless bank balances."

"Aw, what's th' use of havin' a wise noodle like yours if you don't use it? When a guy's got a money-makin' think-tank, he's gotta keep it oiled or it's gonna get rusty."

"Unfortunately, James," and the master confidence man smiled, "I do seem to get a bit rusty at times. Just now, for instance, I have thumbed my

list of prospects in vain; I don't seem to be able to get hold of a single lead. At that I am not sorry, for I am getting terribly behind in my reading."

The Early Bird groaned as there arose before him the dismal picture of Mr. Clackworthy sitting in the library of his Sheridan Road apartment for countless hours, nose buried between the covers of some classical volume; he was very jealous of the masters, for they took much of the time which, so James told himself, could be so much more profitably turned to more practical matters.

However, what further entreaty The Early Bird might have been about to make was abruptly sidetracked as his gaze wandered to the hotel entrance and paused at the sight of an arriving guest.

"Holy pink elephants!" he exclaimed in Mr. Clackworthy's ear. "There's 'Chicago Charlie!' He must be gettin' up in th' world, stoppin' at this swell joint."

"One of your erstwhile friends, I presume, James," responded Mr. Clackworthy. He referred to his coworker's former days, when The Early Bird was not above burgling a safe or turning his hand to various other violent means of annexing the coin which are frowned upon by the law.

"Friend!" sputtered The Early Bird. "Boss, of course I forgive you for you don't know Chicago Charlie, but that is

sure an insult. That guy a friend of mine? Ain'tcha ever heard of Chicago Charlie? But then I forgot that you didn't used t' pal around with th' same bunch I did.

"Honest, boss, I've got every respect in th' world for a square crook; y' know what I mean. But that goof is so crooked that he'd make a corkscrew look as straight as a yardstick. He's so crooked he's gotta read a paper upside down. Alongside Chicago Charlie, Jesse James would of got a bid t' this here Diogenes guy's party fer honest homos."

"Your vehemence piques my interest." Mr. Clackworthy chuckled, casting a glance of interest to the big, heavy-jowled man who had now reached the clerk's desk and was writing his name in the hotel register. "Suppose you tell me something about him. I judge that he must have—er—nicked you for your roll, as you would say."

"I've sure got th' old bowie knife all whetted up for that guy," said The Early Bird. "Th' only time I ever beat th' ponies for a hundred-to-one shot this here Charlie was makin' book out t' th' old Chicago race track. A friend slips me some live dope about a little spindle-legged filly what looked like she was sufferin' from th' sleepin' sickness. So I parks a century into Chicago Charlie's keepin'. An' believe me, boss, them was th' days when a five spot looked as big as th' State of Kansas.

"Well, this little mare grasshopper gets t' th' home stretch about three train lengths ahead of th' field, an' I stands t' collect ten thousand smackers from Chicago Charlie's betting emporium. Does I get it? Huh! I got it all right—in th' neck. Charlie skips out an' grabs th' first rattler for parts unknown! I don't even get my century back.

"Aw, I ain't th' only guy that was handed th' double cross by him. Be-

fore he blowed th' race track that time he'd been mixed up in a coupla dozen crooked races."

"It must have been some years, then, since you have seen him," remarked Mr. Clackworthy. "It does credit to your memory, James. If I am any judge, this Charlie person has now risen considerably above the level of a crooked bookmaker. He carries himself with that assurance which belongs to a man of affairs."

"Well, y' can lay good odds that he's with a gang of counterfeiterers, or head of a trust what's got th' monopoly on stealin' pennies outta blind men's cups or somethin' like that," retorted The Early Bird spitefully. He was staring at Chicago Charlie's luggage, his brow wrinkled in deep thought.

"If he ain't swiped some goof's baggage—which wouldn't surprise me none—he's changed his moniker," he said. "See them initials—'J. H.,' they says; an' in th' days when I knowed him, his name was Charlie Batterson. Yeah; them's his grips aw'right. He's pointin' 'em out t' th' bell hop. It says 'J. M., Swaneetown, Indiana.'"

Mr. Clackworthy referred to his carefully card-indexed memory.

"Swaneetown, eh?" he murmured. "If I mistake not, James, that is the name of the town which has enjoyed such a spectacular boom of late. A number of factories have erected large plants there; it is something less than a hundred miles from here, I believe. No doubt, James, Charlie is doing quite well. Humph!"

The master confidence man lowered his eyelids meditatively and thoughtfully tugged at the neatly trimmed point of his Vandyke beard.

"James," he said slowly, "it may be that our dining here this evening was nothing short of providential. Who knows but that we may be able to find a way whereby we can collect this old debt which Chicago Charlie owes you—

with appropriate interest and—humph—an adequate fee for my services as a collector.”

“Boss!” exclaimed The Early Bird eagerly. “Y’ ain’t stringin’ me? Honest, boss, will ya throw th’ old harpoon into that guy; will ya?”

“It’s a bad idea, James, to weigh your fish before you have so much as baited your hook,” responded Mr. Clackworthy cautiously, “but we most certainly shall look into this little matter.”

## II.

“Chicago Charlie has certainly developed into a most shrewd person,” remarked Mr. Clackworthy as, from the window in his room of The Swanecetown House, he stared across the nondescript business street which was cluttered with all sorts of building material such as marks a growing town in the making.

“Meanin’,” said The Early Bird with a discouraged sigh, “that you ain’t been able t’ figger out th’ ways an’ means of liftin’ a bunch of his kale.”

“You have correctly stated the matter, James,” replied the master confidence man, “but, to paraphrase a bit of sound philosophy, where there is money there is always hope—of getting some of it.

“I have now spent some hours making guarded inquiries regarding our debtor. As you know, he has buttoned the cloak of respectability tightly about his shoulders. He has taken unto himself the name of John Harley, and he is president of the bank of Swanecetown. He came here when the boom started and purchased considerable portions of real estate for practically a song.

“He has become a power in municipal politics through his money and the strangle hold which he has gotten on local affairs. I understand that all of the city officials literally eat from his

hand. In addition to being president of the bank, he has numerous other investments. He has developed into a shrewd business man, and not any too scrupulous, I take it.

“He is, I judge, an extremely suspicious man, which will make it very difficult for me to win his confidence—the first necessity, of course, if I am to reduce the plethora of his roll.”

“So y’ gotta call it off, huh?” The Early Bird said mournfully.

“Did you ever know me to quit, James?” reproved Mr. Clackworthy. “I did not intend to deluge your hopes with the cold water of discouraging facts; I merely reported the situation as I have found it. It really makes the game only the more interesting. I have not quit, old dear; I have just begun.

“These facts which I have recited to you I have gathered about town. I am going over to Harley’s bank—we might as well respect his alias for the present—and open up an account.”

“Gonna put your kale in Chicago Charlie’s bank?” demanded The Early Bird. “Don’cha do it. We come down here t’ trim him, not t’ let him trim us; remember what I told y’ about him goin’ south with my ten thousand smackers. Keep your dough in your own kick; it’s safer.”

“Tut, James; the bank is perfectly safe. All banks are protected by State guarantees these days. And a clever fellow like Chicago Charlie isn’t going to risk wrecking a bank. I’ll be back presently and I may, perchance, have discovered his vulnerable point.”

Following the principle that nothing succeeds like success, Mr. Clackworthy had long since discovered that the most powerful magnet to attract money was—money. In pursuance thereof he had brought along a generous working capital.

Entering the bank of Swanecetown, the master confidence man found John Harley seated in front of an elaborate

mahogany desk within the open, brass-railed space adjoining the tellers' cages. The banker who had once answered to the name of Chicago Charlie was a big, heavy-jawed man, florid and beefy. He had learned the trick of narrowing his eyes to mere slits until he was like a man peering through a crack in a window blind; he could look into a face without giving any hint of his own emotions. It rather gave the impression of a man asleep, except for the glinting of the light against his curtained retina. His mind was very much awake.

"My name is Clackworthy," explained the master confidence man; "I wish to open an account with your bank; it will be small for the present—only ten thousand dollars."

"Check?" demanded the self-styled Mr. Harvey with bankerlike caution; unintroduced strangers who opened accounts with checks were, of course, open to inquiry.

"Cash," replied Mr. Clackworthy just as briefly.

"Aw right," said Harley. "Glad to have your account. Thinking of going into business in Swaneetown?"

"That remains to be decided." Mr. Clackworthy smiled. He was aware that Chicago Charlie, through his half-closed eyes, was subjecting him to the most minute scrutiny. And he realized with a vague feeling of discouragement that fooling Chicago Charlie was going to prove a difficult task. The man was, without doubt, suspicious and practical; he had learned caution in the hard school of life, where the lessons are not easily forgotten.

And, had he known the thoroughness of the banker's classification, Mr. Clackworthy would have been still further discouraged.

"A fox, this fellow," was Harley's appraisal. "Can't sell him any real estate at inflated values; can't sell him any stock that isn't on the level. Can't

be picked for a sucker; no use wasting any time on him."

Which was a disappointment to Chicago Charlie; every newcomer who deposited money in the bank of Swaneetown was at once sized up with a view to swelling the size of the Harley exchequer. Straightway he decided that it was going to be a cold day in August when he would try to do business with this Mr. Clackworthy.

And the master confidence man, with that intuitive sixth sense of his, realized at least a small part of Chicago Charlie's skittish distrust. It would have to be a most unusual trap indeed that would lure Banker Harley.

### III.

It really could not be considered strange, inasmuch as The Early Bird had instantly recognized Chicago Charlie after nearly fifteen years, that Chicago Charlie, in turn, should recognize The Early Bird. The bank president had dropped into the Swaneetown House for lunch.

Glancing across the dining room, he nodded politely to Mr. Clackworthy as is due a man who has deposited ten thousand dollars in cash the day before. Almost at the same instant he got a good look at Mr. Clackworthy's companion. He started unpleasantly.

"The Early Bird!" he murmured, for James Early had, after all, changed very little since the time when the police were considerably interested in his movements and when James, with the capital which he had secured through extremely dubious methods, had been a regular patron at the race track.

Now the self-styled John Harley congratulated himself that he had successfully erased the unsavory pages of his past. In physical appearance he had changed a good deal; his body had thickened, his face was more full, older. After his sudden disappearance from

his betting stall at the Chicago race track he had gone far West; he thought that he had thoroughly done away with Chicago Charlie. As he stared covertly at The Early Bird he detected The Early Bird looking just as covertly at him; and something told him that there was recognition in James' eyes.

The Early Bird pressed Mr. Clackworthy's foot beneath the table.

"He's lamped me, boss," he whispered. "He's jerry t' me."

Mr. Clackworthy frowned in annoyance; he had thoughtlessly neglected to take into consideration the possibility that Chicago Charlie would dine at their hotel. It had not been his intention that the banker should see him and his coworker together.

Banker Harley hurried through his meal, keeping his face averted. He left the hotel and went back to his bank. For half an hour he sat, pudgy hands folded across his expansive waistcoat, chewing a dead cigar; he was thinking many unpleasant thoughts.

It was, of course, possible that he had been mistaken; that The Early Bird had not recognized him at all. Also, it was barely possible that The Early Bird carried with him no spirit of revenge, and perhaps even forgotten the incident of the welched hundred-to-one shot so many years before.

And what if The Early Bird had not forgotten or forgiven and did tell what he knew? He could brazen it out, deny that he was the former race-track booky in case The Early Bird did show a vindictive spirit; surely his word would be accepted against that of a former safe blower. But even at the best, it was an unpleasant business, would shake the local confidence in his bank if the story got abroad. If the story was believed, it might even force his resignation as president of the institution.

The crux of the whole trouble, the thing that made it so dangerous was

that Chicago Charlie had not always been so wise and so cautious as he now was. He had done some very foolish things at various and sundry times, with the result that the police had "mugged" him. If the thing got far enough for that to leak out—— He shuddered at the thought.

Presently Banker Harley arrived at a decision and reached for the telephone and called "Swaneetown twenty," which was the police station. He even chuckled a little at the cleverness of his inspiration.

"Givney," he said to the chief of police, "I want you to come over to the bank right away."

Chief Givney came and lost no time about it; Harvey's political machine had put him in office. The banker led Givney back to the private office and closed the door.

"Givney," he grunted, "you want to continue to hold your job, don't you?"

The chief, looking a bit frightened, nodded vigorously.

"Aw right, Givney, it's up to you. You do what I say—and keep your mouth shut. Understand?" Again the chief nodded.

"Now, Givney, you listen to me, and do what I tell you; your job depends on it."

Givney listened.

#### IV.

"Boss," said The Early Bird as he and Mr. Clackworthy sat in the lobby of the Swaneetown House, "somethin' seems t' tell me that we ain't gonna trim Chicago Charlie for so much as a solitary Lincoln. Le's grab th' rattler for th' big burg."

"Not for another day or so, James," responded Mr. Clackworthy. "We must not accept defeat so easily; I will admit——"

He paused as a man sauntered up to them.

"Beg your pardon," said the stranger. "You two fellows look as if time were hanging heavily on your hands, and I'm trying to drum up a little poker game. Oh, I'm not a professional; three of the boys are willing but three-handed draw is a little like tiddlewinks, you know. Thought I'd invite you to sit in."

Mr. Clackworthy gave the man a swift glance of appraisal; certainly he was not a professional card sharper, and besides he was himself no novice at the game. He liked poker, and it offered a welcomed opportunity to pass away a few hours.

"What do you say, James?" he asked of his coworker.

The Early Bird eagerly assented, for he was no slouch with the cards even in a professional game.

"I gotcha," he said. "I'm gonna get th' chance t' make expenses on this trip anyhow. Lead th' way."

Mr. Clackworthy, however, became suddenly alert as he noted the look of satisfaction which flashed over the stranger's face; he felt instinctively that there was something behind it. His curiosity overcame any cautious misgivings he felt. The stranger led the way upstairs and to one of the ordinary guest rooms. Presently two others joined the party and the game got under way. As poker games go, it was a rather tame business.

The five had been playing less than an hour when there was a rap at the door. One of the players got from his chair and turned back the key. Instantly the door was shoved open and Chief of Police Givney faced the five players in all of his official sternness.

"You're pinched," he announced, "for gamblin'. Line up there; as soon as I get this here evidence together we go down to th' station."

"Now don't that beat the devil!" exclaimed The Early Bird. "Caught with th' goods—an' me winner enough t' buy th' tickets home!"

Mr. Clackworthy knew that it was a frame-up; he and The Early Bird had been deliberately led into this game for the purpose of arrest but, as quick as he was at probing situations, he admitted that the motive proved too deep for him. The other three players took the matter cheerfully enough, as became true sports, and the journey was begun to the police station.

At the station all five were booked and motioned to a bench.

"I ain't goin' to lock you fellows up," he explained. "I'll take you over to the police magistrate. Want t' call a lawyer? It ain't much use; I got you with th' evidence, an' you'll draw fines anyhow."

The police magistrate's office was directly across the street and, presently, Chief Givney led them thither.

The arraignment proceeded as is customary in such cases as Chief Givney formally presented his charge, displayed the evidence, and giving his details of his raid—made, he explained, when a guest in the adjoining room had notified him over the telephone that a game was in progress. Quite naturally the five prisoners had no defense.

The magistrate, a pompous man who took his judicial duties with great seriousness, glared down upon the five offenders.

"There's been too much gamblin' goin' on in this town," he declared with a nasal twang. "I've got to take harsh measures to stamp out this evil. Now, three of these prisoners is home boys, their faces is familiar. I fine these three"—and he read off their names—"ten dollars an' costs."

Promptly the three guilty men produced pocketbooks and paid their fines.

"And now," went on the magistrate, "let's see about these other two. Strangers in Swaneetown, huh? Professional gamblers, like as not."

The Early Bird, enjoying the humor of the situation, shook his head; Mr.

Clackworthy, likewise, denied the imputation that he was a professional gambler.

"You'd lie about it anyhow," retorted the judge witheringly. "Now this man here has got a hard face—a hard face." He pointed an accusing finger at The Early Bird. "He looks like a criminal t' me."

Chief Givney stared intently at James and simulated a start of surprise.

"Your honor," he said, "you are right. This man is a criminal. I remember seein' his picture in th' rogue's gallery in Chicago. I've got a good memory; I can even tell you his name. He give th' name of Brown when I arrested him. His name's James Early, alias Th' Early Bird. He's—a desprit character."

The Early Bird's face paled slightly at this sudden turn of events. Mr. Clackworthy, a police prisoner for the first time in his life, began to understand that Chicago Charlie was at the bottom of this; he had, of course, inspired the raid on the poker game and had supplied Givney with what was now ancient history concerning his co-worker. But what was Chicago Charlie's game? He could not quite fathom it.

"What have you to say for yourself?" the magistrate inquired crisply. The Early Bird floundered for a reply.

"I've pleaded guilty t' gamblin', ain't I?" he demanded weakly. "I'm willin' to fork up th' coin for th' fine. Ain't that enough?"

"I haven't indicated that I would let you off with a fine," retorted the judge. "The penalty for this offense is a fine of not less than five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, or a jail sentence of ninety days, or both. And don't you talk back to this court! Have you got a police record?"

"I—I want a lawyer," stammered

The Early Bird. "I ain't gettin' an even break. I refuse to answer."

"It's too late for a lawyer now," decreed the judge; "you've already pleaded guilty; you can't even appeal from a plea of guilty. So you refuse to answer, eh? That means it's so."

"You and this other prisoner here are together, huh? I guess you're both crooks—you look it. If it wasn't for puttin' the county to th' expense of feedin' a couple of city crooks, I'd give you both the limit. We don't want crooks like you in our town."

"I fine you each one hundred dollars and costs and three months in jail—and set aside the sentence, providin' that you buy tickets to Chicago and that th' chief of police sees you off on the four o'clock train. Call next case."

The Early Bird breathed a sigh of relief; he hadn't realized that a poker game could have such threateningly dangerous consequences. Mr. Clackworthy, however, refused to let the matter end there.

"If the court please," he said calmly, "I deny your right to attempt to drive my friend and me from town in this fashion. I have a right to remain here, and I shall—even if it be in jail."

The Early Bird stared at Mr. Clackworthy in horror.

"Boss!" he whispered hoarsely. "You've gone off your onion! For th' love of Pete——"

Mr. Clackworthy smiled cheerfully.

"Wake up, James!" he murmured. "Don't you see through it? Chicago Charlie did this—he's afraid of us! We've got him where we want him. He's furnished me with a plan, and I think we're going to collect, after all. I've never been in jail before, old dear, but I wouldn't let Chicago Charlie get away with this—not for a year in jail."

The judge, after sputtering for one speechless moment at Mr. Clackworthy's surprising stand, found voice.

"Lock him up!" he ordered.



## V.

The Early Bird, as he always did, bowed to Mr. Clackworthy's wishes and, likewise, refused to shake the dust of Swaneetown from his new twenty-dollar patent-leather shoes. However, he was forlorn when he learned that he must bide his time to be taken into his master's confidence as to the motive of his practically voluntary incarceration; they were locked in separate cells.

As the steel door clanged shut behind him, Mr. Clackworthy, through the bars, proffered the turnkey a neatly folded twenty-dollar bill.

"I want a little information," he said. "I want to know what kind of a lawyer Edward Stone is?"

"Punk," replied the turnkey. "He's just a young fellow and pretty near starvin' to death, I reckon."

"What relationship has he to Henry Stone, publisher of the Swaneetown *Courier*?"

"Brothers they are."

"So I guessed." Mr. Clackworthy nodded. "Call up Lawyer Stone for me and tell him that there's a hundred-dollar retainer fee waiting for him the minute he gets here."

"Then he'll get here before I can get the receiver hung up," shrewdly replied the turnkey.

The prediction may have failed by a few minutes, but Lawyer Stone did not waste any time. He came back to Mr. Clackworthy's cell, a neatly shabby man of perhaps thirty. He took the hundred-dollar bill which Mr. Clackworthy gave him, fingering it fondly.

"Stone," began the master confidence man, "your brother owns *The Courier*?"

"Yes, but——"

"I happened to be looking over it back in the hotel this morning. I saw your name in the news columns and the boost the paper gave you made me lean to the conclusion that he must be your

brother. No, don't interrupt; all of this is quite pertinent.

"Let me ask you another question: How does your brother and Banker Harley get along?"

"You say this is—pertinent?" exclaimed the attorney. "Maybe so; anyhow, you've given me a hundred, and I don't know any easier way to earn it than hand you out the family secrets. Henry *has* to get along with Harley; Harley has a mortgage on the paper."

"And the paper isn't exactly a newspaper bonanza, I take it," went on Mr. Clackworthy. "The lack of advertising patronage would indicate that your brother is having a tough time of it."

"It does look rather sickly, doesn't it?" agreed the lawyer. "Say, what's the idea anyhow?"

For answer, Mr. Clackworthy drew closer to the barred door and whispered into Lawyer Stone's ear for several minutes. When he had finished the attorney was grinning.

"I'll talk it over with Henry," he said. "I am dead sure he'll do it; it will save the paper for him. Henry would commit murder for three thousand dollars right now. He hasn't been able to rake up last week's pay roll."

That same afternoon, less than three hours after the young lawyer's consultation with Mr. Clackworthy, small boys began to flood the streets of Swaneetown with handbills. They read:

## A GREAT SENSATION!!!

*The Courier* takes pleasure in announcing that in its issue to-morrow, and running every week thereafter, it will begin the publication of a sensation series of articles exposing the inside secrets of crooked race track gambling entitled

FROM BOOKMAKER TO BANK PRESIDENT.

We guarantee that this series of articles will stir Swaneetown as no other series of newspaper article has ever done. It will describe how a former race-track gambler,

who served several jail terms for a number of offenses, changed his name, accumulated a fortune, and became president of a bank.

#### IT STARTS TO-MORROW.

Banker Harley, otherwise Chicago Charlie, was at his desk when some one, coming in from the street, carried in one of the bills. His eyes lighted on the line in big type "FROM BOOK-MAKER TO BANK PRESIDENT." He gave a violent start and, with trembling fingers, began to read.

He had already been informed, of course, that Mr. Clackworthy and The Early Bird had refused to leave town; that, of course, puzzled and worried him, but this! How had they done it? There was one consoling thought; he could stop *The Courier* from printing it. He reached for the phone and called *The Courier* office.

"Stone!" he snapped into the transmitter. "You owe this bank a mortgage for three thousand dollars on your paper. It was due to-day and you haven't paid it. I'll have to foreclose unless you meet that mortgage."

"Why, Mr. Harley!" exclaimed Stone with apparent innocence. "Why are you so sudden about it?"

"I think you already know," retorted the banker. "Any man who's loon enough to flood the town with a lot of ridiculous bills like you're having distributed this afternoon, isn't sane enough to get credit at this bank. Of course, if you stopped this foolishness I might——"

"But I couldn't do that, Mr. Harley," replied the editor. "I've advertised it, you know, and—well, besides, I was just on my way down to pay off the mortgage. I have made other financial arrangements—borrowed the money from a—a Mr. Amos Clackworthy. I've got his check drawn on your bank. I'll be right down."

Chicago Charlie dropped limply back in his chair.

#### VI.

Being a man of average intelligence, Chicago Charlie did not need a diagram to tell him what had happened to him. And he wasted no time; he had a situation to meet and he met it. He hurried to police headquarters and flung himself down into the chair at Chief Givney's desk.

"Givney," he commanded, "get an order from the court and bring those two prisoners over here from the jail—and then go away and let us alone. Understand?"

The chief obediently brought Mr. Clackworthy and The Early Bird from their cells in the jail and conducted them to his private office.

"Beat it, Givney; shut the door behind you," ordered Chicago Charlie. "Sit down, you two," he went on as the door slammed; "sit down and talk turkey. You've got me hooked, an' I know it.

"I thought I'd run you out of town; it didn't work. You two came out here to get me; I understand it now—and you put it over. There's no use raisin' a fuss about that part of it. The question is—how much do you want?"

The Early Bird who, a moment before had been the glummiest man in seven States, stared in amazed delight at Mr. Clackworthy; somehow Mr. Clackworthy had put it over.

"I guess you ain't forgot them ten thousand smackers of mine that you went south with, eh, Chicago Charlie?" James inquired gleefully.

The banker winced unpleasantly at the name which he had not heard for many years.

"Cut out that stuff," he ordered. "I'm willin' to pay a reasonable amount of blackmail to you two——"

"Blackmail!" interrupted Mr. Clackworthy. "I am quite sure that neither James here nor myself have any intention of blackmailing you."

"Then what do you call it, I'd like to know?"

"Now come—er—Charlie," and Mr. Clackworthy smiled. "Suppose we put this on a strictly business basis. You are indebted to Mr. Early in the sum of ten thousand dollars, a debt which has been unpaid for more than ten years. The interest on that, straight interest at six per cent, amounts to more than six thousand dollars. Should we compound it, and most certainly it should be compounded, it would reach a very large sum. However, I am sure that he will waive compound interest if you, in turn, would allow him something for the—er—expenses of collection.

"Surely there is no blackmail in a straightforward business proposition of this character. Speaking as Mr. Early's representative, I offer you a settlement figure of twenty-five thousand dollars. Not a penny less—er—Charlie; take it or leave it, just as you choose."

"Cut it half in two; twelve thousand five hundred," parried the banker.

"Not a cent for bargaining," refused Mr. Clackworthy.

"How're you goin' to call off your dogs?" demanded Chicago Charlie. "How are you going to shut up that newspaper? I guess he knows the whole thing, too, eh?"

"Not a word," denied Mr. Clackworthy. "In fact Mr. Early here has not yet written his series of sensational articles, and Editor Stone rather advertised them blind; that is to say, he accepted a gift of three thousand dollars from me, given under the condition that

he accepts my—er—suggestion that he popularize his paper with a touch of—ah—sensationalism. Of course he may guess at a thing or two, but so far he knows absolutely nothing."

"All right," brusquely interrupted Chicago Charlie. "I know when I'm licked. I've got to cough up. Come on down to the bank just as soon as I have the judge lift the sentences, but you ought to be in the pen—you blackmailers!"

Mr. Clackworthy chuckled.

"You know—er—Charlie," he said, "you brought the whole thing on yourself. You forced us to the one method of—er—collection that we would have never thought of. The Early Bird would never have exposed you—not in a thousand years. He doesn't play the game that way. But you didn't know that. You got worried and tried to drive us out of town; if it hadn't been for that, I would have never known that you were scared to death of a—what The Early Bird would call 'a squawk.' I had about given you up as a bad job; if you had let us alone we would have left town to-morrow, and you would be twenty-five thousand to the good."

"Come on, boss; save th' chin music until after I've got that jack in my mitts," cut in The Early Bird. "I been waitin' more'n ten years t' find out how it'd feel t' see Chicago Charlie count out my winnin's on that hundred-t'-one shot. I reckon that's worth a few hours in jail, eh, boss?"

Mr. Clackworthy's slight shudder seemed to dispute this opinion.



## NEW RAILROAD CARS AND SAFES TO FOIL BANDITS

**S**PECIAL safes and railroad cars may be used soon to protect the United States mails from robbers. Each of the new cars, which already have been tried out, holds several huge square steel safes. It is necessary to move two levers in order to open the safes. While the steel boxes are in the railroad car one of their levers cannot be moved, as the arrangement of the safes in the car prevents any manipulation of these levers.

# “ Z ”

by

Edwin Baird

## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE DIRECTORS' ROOM.

**T**HE star reporter of *The Evening Standard*, Waldron Shumway, covered up his typewriter and glanced at the clock above the city desk. The hands pointed to three fifty-five.

Pierce, the city editor, was sitting easily back in his swivel chair, smoking a cigar and glancing through the early editions of the other afternoon papers. His assistant was reading a magazine. Fanny Fletcher, feature writer, was chatting lazily with Menns, the music critic, about last night's opera.

The financial edition had gone to press, and the dynamic tension was over for the moment. The local room was languorously peaceful, resting from the day's hard grind. Shumway, pushing his typewriter aside, rose from his desk, thinking of the date he had for to-night with Katharine Hoyt. He and Katharine were going to a new musical show and afterward to supper.

Whistling blithely he started toward his locker for his hat and overcoat, and then, all at once, he became aware of a sudden commotion at the city desk. Turning he saw Pierce talking excitedly at the telephone, while Barker, his assistant, had tossed aside his magazine and was hurrying to the private office of Carmody, the managing editor. The air tingled with electric tension.

These things at once told Shumway that a big story was "breaking." He was hastening to the city desk even before Pierce called sharply: "Shumway!"

"What's happened, Pierce?"

"Plenty! Henry W. Reeves, president of the Second National Bank, has just been murdered!"

"Where?"

"At the bank. Hurry!"

Shumway sped back to the locker, seized his hat and overcoat, and rushed for the street. As he dashed from the local room, struggling into his overcoat while he ran, his eye chanced to encounter the clock on the wall. The hands pointed to three fifty-nine.

Walking rapidly toward the Second National Bank building, which was only four blocks away, Shumway visualized the scene that he supposed awaited him there: the startled officials, the frightened clerks, the confusion and excitement, the curious crowd outside the bank, the ambulance, and policemen. But for what he really found he was totally unprepared.

Since it was after banking hours, the massive front doors were closed and bolted. But, when he entered the bank, through the employees' private entrance, where he was admitted on the presentation of his reporter's card, he was surprised to see that there were no visible signs of anything unusual.

The clerks and tellers were in their cages, clearly intent upon their routine duties. Several of the executives were at their desks, similarly oblivious to all except the work before them. A sleepy-looking janitor was methodically mopping the marble-tiled floor. Except for the rhythmic swish of his mop, scarcely a sound disturbed the stillness.

There was nothing here to indicate that a murder had been committed, or

that anything out of the ordinary had happened. Shumway, irresolute and puzzled, was wondering if somebody had hoaxed his city editor when he heard his name called. Turning to look, he saw Nat Sloan of *The Evening Times*.

"Who killed him?" asked Sloan, breathing like a spent runner.

"Who killed who?"

"Reeves. He's dead, isn't he? Murdered?"

"Don't know yet. I haven't seen him."

"Somebody phoned my office," Sloan declared, still breathing hard. "Said old Reeves had been croaked. Wasn't more than ten minutes ago. What d'you know about that?"

"I know this much," said Shumway, nodding toward the marble steps that led to the bank floor, "the same message has been telephoned to every newspaper office in town."

Up the steps swarmed a phalanx of eager newspapermen, representing *The Evening Star*, *The Evening Dispatch*, *The Morning Post*, and *The Morning Sun*.

It speedily developed that all had received the same communication which had brought Sloan and Shumway to the bank. After a hasty consultation all agreed that they were victims of a practical joker.

"Still," said Shumway, bending his gaze on a desk in the far corner, "we've got to make sure of that. That's Reeves' desk, over there near the window, and Reeves is not there. We've got to find Reeves."

"You'll find him at his club," said *The Sun* reporter, "drinking his favorite hooch. I know Reeves."

"Go find him, then," said Sloan, "and bring him here so I can see him."

"I pass the buck to Shumway. He knows him even better than I."

"Accepted with pleasure," Shumway said, and, leaving his colleagues, he

strode the length of the big rotunda and stopped before a mahogany desk behind a mahogany railing, where sat a slender, elderly gentleman, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles. Shumway recognized this official as G. N. Simpson, from whom he had often received financial news for his paper.

"Excuse me, Mr. Simpson," he said pleasantly. "I wonder if I may see Mr. Reeves for a moment?"

Mr. Simpson glanced briefly up from the work before him. "You'll find him at that desk in the corner," he said, carefully signing a letter.

Shumway made an elaborate pretense of inspecting the corner desk. "But there's nobody at that desk, Mr. Simpson."

Mr. Simpson put down his pen with grave deliberation and turned and looked over his shoulder.

"Strange!" he murmured, patently surprised. "He was there a few minutes ago. He's probably in the directors' room. Who wants to see him?"

"Shumway, of *The Evening Standard*."

"I'll tell him you're here," said the elderly Simpson, and he rose from his desk and moved toward a mahogany door, some thirty feet away.

Shumway, following him narrowly with his eyes, saw him casually open the door, as if to cross the threshold, then violently start and stagger backward, as though struck in the face by an invisible hand. Then he swiftly entered the room and closed the door behind him.

In another moment Shumway had vaulted the mahogany railing and was running toward the closed door. He flung the door open, every sense quivering alert, and what he beheld in the directors' room confirmed his wild suspicion. Sprawling unnaturally across the thick rug, beside an overturned chair, lay the body of Henry Reeves, president of the bank. A glance suf-

ficed to show that he was dead, and the crimson-stained rug, the deep gash in his neck, showed that death had come in a violent manner.

## CHAPTER II.

### APPLE SEEDS.

IT was characteristic of Shumway that his first thought was for his paper. There was a telephone a few feet away. He crossed to it swiftly and called his office.

"The first thing to do," he said to Pierce, after describing the scene at the bank, "is to learn who phoned you about this murder. Maybe you already know who it was. Eh?"

"No, I don't," said Pierce over the wire. "It was a man's voice, and he merely said, 'This is Z calling. I've just killed Reeves of the Second National.' Then he hung up. I tried to reestablish the connection, but couldn't make it. We're tracing the call now, or trying to."

"Good! We've got to find him," insisted Shumway. "There's a real mystery here, and this unknown Z is probably the only person who can clear it up. He phoned you about three fifty-seven, or between three fifty-five and three fifty-nine. I remember looking at the clock."

"Other papers there?" asked Pierce.

"All of them. He phoned them, too. They're in the directors' room now," said Shumway, rising from the desk with the receiver to his ear, "so I'd better choke off. Call you back in a few minutes." He snapped the receiver on its hook and hurried back to the long, paneled room, where lay the body of the murdered banker.

The room was rapidly filling with excited persons. Two of the evening newspaper reporters were quarreling over a telephone. At another telephone stood Simpson, calling the police in an excited tone of voice.

Several of the other bank officials, attracted by the unwonted commotion, stood gaping in speechless horror at Reeves' dead body, as if unable to believe their eyes. A number of minor employees, similarly drawn to the chamber of death, clogged the doorway, whispering excitedly to one another, craning their necks to see what had happened. The bank, peacefully dozing a few minutes ago, was now buzzing with alarm.

It was also characteristic of Shumway that, when people around him became excited, he grew calm. Now, in the midst of all this frantic agitation, he was cool master of his thoughts, and his mind was working with the precision of a piece of perfect mechanism.

Heedless of the feverish babble in the room, he concentrated all his faculties on one thing alone: Who killed Reeves?

Rapidly he marshaled all the known facts, adding to them, as he inspected the room and questioned the bank officials. These facts, when brought together, were arrayed in his mind as follows: First, Reeves had entered the directors' room, unknown to his associates, between three and four o'clock this afternoon; second, also unknown to his associates, or to any other person in the bank, he had met a violent death there; third, so far as was known he had no enemies and no cause to take his own life; fourth, his assailant, assuming it was murder and not suicide, had gained access to the directors' room by a private passageway which led to a corridor on the second floor of the bank building; fifth, since the body was still warm when found, Reeves had died only a few minutes before.

As Shumway mentally noted his fifth fact it came to him that the banker undoubtedly was still alive when the mysterious Z had telephoned to *The Standard*. This, of course, brought him back to the important question of who this anonymous person was, and

that bred other baffling questions which Shumway quickly classified thus: First, assuming the unknown Z had murdered Reeves, what was his motive? Second, if he had committed the murder, why had he telephoned the newspapers about it? Third, if he hadn't committed the murder how had he known of it before the banker was dead?

These and other puzzling questions hinged clearly enough on the apprehension of Z, and Shumway, having made a hasty inspection of the room and questioned those who might shed light on the mystery, started briskly back to the telephone, intending to call Pierce again. As he shoved his way through the frightened crowd, which now filled the big room, he chanced to pass near the body of the dead bank president. He paused for a moment to gaze down at it, his brows knitted in perplexity.

Reeves in falling had evidently struck one of the heavy chairs and upset it. His left hand rested on a rung of the chair, and his right arm was flung out horizontally from his body. He lay with his head thrown back, and it was apparent that a severed jugular vein had sealed his fate.

Suddenly Shumway stooped and picked from the rug, beside the body, three tiny brown objects which he perceived to be apple seeds. He quietly inclosed these in his palm; and then he saw something that seemed to have a deeper significance, something that piqued his interest sharply. The outstretched right hand of the dead man clutched a ragged sheet of red paper.

Shumway would have given much to have possessed that bit of red paper, and for a moment he rashly thought of taking it. But he knew the danger of doing that before the coroner's arrival, knew he was courting trouble in concealing even the apple seeds. Besides, Simpson and his fellow officials had recovered from their shock and were now clearing the room.

Ejected with the rest of the crowd, Shumway put the apple seeds in a vest pocket, then stepped to a telephone and called his office.

"We've traced the call!" Pierce jubilantly told him. "It came from the drug store two doors north of the bank. I've got two men on the way there."

"I'll be there first," said Shumway and bolted for the street.

Entering the crowded drug store, he wedged his way to the cashier's cage and said to the proud young woman there: "About five minutes to four this afternoon you sold a telephone slug, or maybe five or six, to a man who was eating an apple. Do you remember what that man looked like?"

The young woman surveyed him haughtily. "What's eatin' you?" she inquired with superb disdain. "We got ten public booths in this store, and I sell a thousand slugs a day. Beat it!"

Shumway didn't beat it. Instead he handed her a ten-dollar bill.

"Think it over," he told her earnestly, "and try to remember. I'll return in a minute."

He crossed to the first telephone booth, saw it was occupied by a woman in furs, and tried the next one. Searching the floor he found nothing more important than a cigar stump and a burnt match; he scanned the floor of the third booth, likewise unsuccessfully. The fourth was occupied, and he moved on.

When he opened the door of the seventh booth and looked closely at the floor he uttered a low cry of triumph and plucked from a corner a fresh apple core, recently thrown there. He entered the booth, closed the door, which automatically lighted the lamp overhead, and with his thumb nail pried a seed from the apple core and compared it with those in his vest pocket.

They matched as perfectly as the buttons on his coat. Pocketing his possessions he sought the proprietor of the store and quietly told him what had

happened. His fellow workers from *The Standard* came in at this juncture, and Shumway, knowing the coroner had probably arrived by now, left them in charge of the drug-store "angle" and hurried back to the bank.

When he entered the directors' room he found the coroner, whom he knew intimately, examining the body of the slain bank president. Two detective sergeants, whom he also knew, were inspecting the room, and the doors were guarded by two patrolmen.

But Shumway's eyes went first of all to the right hand of the dead man. It was empty. "There was a bit of red paper in his right hand, Tom," he said casually to the coroner. "You got it, I suppose?"

The coroner, kneeling beside the body, looked up over his shoulder. "Oh, hello, Shumway! Yes, I found the paper. It's on the table there. I can't make anything of it."

Shumway's eyes, darting instantly to the table, beheld the ragged piece of paper, and involuntarily he gasped with amazement. Surely this was carrying the thing too far! Zigzagging crazily across the red surface, in heavy black lines, was the crude, gigantic letter Z.

### CHAPTER III.

#### UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

**D**URING his several years experience in metropolitan newspaper work, Shumway had encountered many peculiar criminals, but here was one quite new to him.

Here was one who walked boldly into a bank, stabbed the president to death, left his calling card in his victim's hand, scattered other evidence about, then calmly walked out and told the newspapers all about it and got away. The brazenness of the thing, to say the least, was disconcerting.

Examining the sheet of scarlet paper under a reading glass, which he found

in the room, Shumway discerned it was of strong linen texture, that it contained two faint finger prints, and that the letter Z was roughly drawn with a soft, black crayon.

And now the coroner, emptying Reeves' pockets, drew forth a second sheet of like description! This, too, was scrutinized by Shumway who, unperceived, pinched off a corner that bore a thumb print and quietly concealed it in his hand.

Tantalized by the multiplicity of clues, he waited till the coroner's investigation was finished, and, discovering nothing further of note, he then returned to the drug store.

The cashier had been searching her memory, and she now vaguely described to him a number of men to whom she had sold telephone slugs today. The proprietor supplied a description of others whom he had seen in the store that afternoon, and who, so he thought, had "acted suspiciously."

Shumway wrote down the salient points, though he felt it was futile, like describing small objects lost in the sea.

The musical show, which he had eagerly anticipated seeing that night, was to him and Katharine a failure. In the circumstances it could not have been otherwise.

Katharine's father, J. D. Hoyt, was president of the State Bank of Oakdale, and a warm friend of the murdered Reeves. The dinner-table talk in her home that evening, centering almost exclusively on the tragedy at the Second National, had not been conducive to joyousness.

Her mood, therefore, was dismal, and Shumway unconsciously contributed thereto. For the first time since she had known him he was preoccupied in her presence and inattentive to her. He was similarly heedless of the bright performance. Although he stared steadily at the stage, his mind



took no cognizance of what happened there. He was, in fact, completely buried in his thoughts and oblivious to everything around him.

Shumway's brain was working hard on a plan to trap the mysterious Z. It was only a nebulous plan as yet, but— Suddenly he rose and, with a hasty apology, went to the nearest telephone booth and called the city editor of *The Morning Sun*.

"Hello, McLaughlin? . . . Shumway talking. Want to ask a small favor. Just for my own information, would you mind telling me exactly what this anonymous bird, known as Z, said to you over the phone this afternoon?"

"As nearly as I can remember," McLaughlin answered, "he said: 'This is Z speaking. I've just killed Reeves of the Second National.'"

"You sure he said nothing else?"

"Nothing else that I recall. Oh, wait a second. He did say something else at that. Something nutty, as I remember. Something about apple seeds, I think."

Shumway suppressed his swift throb of elation and asked in a puzzled tone: "Did you say 'apple seeds,' old man?"

"'Apple seeds' is what I said."

"What'd he say about apple seeds?"

"Can't remember his words exactly, but it was something about looking for apple seeds. He was clearly off his nut."

Further interrogation failing to elicit anything more definite, Shumway called *The Morning Post*. Randall, night city editor, possessed a better memory.

"I recall his words perfectly," said Randall. "'This is Z calling,' he said to me. 'I've just killed Reeves of the Second National. Look for the apple seeds.' What he meant by that last crack, Heaven only knows! Have you any idea what he was driving at?"

Shumway answered evasively and then phoned Pierce at his home.

"Why, yes," said Pierce. "Now that

you remind me of it, he did say something about apple seeds, but I attached no particular importance to it. The fact is that, when he mentioned killing Reeves, I cut in with a question, and his chatter about apple seeds was lost. What do you see in it, Shumway? What's on your mind?"

"I can't tell you now," said Shumway and returned to his seat in the theater, treading on air.

His plan was not so nebulous now. In fact it was shaping itself beautifully in his mind, and he was jubilant.

When he sat down beside Katharine, however, he saw that no such joy was hers. The curtain was down, and the lights were up, and she looked at him with disapproval. "Where on earth have you been?" she asked, a touch of coolness in her voice. "You missed the best part of the first act."

"I don't care!" he answered lightly. "I'd far rather sit and talk with you."

"If you'll pardon my saying so, I think it's high time. You've pointedly ignored me the entire evening."

"I'll make up for it now," he promised and reassuringly patted her hand. "From now on I shall devote myself to you exclusively."

Straightway he excluded all thought of the mystery, which hitherto had occupied his mind, and paid homage to her. And later, when they sat vis-à-vis at a charming after-theater supper in a sparkling restaurant, he smiled into her starry eyes across the pink-shaded, lamplit table, and wove a dream about her loveliness. Some day, he fondly whispered to himself, she would face him thus across the breakfast table!

When at last he reached home, however, he put all such thoughts aside. It was nearly two o'clock when he let himself into his room, for the suburban town of Oakdale was a good twelve miles from his lodgings, but he did not immediately prepare for bed.

Instead he closed and locked the

door, lowered the window shades and attached a high-powered electric bulb to the reading lamp on his table. He then brought forth the bit of red paper and the apple core and seeds, and for upward of an hour he studied them with a powerful microscope. Of particular interest to him were the marks of the teeth in the apple core and the thumb print on the paper.

When he turned out the light and got into bed he was well satisfied with his progress. His plan to capture Z seemed perfect.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A MESSAGE FROM Z.

HE was up before seven o'clock, and thirty minutes later he occupied a stool in a lunch room round the corner, simultaneously breakfasting and reading the morning newspapers.

The Reeves story, of course, had been "played up" heavily in both morning papers, and was liberally embellished with pictures of the slain banker and members of his family, photographs of the bank, more photographs of the coroner and detectives "searching for clues," and a diagram of the directors' room, with a maltese cross indicating the spot where the body was found. A perusal of the text, however, failed to disclose anything beyond what Shumway already knew.

At least one important thing, and this only contributed to the mystery, had been definitely established: Robbery was not the motive. Several hundred dollars in currency had been found on the dead man's body, and his costly gold watch, a pearl scarfpin, and other objects of considerable value were found intact.

But Shumway had already ascertained that the unknown murderer had stolen nothing; and last night, while studying the several peculiar phases of the crime, he had, he believed, discovered the thing that actuated it. Upon

this thing he had decided to base his procedure to-day.

After breakfast he telephoned his office and said to Pierce:

"I'm working on the Reeves story. I've an idea of my own I'd like to follow up if I can have two or three hours to do as I please. It may mean a big scoop for us, or it may mean nothing. I can't tell yet. Shall I go ahead?"

"Sure!" said the city editor. "But what is this idea, Shumway?"

"I'll tell you as soon as I get to the office, and I ought to be there before eleven."

"All right, hop to it," said Pierce and hung up the receiver.

Shumway then went to a large dental supply house and asked to see the proprietor.

"I'm from *The Standard*," he said to this gentleman, "and I want a good feature story on the newest discoveries in dentistry. I should particularly like to get the latest dope on bridgework, false teeth, and dental surgery. Can you fix me up?"

"I can and will," said the beaming proprietor, clearly pleased by the prospect of free publicity. "We have a wonderful plant here, and I'll be glad to show you through it."

"I'd rather not put you to so much trouble," protested Shumway, "but I should like to see the place where you make false teeth, and I wish you would explain how they are fitted to people's mouths."

"Delighted! We have a wonderful laboratory, biggest in the city. Step this way, please."

An hour had passed before Shumway emerged to the street again, but he felt that the hour had been well spent. He next called upon a noted finger-print expert and interviewed him for thirty minutes, ostensibly for the purpose of writing a story concerning the various characteristics of thumb prints.

From there he went to a department store and bought a soft black crayon. Then he visited in turn three stationers, and, though he was unable to find exactly what he wanted, a bright red paper of stout linen texture, he found something that he thought might answer his purpose, a cherry-colored wrapping paper. He bought two pounds, then started for his office.

On his way there he stopped at a fruit store and carefully selected and bought four apples of different varieties. At a second store he found two more varieties, unobtainable at the first place, and he bought one of each kind.

It was five minutes of eleven when he entered the local room of *The Standard*, and the incessant clatter of many typewriters, the scurrying copy boys, the industrious reporters, the nervous tension in the air, all were familiar signs to him of the home-edition deadline. Placing his purchases in his locker, he walked toward the city desk, always the center of feverish activity when an edition was going to press.

Pierce was conferring with the make-up editor, and for the moment his desk was left in charge of Barker, his assistant. Barker was handling a steady stream of copy, which flowed from the machines of three rewrite men and five reporters, and trying to answer two telephones at once. He nodded toward the third phone, as Shumway stopped beside the desk.

“Answer that, will you, Shumway?”

Shumway picked up the telephone and placed the receiver to his ear. “Hello?” said he.

“This is Z calling,” said a deep masculine voice. “I’ve just killed Ashfield of the Western Trust. Look for the apple seeds.”

Shumway’s strong fingers spasmodically gripped the telephone instrument, and, for a breathless instant, he listened tensely, the receiver glued to his ear, every sense quivering alive. Then, as

no further sound came, he said clearly and distinctly in a tone of stern authority: “I don’t believe a word you say. I think you’re lying to us.”

But it was no use. The telephone connection had been broken.

Instantly, for he realized the value of every second, he got *The Standard* switchboard operator on the wire. “Trace that call!” he said sharply. “The last one you got for the city desk. Drop everything else and trace it! It’s of the utmost importance.” Then he whirled round to Pierce, who was still talking with the make-up man, quite unaware of what had happened. “L. D. Ashfield, president of the Western Trust, has just been murdered!” he said. Heedless of the quick excitement that seized all within sound of his voice, and the babble of questions that were shot at him, he went on: “Better call up every public telephone booth within two blocks of the bank. I’d put at least five men on it, Pierce. Then call up the bank and ask for Harris, first vice president. We’ve got to work fast! Every second is precious. I’ve——”

“Is this another Z killing?” Pierce demanded.

“Yes! Just got his message over the phone. Miss Mandel is tracing the call. Mustn’t lose a moment. I’m off for the bank. Be there in five minutes.”

He was already hurrying toward the door. Not waiting to get his overcoat, he sped down the stairs and out into the street. A taxicab stood at the curb. “Western Trust, and make it snappy!” he said to the chauffeur, as he sprang into the vehicle.

## CHAPTER V.

### CARMODY CONSENTS.

THE circumstances surrounding the mysterious slaying of President Ashfield of the Western Trust Company were, as Shumway quickly discerned, almost identical with those

that attended the murder of President Reeves of the Second National Bank.

That the same person had committed both crimes there could be no doubt. Ashfield had been stabbed to death in his private office, not more than twenty minutes ago, or shortly before eleven o'clock, by an unknown man who had entered and left the room without attracting attention. The slayer had then telephoned the city editors of all the newspapers the same weird message that had startled them yesterday.

Ashfield's body had been found by an office boy, John Simmons, only a few minutes before the newspaper men arrived. When Shumway hastened into the bank he found this frightened lad surrounded by a group of men who were excitedly plying him with questions.

Listening unobtrusively, Shumway learned that the boy had admitted the murderer to the banker's private office and a little later had seen him depart, but could give no adequate description of him.

"He was tall and skinny," said the trembling youth in answer to a question, "and I guess that's all I can remember about him, 'cept that he wore a long overcoat."

"Was he dark or light-haired?" somebody asked.

"I guess he was dark. No, he was light. I'm not sure which. He wasn't in Mr. Ashfield's office more'n two or three minutes," declared the boy defensively, "and I don't see how he could 'a' done much in just that little time."

"You saw him come out?"

"Yes, sir. He come out and closed the door and walked away, just like nothin' had happened."

"Which way did he go?"

"I didn't notice where he went. I wasn't payin' much attention. I guess he went out in the street. I don't know."

"What happened next?"

"Well, pretty soon Miss Nichols give me some letters for Mr. Ashfield to sign, and I went to his office and opened the door, and I saw him sittin' there at the desk, all slumped over, and his face was smeared with crimson stains." The boy, overcome by the memory of the horror he had seen, was unable to continue.

"How did you happen to let this man in?" one of his questioners asked. "What did he say to you?"

"Well, he said he wanted to see Mr. Ashfield, and when I asked him for his card he said, 'Never mind the card; just tell 'im Mr. Zander wants to see 'im on some very important business.' Well, I told Mr. Ashfield that, and he said to tell the gentleman to come in. Well, the man went in, and he wasn't in there more'n two or three minutes before he come out again."

Shumway hurried on to Ashfield's office, shoved his way through the crowd of people standing about the doorway and in one swift glance took in the scene within the room. The dead banker sat in a deep swivel chair before his desk, his face buried in his arms, resting upon the plate-glass top.

His back was toward the door, and Shumway divined that the murderer had slipped noiselessly up behind him, cut his throat, then stepped from the room as casually as he had entered. Ashfield had pitched forward on his face and now lay as he had fallen.

Entering the room Shumway's eyes darted to the dead man's right hand, clenched beside his head; and, yes, there it was! A bit of paper, as red as the stains on the desk, protruded from his fingers, Z's calling card.

Kneeling, he searched the rug around the chair, and when he rose he held in his palm three apple seeds. An irate bank official confronted him, seized him, and pointed angrily to the door.

"Get out! You've no business in here. Clear out!"

"Of course I will," said Shumway, "if it'll ease your mind. I don't blame you a bit for losing your head."

Outside the door he was besieged by a half dozen of his colleagues who had been denied admittance to the room. All talking at once, they plied him with eager questions: "What'd you find, Shumway? Is he dead? Who killed him? How was he killed? What'd you see in there? See anything of any apple seeds? The boss said——"

Shumway, genial though noncommittal, good-naturedly shook them off and hurried to the public telephone booth, near the main entrance to the bank, and called his office.

"We've traced the call," Pierce told him. "It came from the public booth in the Western Trust building."

"I'm telephoning in that booth now," said Shumway.

"Good gosh! Search it, man! Maybe he's left a clew. Look around! He may still be in the bank or in the neighborhood."

Shumway slowly replaced the receiver on the hook, his brows knitted in deep thought, inspected the narrow shelf in the booth and the telephone directory lying there, then searched the floor. Finding nothing, he stepped from the booth and swept his gaze keenly around the bank. It was buzzing with noon-day customers, none of whom suspected anything amiss.

"A tall, skinny man in a long overcoat," so the boy had said.

He glanced toward the boy, saw his questioners had been augmented by the newspaper men and two plain-clothes detectives, and sauntered to the rear of the bank and back, scrutinizing all around him. He then walked outside and as far as the corner, eyeing every person who appeared to be loitering in the neighborhood.

The quest was hopeless, as he feared it would be, yet at least he had obeyed Pierce's instructions.

The coroner had arrived when he returned to the bank, and he learned that Ashfield's death was caused by a severed jugular vein, that nothing had been stolen from him or from his office, and that the sheet of red paper, found in his hand, bore a crude black letter Z.

He now sought the boy Simmons, took him aside and contrived to have a few minutes' private talk with him. "This man who entered Mr. Ashfield's office," he said to the lad, "was eating an apple when you saw him, wasn't he?"

"Well, if I didn't forget all about that!" exclaimed the boy. "How'd you know he was eatin' an apple?"

"While he was eating the apple," pursued Shumway, "or while he was talking, did you notice his mouth?"

"Well, yes, I guess so."

"Then you saw his teeth. Think hard now! What sort of teeth did he have?"

With a visible effort, the boy prodded his memory. Suddenly his face brightened. "I remember now! He had one of his front teeth gone. I think it was this one here." He indicated with his finger the position of the missing tooth.

"Did he look you in the eye while he was talking to you? Or how did he act?"

"I guess I don't remember about that. I looked up and saw him standin' there, eatin' an apple, and, when he said he wanted to see Mr. Ashfield and I asked him for his card, he sorta grinned, and I saw one of his teeth was gone. That's about all I remember about 'im."

"All right, Johnny. Here's a half dollar for you."

Further inquiry disclosed that no other person had observed the man except Mr. Ashfield's secretary, Miss Nichols; and she, busily typing at her desk, had given him only a fleeting glance as he entered her employer's office. She corroborated Johnny's statement that he was tall and thin and wore

a long overcoat, but could recall nothing else that might help to identify him.

After "cleaning up" on the story and ascertaining that it corresponded in all its salient details with the murder committed yesterday, Shumway started back to his office.

This second peculiar murder, treading hard on the heels of the first, did not puzzle him or complicate the mystery, but rather substantiated the theory that he had already formed. Nor was he persuaded to alter the plan carefully conceived last evening. Indeed he was now more than ever firmly convinced that this plan offered the only quick way of trapping the murderer.

Late that afternoon, when the final edition had gone to press, he outlined the plan to Pierce and to Michael Carmody, the managing editor, in the latter's office. When he had finished, Carmody shook his head dubiously. "It sounds too fantastic to me, Shumway. What do you think of it, Pierce?"

"I'll say this for Shumway," replied the city editor, "he's solved more crime mysteries and caught more crooks than any other man on my staff, if not more than all the rest combined. This present scheme of his, I admit, seems pretty extravagant, but I know Shumway. I'm willing to take a chance on it."

"Very well, then," said Carmody, turning back to Shumway. "Go ahead with your plan and draw on the paper for whatever money you need. You'll be needing some cash right away, I take it, so I'll give you an order on the cashier now."

"Thanks," said Shumway briefly. "I can't guarantee, of course, that I'll catch this bird within a certain length of time, or even that I'll catch him at all, but, unless I'm sadly mistaken, I'll be able to hand him over to the police inside of forty-eight hours.

"There's one thing sure," he earnestly added. "If he's not caught pretty soon he'll commit more murders. The two

we've already had are, I am sure, only the forerunner of others. This man has just begun to kill."

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SHACK ON STEEL STREET.

NOW that he had authority to go ahead, Shumway immediately set and baited the trap which Carmody, justifiably perhaps, had characterized as "too bizarre."

His first act upon leaving the managing editor's office was to write a post-script story, to be run on the first page of all editions of the next day's *Standard*, concerning a mythical Professor Zipf, self-styled banking expert.

Written in straight "newspaper style," with no undue embellishment, the story stated that Professor Zipf, reduced to poverty by the collapse of a bank in which he had deposited his life's savings, now lived in a wretched hovel. Here he was engaged in writing a book that would "expose the evils of the banking system." Shumway wrote:

Professor Zipf was found by a *Standard* reporter in a poor neighborhood, living alone in a dilapidated shanty, meagerly furnished and heated only by a rusty oil stove. He sat at a crude pine table, busily writing, when the reporter found him.

At first he was unwilling to talk, but eventually he consented to an interview, when it was pointed out to him that this might aid him in finding a publisher for his book. Among other things he said that his diet consisted chiefly of apples which he declared to be the most healthful of foods. A large bowl of the fruit was on the table beside his writing pad, and he ate one of these while speaking with the reporter from *The Standard*.

Then followed a lengthy interview in which Professor Zipf described how his life had been ruined by an "inexcusable bank failure," how his home had been destroyed, and how his book, when published, would "shake our nefarious banking system to its rotten foundation."

Shumway, uncommonly painstaking

in writing the story, carefully omitted one salient point: The exact whereabouts of Professor Zipf. Beyond the vague information that he lived in a "poor neighborhood," there was no clew to his street address.

He gave the copy to Carmody for approval, then wrapped up the things he had bought that morning and called at the office of an old and trusted friend, one Robert Cooper, a salesman for the real estate firm of D. L. Rothschild & Co.

"Bobby, old man, I'm in the market for a house."

"You're out of luck," said Bobby.

"I'm in the market," said Shumway unperturbed, "for the meanest, ugliest, dirtiest tumble-down shack in town; and it's got to be in a street of the same description. The more slovenly the street the better."

"In these days," said Bobby Cooper, "with houses scarce as snowballs in June, that's the only sort of place you can find. But what's the joke?"

Shumway convinced him he wasn't joking, and young Cooper inspected his card index and plucked forth a card and studied it.

"How's this sound?" he asked. "Here's a three-room cottage on Steel Street, that's a tenement district, you know, and there's no plumbing, no electricity, no gas, no heat. The house, which has been unoccupied for several years, is in a state of general disrepair."

"Have you got a sign on it?" Shumway interrupted.

"No; and we'd hardly care to put one on. We don't want the name of our firm associated with such a hut. As a matter of fact we're not offering it either for sale or rent. The old man owns the property, as well as several adjoining lots, and he's planning to erect a modern structure, flats and stores, as soon as building gets back to normal."

"I'll rent the house," said Shumway, "at your own figure, if you'll nail a 'For Rent' sign on it."

"I suppose I could manage that. How long will you want the house, old man?"

"Not more than a week, probably less, but I'll pay you a month's rent in advance on one other condition. Within twenty-four hours, perhaps to-morrow morning, a number of men will be asking you for the name of the person who rented this house. To all of them you are to say that the house has not been rented, will not be rented, and is soon to be torn down. Tell 'em nobody is living there, that your sign was placed on the house by mistake."

"I suppose I could manage that, too. If you want to see the shack, old man, I can——"

"Not now, Bobby. I'll take your word that it's what I want, and I'll move in sometime to-morrow. Meanwhile get that sign up. Better do the job yourself. I wish you'd do it to-night with as little fuss as possible, for I don't want the neighbors to see you. If you drive out in your car, park it several blocks from the house and go the rest of the way afoot."

"It shall be done," Bobby promised. "And now, not that I care a cent, of course, would you mind explaining all this dark, deep mystery?"

"I can't tell you just yet, Bobby. You'll pardon me, won't you? At the present moment only two persons, besides myself, know why I'm doing this. In less than forty-eight hours, if all goes well, it will be known by many times two millions."

## CHAPTER VII.

### SETTING THE STAGE.

LEAVING the real estate office, with a key to the cottage in his pocket, Shumway went to a secondhand furniture store in a crowded neighborhood

and bought three broken chairs, a cheap kitchen table, an old glass jar, grievously cracked and chipped, a portable bookcase of like description, three blankets and a mattress, sundry cooking utensils, a kerosene lamp, and a stove.

He paid the proprietor, saying he would return for the goods in an hour, then boarded a street car, rode to another part of the city and alighted near a garage that made a specialty of renting automobiles.

"I'm showing some out-of-town friends around to-night," he said to the owner, with whom he was slightly acquainted, "and I want a closed car for about four hours. I'll drive it myself."

Ten minutes later, in an ancient limousine, he was traveling back in the direction from which he had come. He stopped en route at an old book store and from the dusty shelves selected two dozen odd books on banks and banking. These he bought and placed in the car.

Further on he passed a lighted pawnshop, and, two blocks away, he stopped the car, removed his hat and overcoat and walked back to the shop and addressed himself to a phlegmatic young man behind a show case filled with revolvers. "Coupla guys stuck me up down the street. Got my hat and coat. All I managed to save was a five-dollar bill. I'd like to get home without freezing. Can you fix me up?"

He left the pawnshop wearing a shabby overcoat, that reached well below his knees, and a discarded felt hat, both of which gave him a quite disreputable appearance. He made two more purchases before reaching the secondhand furniture store. At a corner grocery he bought a half dozen old gunny bags, and at a hardware store a package of carpet tacks.

It was nearly ten o'clock that night, with a north wind blowing freezingly, when he steered the aged limousine, heavily freighted with secondhand chat-

tels, into the alley back of No. 2715 Steel Street. Having darkened his lamps, he proceeded slowly, cautiously, with the least possible amount of noise, eyes and ears keenly alert.

Luckily the cold had frigidly sealed the denizens of this teeming district within their miserable homes, and his arrival in their squalid midst was unobserved.

Wearing the tattered hat and overcoat he entered the tumble-down cottage and, so far as he could determine in the darkness, for he dared not strike a match, it was all that Cooper had claimed. The rotting floor gave sog-gily beneath his feet, the wind whistled through the broken windows, and the rooms seemed moldy with decay.

Without delay he lugged the goods from the automobile across the small back yard, littered with all manner of refuse, and placed them in the shanty. Then he rubbed the gunny sacks in the dust on the floor and tacked them over the windows.

He now locked the door, returned to his car and drove silently away. As he emerged from the dark alley, his lamps still unlit, he paused to look back upon his surrounding, palely illumined by the moon. He was reasonably sure that no eye had seen him arrive or depart.

Hard upon midnight Shumway entered his own rooms, carrying the disreputable hat and overcoat in a roll beneath his arm. Bolting the hall door behind him, he lowered the shades, switched on the lights and settled down to the remainder of his night's work. He was glad for the warmth and the cheer, which were doubly welcome after the squalor of the cottage that he had just left.

With a pot of coffee, fragrantly steaming on an alcohol stove beside him, he bisected the apples, which he had bought that morning, and removed the seeds and compared them, beneath



his microscope, with those found beside the murdered bankers. When at length he had perfectly matched the seeds, he made a notation in his memorandum book and turned his attention to the cherry-colored wrapping paper.

Spreading this paper upon the table, he cut it into sheets, eight by eleven inches in size, and then, with the soft, black crayon, which he had bought at the department store, he printed upon each ruddy sheet a tremendous letter Z.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANOTHER CALLING CARD.

ARISING at six next morning, he examined his face in the bathroom mirror, and decided not to shave. Ordinarily a punctilious young man about his personal appearance, he now proceeded to make himself as disreputable-looking as possible.

He donned a pair of moth-eaten trousers, a soiled shirt and collar, a faded necktie, an old coat and vest, and shoes worn beyond repair. He then partially concealed his unkempt appearance with his stylish hat and smart overcoat which he buttoned around his neck. With the coat and hat from the pawnshop, wrapped in newspaper, he started forth.

In the next block he entered a saloon which ostensibly had become a "soft-drink parlor." To strangers this place was "dry," but the proprietor's friends could obtain something more stimulating than malted milk.

The proprietor knew Shumway, and Shumway departed a little later with a quart of whisky in the newspaper parcel under his arm. Thus far, at least, his plans for this day were proceeding nicely.

Upon entering the office of *The Standard*, however, these plans received an unexpected jolt. Pierce, visibly excited, hurried him into Carmody's office and gave him a long envelope of bright-

red hue, addressed in angular handwriting to "City Editor, Herald."

"It came in this morning's mail," said Pierce. "Read it."

Shumway drew from the envelope a sheet of red paper which he instantly recognized as Z's calling card. On one side was printed a huge black Z, on the other this message was written:

Frank W. Eggleston, President of the Merchants' Bank, will be killed at one forty-five p. m. on the day you receive this message.

"Every paper in town," Pierce went on, "got one of those things in the mail this morning. I tried to get you on the phone at home, but they said you'd left. What d'you think of it, Shumway?"

Shumway, examining the missive by the light at the window, saw that the Z was the same as those he had seen before; that the superscription was jerkily written with black ink and the message with a soft black lead pencil, the handwriting of both being the same, and that the communication was correctly spelled and punctuated. The postmark revealed that the letter had been mailed at the main post office at five o'clock yesterday afternoon.

"It seems genuine enough," he said, handing it back to Pierce. "Of course, it may only be the work of a harmless crank, but I think not."

"You think, then, it was written by the person who killed Reeves and Ashfield?"

Shumway nodded affirmatively. "It's the same as his other calling cards, same sort of paper and same black crayon. I've no doubt he'll try to kill Eggleston to-day, just as he says he will. Where's Carmody?"

"Attending a publishers' meeting."

"Gosh! At this hour?"

"It's an emergency session, called twenty minutes ago by all the papers when it became known that all had received that message. They're considering the question of suppressing it. This

thing's getting mighty serious, Shumway."

"Right! The police——"

"The chief of police," Pierce interrupted, "got one, too! So did Captain Grimm of the detective bureau. And so did Eggleston. He apparently overlooked nobody."

Shumway glanced at his watch. "I can see this is going to be my busy day. First I've got to hustle out to that shack I rented. The address, by the way, in case you happen to need it, is 2715 Steel Street."

"That reminds me of something," said Pierce, writing down the address, "that will probably interest you: *The Standard* is offering five thousand dollars for the arrest of Z."

"I can use it quite neatly," Shumway said, and called back over his shoulder, as he started for the door: "I'll need it pretty soon to set up housekeeping."

Within an hour he entered the tumble-down cottage from the rear, carrying the newspaper parcel and a loaded market basket, and locked the door behind him. Upon the kitchen table in the front room he placed the contents of this basket, a can of kerosene, some writing materials, an earthen pot, a long-pronged fork, a paper lamp shade, two jelly glasses, a hammer and chisel, and a dozen Baldwin apples.

He perforated two of the apples with his fork, placed them in the earthen pot and upon them poured a pint of whisky. Then, working carefully with hammer and chisel, he pried loose two of the rotting boards in the floor, concealed the apples and whisky in the aperture, nailed the boards down and placed the table and chairs over the spot.

The next forty minutes were devoted to giving the cottage an appearance of long habitation. The books were arranged in the secondhand bookcase, the mattress and blankets were spread on the floor, the lamp and stove were

cleaned and filled, the writing materials were spread on the table. He also put the glass jar on the table and filled it with six of the bright-red apples.

For two hours thereafter, with the kerosene stove lighted, he sat at the table and made copious notes from one of the books on banking. He wore the hat and coat from the pawnshop, his own coat and hat hanging in the rear room.

A few minutes before twelve o'clock he heard footsteps outside the house, then a knock on the door. He rose, took an apple from the jar, and walked to the window, eating it. Two newspaper reporters stood outside.

Shumway hastily removed the overcoat and hat, hid them beneath the mattress on the floor, and, wearing his more presentable apparel, greeted them cordially. "It's no use, boys. I've been waiting three hours for Professor Zipf, and there's nothing doing."

One of the reporters exhibited an early edition of *The Standard* and indicated the Zipf story on the first page.

"What about this interview? Who wrote that?"

"A cub named Schiller. I came here this morning for a follow-up story, bought some apples for the professor on the way out, and I found nothing. Nobody around here ever heard of Professor Zipf. I called up D. L. Rothschild & Co., agents for the house, and they told me it hadn't been rented. You might try your luck with them. Ask for Robert Cooper."

"We'd better take a look inside first."

"Step right in," said Shumway, "and make yourselves at home. I bought some oil for the professor's stove and helped myself to one of his books; but it's been disagreeable waiting for him, and I'm ready to give it up."

The reporters poked through the rooms, kicked at the mattress, read the titles of the books, examined the papers on the table, and decided it was useless

to wait any longer for the “nutty professor.”

“It’s a rotten assignment, anyway,” said one.

Shumway heartily agreed and conducted them to a corner drug store and ordered hot coffee and sandwiches. While his confrères were consuming this repast, he went to the telephone booth and called his office.

“Two unknown men,” Pierce told him, “telephoned for Zipf’s address. One said he was a publisher.”

“I’m lunching with them now,” said Shumway. “One is Tom Knox of *The Stan*, and the other is William Mandel of *The Dispatch*, both charming fellows. Any further developments?”

“Plenty! We’ve learned that every banker in town got one of those anonymous messages this morning, and the Bankers’ Association has held a special meeting and offered a reward of twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of the person who murdered Reeves and Ashfield. That means thirty thousand for you, my boy, if your plan succeeds.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### AT ONE-FORTY SIX.

WHEN Shumway reached the Merchants’ Bank, about one o’clock that afternoon, he perceived a dozen uniformed policemen in the neighborhood and as many more plain-clothes men, mingling with the crowds in the street in a casual, unobtrusive manner. Since the Newspaper Publishers’ Association, at the special conference this morning, had agreed to print nothing concerning the threat against Eggleston’s life, the people streaming to and from the bank building never suspected the cause of the policemen’s presence.

The police department, angered by the boldness of the unknown murderer and stimulated by the big reward, had taken extraordinary measures to cap-

ture him. Every door to the bank was heavily guarded, and every policeman in the downtown district had been put on his mettle.

Ascending to the bank floor, Shumway discerned a dozen more plain-clothes guards stationed quietly at strategic points. The Bankers’ Association had retained a private detective agency, and the representatives of this agency were also present.

He found President Eggleston in his private office, exchanging witticisms with the newspaper men. The private detectives, with characteristic self-importance, had attempted to eject the reporters from the bank, but Eggleston, also characteristically, had forbidden this.

“Let ’em stay,” he said in his bluff fashion. “If there’s going to be a killing in my bank I want the press to know about it. But there won’t be any killing,” he added emphatically, and, rising from his great desk, he illustrated to the reporters, with elaborate detail, the “utter impossibility” of such a thing.

His office could be entered, he pointed out, only through the door leading to the bank, and that door was now guarded by three armed men, and it would be so guarded all afternoon. The massive plate-glass window, facing the street, was securely locked on the inside and could not be opened from without.

Besides, he went on, the window was a sheer forty feet above the sidewalk and more than ten feet from the window above. There was no fire escape near the window, and a half dozen men were guarding it, both in the street below and the window above.

“So you see,” he finished laughingly, “there’s no hope for you boys getting any news here to-day. Sorry to disappoint you, but there’ll be no killing. Not to-day, at any rate. There’s not one chance in twenty million.”

They went out, leaving him alone with his secretary, a dark-haired young woman, who, throughout the "demonstration," had sat quietly beside his desk, staring absently at the stenographic notebook in her lap.

It was quite apparent to Shumway that Eggleston's jovial bravado was mostly sham. Beneath the banker's blustering manner he detected an undercurrent of fear which seemed substantiated by the remarkable precautions he had taken.

And, after all, who could blame him? With the atrocious murder of his fellow bankers, Reeves and Ashfield, still fresh in his mind, no wonder he was alarmed!

Shumway, last to leave the office, glanced back at the door and saw the bank president sitting at his desk, dictating a letter to his secretary.

A huge clock on the wall informed him it was fifteen minutes past one. Shumway strolled through the bank, remarking that the detectives outnumbered the customers. He walked back toward Eggleston's private office. Three men stood guard outside the door, and a short distance away stood two more, narrowly eying every person who approached.

The street outside, as Shumway knew, was carefully watched, and so were all the adjacent streets. The window of the banker's office was guarded by at least a dozen men. "Not one chance in twenty million," Eggleston had said, and it seemed he was right.

Shumway joined the group of newspaper men who were sitting outside the door, enjoying the expensive cigars which Eggleston had given to them. It was now twenty-five minutes past one.

The minutes sped past, or dragged slowly along, according to your mood, while the reporters bantered one another, "kidded" the detectives, smoked the cigars, spent the reward money, and watched the big clock on the wall.

At thirty-eight minutes after one, Eggleston's secretary came from his office, closed the door behind her and walked to her desk. Shumway, observing her closely, saw her seat herself at the desk, insert a letterhead in her typewriter and open her notebook. He noticed her fingers were trembling.

For perhaps a minute she studied her notes, a perplexed frown on her brow, then she rose abruptly with a quick, nervous movement and returned to the office, taking the notebook with her.

At one forty-three she again emerged, again closed the door behind her and crossed to her desk, studiously ignoring the eyes watching her. Her face was pale. She was palpably frightened, ill at ease.

It was one forty-four, one minute from the fatal hour. The reporters had ceased their chatter and were silently watching the clock. The guards at the door were exhibiting signs of nervousness. One of them placed his hand on the knob, as if minded to open it and look within, but refrained, evidently fearing the act would betray his excitement.

The giant minute hand of the clock crept slowly, inevitably toward the figure nine. The dozen men who were watching it almost held their breath, as it touched the three-quarter mark, and when it gradually moved on, the merest fraction, there was an almost audible sigh of relief. The suspense was over! The fateful moment had come and gone.

The hand was hovering at one forty-six when Eggleston's secretary, who had made several ineffectual attempts to type a letter, sprang from her chair, her face pale as death, and hurried to his office. Ignoring the detectives, she flung the door open, and then, just as she was crossing the threshold, she uttered a piercing scream and fell unconscious to the floor.

Shumway, who had been watching

her instead of the clock, leaped to his feet and rushed to the room. His eyes darted instantly to Eggleston, and he saw why she had fainted. Eggleston was dead!

## CHAPTER X.

"I TOLD YOU SO."

IN the midst of the ensuing panic, Shumway kept a level head. Detectives, reporters, bank employees, all crowded pell-mell into Eggleston's office, all talking excitedly, all asking questions which nobody answered.

The unconscious young woman was carried to a divan. Somebody telephoned for a doctor. Somebody else dashed madly downstairs to spread the alarm. A group gathered quickly at the desk where the dead man sat. There was much confusion.

Shumway, standing near the door, heard a voice say: "He's shot through the head; it killed him instantly."

Two answers immediately presented themselves: Suicide and the dark-haired secretary. The first he promptly put aside. As for the second—but that, too, he saw, was highly improbable. True, the girl might have killed him, but no shot had been heard.

And then suddenly he perceived the correct solution, and, such was its obviousness, he wondered he hadn't seen it at once.

Without a word he turned and sped quietly from the bank and hastened across the street to an old office building, directly opposite. On the third floor of this aged building he found what he sought, a small room, recently vacated, facing the street and commanding an unobstructed view of Eggleston's private office.

Beside the open window stood a .45 caliber rifle, mute evidence of the tragedy that had just been enacted here. From the litter on the floor he plucked a half-eaten Baldwin apple, and nearby he found a rifle case; but of more im-

mediate interest to him was the sheet of red paper attached to the barrel of the rifle.

Scrawled across this ruby-colored sheet, which bore the fatal letter Z in the angular handwriting he had seen that morning, were four brief words, forming a grim, ironical sentence:

"I told you so!"

Hurried inquiry in the adjacent offices and questioning of the elevator starter and operators revealed nothing of value. The people in the next office said they had heard "some sort of report" a few minutes ago, but hadn't paid it much attention, supposing it to be only the slamming of a door. Nobody had seen a man of Z's description, nor had anybody noticed "anything unusual."

Shumway telephoned the story to his paper and ran back to the vacant room. Looking across the street into Eggleston's office, he saw that the frantic men therein had discovered the bullet hole in the plate-glass window and were excitedly gesticulating his way.

In ten minutes they were swarming through the building, carefully searching every office, minutely examining the "death chamber," combing the litter there for clues, interrogating all.

The alarm went forth. A hue and cry went up. The police dragnet was spread throughout the downtown streets and drawn in and thrown farther out. A dozen or more "suspects" were arrested. When all was done, the entire result came merely to this: Z had again committed murder, and again he had eluded the law.

## CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER RED ENVELOPE.

THAT night Shumway sat in his shanty copying long passages from the book on banking, until well past twelve o'clock.

His lonely vigil was interrupted by

an amateur sleuth, eagerly seeking fame and fortune, and by two newspaper men, one from *The Morning Post*, the other from *The Morning Sun*, whom he disposed of in somewhat the same manner that had proved effective in the case of the afternoon reporters.

About one o'clock he wrapped himself in the blankets on the floor and fell asleep. He left the oil stove burning, the kerosene lamp lit on the table, and the door to the cabin unlatched. He awoke with a start to find himself in darkness and the room freezingly cold. The lamp and stove had burned out. He struck a match and looked at his watch. It lacked twenty minutes of five.

Further sleep being impossible, he sprang from his comfortless couch, violently waving his arms to excite warmth, and went to an owl lunch room for some hot coffee. Then he boarded a downtown street car and, before six o'clock, entered the local room of *The Standard*. Barker, who was on the early shift, sat at the city desk, clipping the morning newspapers. He looked up in surprise. "Hello! What brings you down so early?"

"Couldn't sleep," said Shumway. "Has the mail come yet?"

"Not due for an hour. But here's something that will interest you." Barker with his shears indicated a "box" on the first page of *The Morning Sun*, announcing a reward of five thousand dollars offered by that paper for the arrest of the person or persons who had slain Henry W. Reeves, L. D. Ashfield, and Frank W. Eggleston.

Beyond this announcement the morning papers contained little that was new or really important, notwithstanding each of them devoted several columns to the murder mystery which was declared to be the most baffling in the annals of the city.

The police and detective departments were engaged in the greatest man hunt

in their history. Their dragnet now extended beyond the city, into the suburbs and adjacent towns. Some twenty suspicious characters had been caught in this net and were being held by the police for investigation, but the real murderer, who taunted them with his notes and supplied them with all manner of clues, still remained at large.

Shumway, with his feet propped on a steam radiator, sat reading the papers and smoking cigarettes until a boy came in with the morning mail. Then he walked to the desk where the boy was sorting the letters. One stood out from all the rest and riveted his attention. He drew it forth, a long red envelope, addressed in angular handwriting to "City Editor, Herald."

After a momentary hesitation he tore it open and extracted the sheet of red paper within. On one side of the sheet was a huge black Z, on the other side this message was written:

Walter E. Hubbell, president of the Midland Trust & Savings Bank, will die before four p. m. to-day, Friday, and J. D. Hoyt, president of the State Bank of Oakdale, will die at nine fifteen a. m. to-morrow, Saturday. Z.

## CHAPTER XII.

### KATHARINE CALLS.

IT was as if an unseen hand had dealt Shumway a blow in the face. He sank limply into a chair, staring with distended eyes at the bit of red paper between his trembling fingers.

For the first time the fog of terror, in which all were groping, pierced him personally. Hitherto he had sought to penetrate this fog in the detached, impersonal manner of a scientist. But J. D. Hoyt was Katharine's father!

For the first time, too, he experienced a sort of dazed helplessness. Stunned by the unexpected blow, he seemed powerless to think or act. But only for a moment. Swiftly emerging from his inertia and realizing the need for quick

action, he got Carmody and Pierce on the telephone, told them of this new development and then went to his desk, evolving a new twist to his original plan.

He inserted a sheet of copy paper in his typewriter, wrote a "slug" and his name in the upper left-hand corner, spaced three times, and then he sat scowling at the typewriter keys, while the plan shaped itself in his mind. Suddenly he began writing and wrote steadily, without a moment's pause, until Carmody arrived.

When Carmody had read the note from Z, Shumway disclosed what he had written. "I've two special requests to make," he said. "One is that we run that story through all editions to-day, and the other is that you give me a letter to John Tyson, head of the publishing firm of Tyson & Sons, asking him to lend us a contract blank such as they sign for successful authors. You might tell him we want to use it in connection with a literary note on our Saturday book page."

An hour later, with the coveted blank in his pocket, Shumway telephoned Hoyt at the bank in Oakdale. "Yes, I got the 'death message,'" said Hoyt laughingly, "but I'm not taking it seriously."

"Does Katharine know?"

"No. I arrived at the bank only a minute ago and found it in my mail. You're the first person I've mentioned it to. I shall now turn it over to the postal authorities and forget about it."

"Whatever you do," said Shumway, "don't tell Katharine. No use worrying her unnecessarily."

Calling at the Midland Trust & Savings Bank, he found Hubbell quite differently affected.

"I received the thing this morning," said the banker, patently alarmed, "and I don't intend to take any chances. I've already retained two armed guards to remain with me constantly during the

day, and as an added precaution I'm carrying this." He exhibited a loaded revolver. "Our fascinating Mr. Z," he said with grim humor, "will not catch me napping; I promise you that."

Shumway returned to his office and for the next forty minutes was busily employed with the publisher's contract in a secluded corner of the local room. Here he felt secure from interruption and prying eyes.

Meanwhile he learned from Carmody that the chief of police, the chief of detectives, every police captain and all the newspapers had received duplicates of the terrifying message opened by him that morning. As on the preceding day the newspaper publishers agreed to suppress news of the communication.

The man hunt grew in fury. Every den and crooks' hang-out, every dive and criminals' nest was being ruthlessly raided. Suspects were rounded up by scores. The police stations were crowded to the utmost. And still the fog remained impenetrable. Z, the arch murderer, could not be found.

Shumway was finishing his job on the publisher's contract when a copy boy brought word of "a lady waitin' outside to see you."

It was Katharine, and her first words, when she beheld him, were: "What on earth have you been doing to yourself? You look as if——" She checked her tongue and stared at his face, his clothes, as who should say: "You've been drinking!"

So engrossed had he been that he had forgotten his unshaved face and the ragged habiliment which he had not removed since yesterday morning. Now, however, instead of feeling embarrassed, he was conscious of satisfaction with his trampish appearance. Such an appearance was still essential to his plan. Preoccupied, he made a vague remark, in an absent-minded way, about "not having time to clean up."

"Well, I think it's time you were taking time," she said, piqued by his apparent lack of interest. "But what really brought me here," she went on, opening her reticule, "is this." She gave him a sheet of red notepaper. He opened it and read in the angular scrawl that had become familiar to him: "Twenty-four hours after you receive this you will be fatherless."

"It came in the mail this morning after papa left home," she told him. "I loathe anonymous notes. There's something peculiarly cowardly about them. I suppose I shouldn't worry about it, but do you think it really means anything?"

"It means nothing whatever," he promptly assured her and tore the note to pieces. "Just forget that you ever received it."

"Very well, I shall. Now do get shaved and freshened up and meet me somewhere for lunch."

He shook his head. "Not to-day."  
"Why not?"

He declined to give a reason, except to say he was "too busy." This, of course, was worse than no reason at all.

She chided him for looking like a vagabond and hinted, none too subtly, that he was guilty of insobriety. He, thinking of the big task ahead of him, remembering he was actuated largely by the hope of saving her father, made no effort to conciliate her. She construed this as indifference. The thought irked her. Their words grew acrimonious. All this, of course, could end in but one way: they quarreled and parted in anger.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### SHUMWAY'S VISITOR.

SHUMWAY walked back into the local room, got his overcoat and hat and started for his shanty, resolutely closing, or trying to close, his

mind to Katharine. But the thought of her and their first quarrel lurked in his mind, ready to leap up in an unguarded moment and torture him anew.

Stopping at a drug store on his way to the cabin he bought a roll of absorbent cotton, a bottle of wood alcohol, a cob pipe, and a package of cheap smoking tobacco. At a hardware store he procured an aluminum sauce pan with a long handle. He also purchased another quart of whisky and two more gallons of kerosene.

An hour later he sat at the cheap pine table in the front room of the cottage, reading his book on banking. The jar of red apples was on the table, and on the floor beside his chair were the jelly glasses and a quart bottle of whisky.

He wore the discolored hat and threadbare overcoat, and these, with his unshaved face, soiled collar and frayed necktie, gave him a decidedly unkempt look. The cob pipe between his teeth completed the picture.

About four o'clock he went out and telephoned his office. He was told that Walter Hubbell had died twenty minutes ago.

"Poison," said Pierce succinctly. "A new variety of sanitary drinking cup was sent him in the mail, apparently a sample from a manufacturer. Hubbell took it to the water cooler. In half an hour he was dead. His guards were with him, but they might just as well have been in China."

Deeply troubled, Shumway returned to the cottage. The early winter dusk was setting in, and he lit the oil lamp on the table. Then he placed a wad of the absorbent cotton in the saucepan, thoroughly saturated it with alcohol and put the pan on the floor near the table, with the long handle toward him.

He then sat down and resumed his book. It was dull reading, and his eyes were heavy-lidded. If only he might sleep! But he forced himself to stay



awake and plowed steadily on. Several times he dozed fitfully, and each time awoke with a jerk. At last, however, tired nature had her way. His head sank slowly forward. He slept soundly.

He was awakened by a hand falling heavily on his shoulder, and he looked up to find a tall, gaunt man towering above him, calmly eating an apple. The stranger unfolded a copy of *The Standard* and held it beneath the pale yellow light shed by the lamp. "What's the meaning of this?" he demanded and pointed a bony forefinger to a first-page story.

Shumway, rubbing the sleep from his eyes, leaned forward and made a pretense of reading the story. "It's true," he said, "every word of it."

The stranger seemed incredulous. "Prove it," he said.

"With pleasure," said Shumway, and took the publisher's contract from his pocket and gave it to him.

Deliberately the man drew a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles from a rusty case, adjusted them to his nose and, his lean jaws working methodically on the apple, carefully read the contract through. It specifically set forth that Tyson & Sons had agreed to publish a book "exposing the evils of the modern banking system," written by one Professor Hugo Zipf, and had advanced the aforesaid Professor Zipf five thousand dollars on his royalty account.

Clearly impressed, the stranger asked: "Would they care to publish another such book?"

"Perhaps. Do you know somebody who has written one?"

Vouchsafing no answer he crossed to the shabby bookcase and peered through his spectacles at the tattered volumes. "Rubbish!" he exclaimed. "Not a book in the lot worth reading! Any man who reads such trash can't write intelligently of banks and banking. I've written a book that will

startle the world. I've described how bankers make three thousand per cent on every dollar intrusted to them. I've exposed all their crimes, and I can prove every word."

"Sit down," said Shumway genially, "and tell me about it. But first," he added, hospitably placing the bottle of whisky and jelly glasses on the table, "let's have a nip of liquor."

"I've never touched liquor in my life," said the man, seating himself near the window. "I shan't start now."

"An apple then?"

"Thanks. Your apples are better than your books." He selected one from the glass jar, split it with his thumb, took a generous bite. "Odd flavor for a Baldwin," he remarked, munching thoughtfully.

"You like it?"

"Very odd flavor. Not bad, though." He again bit heavily into the fruit.

Shumway filled a jelly glass with whisky. "This is what gives it the flavor," he said, offering the glass temptingly. "Try it."

The man hesitated, chewing his apple and eying the glass suspiciously. Finally he took it in his hand, sniffed the whisky, tasted it, smacked his lips, sipped it, coughed, then emptied the glass at a gulp.

"Fire!" he exclaimed, coughing and sputtering.

Shumway leaned across the table, looked him steadily in the eye and said evenly in a confidential tone: "You look like a man who can hold his tongue, so I'm going to tell you a secret. I've done more for our cause than write a book. I believe in direct action. What would you say if I were to tell you it was I who killed Henry Reeves, Frank Eggleston, L. D. Ashfield——"

The man leaped to his feet, his eyes blazing. "I'd say you were a liar!" he declared. His lips were curled back angrily, revealing a missing front tooth.

"I've proof," said Shumway and

spread on the table his sheets of cherry-colored paper, the Z's uppermost.

"Forgery!" said the gaunt stranger and swept the bits of paper to the floor. "I say you lie!"

Shumway filled the cob pipe with tobacco and took a match from his pocket. "What makes you think I lie?"

His infuriated guest was striding violently to and fro. The fiery whisky, coursing hotly through his veins, lashed his fury. Suddenly he paused at the table. "You know you lie!" he said in thunderous tones and banged the table with his fist. "I am the man who put those crooks away. Don't lie to me! I am the man that America is talking about to-night. You are nothing! I"—he drew himself up proudly—"I am the celebrated Z!"

At this point Shumway lit his match, leisurely touched it to his pipe and dropped it, still lighted, in the saucepan on the floor. Instantly the cotton, soaked with alcohol, burst into flames. He seized the blazing object by the long handle, ran to the door and flung it far out into the street. It described a flaming parabola in mid-air.

When he closed the door and turned back into the room his guest was helping himself to the whisky. He quietly sat down in the chair near the window and watched him swallow three drinks in rapid succession.

It opened the floodgates of his speech. Moving nervously about the small room, now boastful, anon tearful, he told a rambling, disconnected story of how his life's savings had been lost in a bank failure, how he had vowed vengeance, and how he had cunningly planned and executed the murders that had struck terror to the city these last few days.

"Reeves and Ashfield were easy," he said. "I merely stepped up behind them at their desks, slit their throats and walked out. Eggleston was difficult. I needed all my nimble wit to

enter that vacant office, pick him off with a rifle and get away clean. Today's job was simple, some prussic acid in a drinking cup sent to Hubbell with the compliments of the Sanitex Drinking Cup Co. A gamble, of course, yet I won.

"And to-morrow," he said with a flourish, pausing at the table for another drink of whisky, "I shall remove J. D. Hoyt of the State Bank of Oakdale. I shan't rest until I've killed 'em all! I will show up their vicious system, demonstrate that all bankers are leeches——"

"How will you kill Hoyt?" Shumway softly interrupted.

"Artistically. When he enters his automobile to-morrow morning a time bomb in the seat will explode and blow him to atoms."

The murderer had poured another drink of whisky. As he lifted the glass to his lips, Shumway reached behind the gunny sack at the window and rapped sharply on the pane.

In another moment the door burst open, and Detective Sergeants Michael Sullivan and Tom O'Shea, both old friends of Shumway, charged into the room.

The ensuing ten minutes were filled with violence, for they were dealing with a madman. The table was upset, the bookcase overturned, and everything was smashed, but when the struggle ended he was securely tied and handcuffed. The fog had passed. The hunt was over.

Some two hours later Shumway sat in the office of the chief of police, the center of a throng of policemen, detectives, reporters, and representatives of the Bankers' Association. Ambrose Niclow Zander, otherwise known as Z, had signed a complete confession and was now safely locked in a cell.

For what seemed the twentieth time,

Shumway was asked: "How did you do it?"

"When I saw that first sheet of red paper," he answered, "I put him down as a homicidal maniac, and when he committed the second murder, leaving another red sheet behind, I knew I was right. It was clear to me, then, he was obsessed by some real or imaginary grievance against bankers. It was also a safe bet that he had either written a book on banking, or was contemplating writing one, and was seeking a publisher. I was sure he would eventually seek my fictitious Professor Zipf, in whom he recognized a kindred spirit, for publishing advice. My only fear was that he would delay too long. But the story I wrote this morning fetched him."

"What about those apple seeds?" somebody asked.

"They were a symbol of his wrath. 'An apple a day' was the favorite maxim of the president of the bank in which he lost his savings, and he says

he wanted to show that 'he eats apples best who eats them last.' In his confession, by the way, he boasts of having killed that man soon after the collapse of the bank. We're investigating this, and it is probable that in the indictment another murder will be charged against him."

Shumway paused, once more to gaze with dancing eyes on the three bright-colored checks in his hand, aggregating thirty-five thousand dollars, and all were made payable to him. One of these he promptly indorsed and gave to Captain Grimm of the Detective Bureau.

"I want you to divide that five thousand equally between O'Shea and Sullivan," he said. "They never lost faith in my plan, eccentric though it seemed, and they were right on the job when I needed them. Besides," he added, pocketing the thirty thousand, "I've plenty left on which to get married, if the girl will forgive me for not shaving to-day."

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## WOULD-BE MURDERER FORGOT TO PAD ROPE

**I**N what is alleged to have been an attempt to murder Mrs. Irene Lippmann, Jack Lippmann, her husband, attached a rope to a chimney on the roof of an apartment house, lowered himself over the edge, and went down the rope in the middle of the night toward the apartment in which she was sleeping. He carried with him a butcher knife and a revolver.

Two blunders saved Mrs. Lippmann, and may cost her tailor husband his life. He neglected to put a pad under the rope where it came in contact with a cornice of the roof, and he entered a window on the fourth floor instead of one on the third. Failing to find his wife, from whom he had been separated two years, he grasped the rope and attempted to pull himself out of the window.

By this time the rope, scraping against the cornice, had been virtually sawed in two. Only a few strands held it together. And as the tailor again swung himself free from the building it parted. His wife was asleep when he shot past her window, and she knew nothing of her narrow escape from what might have been a terrible death until she was awakened by Policeman Trechtler, who told her that Lippman had been taken to Bellevue Hospital and locked up, charged with violating the Sullivan act and attempted felonious assault.

At first the police thought the tailor was a burglar, but he admitted so freely that he had planned to kill his wife and then do away with himself that his story was accepted. It was later confirmed by Mrs. Lippman, who said her husband had attempted to enter the tenement the preceding afternoon, but was stopped, and that he had sworn to "get" her.

# Big-nose Charley's Dog Helps Out

by Charles W. Tyler

Author of "Hounded by Habit," etc.

**T**HERE were times when the city of culture palled on Big-nose Charley, and there were occasions when dear old Boston did not look upon her prodigy from Kerry Village with any special degree of proud motherhood.

Giving Charley the gate, in the past, had served its purpose temporarily; also when there was no particular evidence with which to enforce on the old scoundrel the hospitality of the commonwealth. However, but a short time after the opening of the automobile show in Mechanics' Building, the bureau of criminal investigation came into the possession of heart-rending truths which even the most ardent of Charley's followers at Pemberton Square were loath to look upon in a spirit of amusement.

In consequence thereof, Big-nose Charley had journeyed westward aboard a freight train, using the side-exit Pullmans in preference to the varnished cars because of the promise of comparative privacy.

In a "gun town" of the Middle West, there followed a period of inactivity. The old-timer rested on his laurels—which stood him about seven thousand dollars—and meanwhile set about replenishing his wardrobe.

Something after the manner of certain newly admitted nabobs, Big-nose Charley went forth in search of raiment with which to adorn, bedeck, garnish, ornament his lanky person. Charley's

tastes were flashy, very flashy. Under normal atmospheric conditions Big-nose Charley's visibility was approximately the same as that of Highland Light.

The old box-man carried a cane, wore tortoise-shell wind shields, and spats, to cap the climax. These accessories, after a time, were augmented by a koodoo called "Nightingale." Charley, also, bought an ornamental collar and a leash.

Apparently, Nightingale was of foreign birth. Sure enough, it would have been difficult to discover another breed like him in North America. He was the homeliest, saddest, hungriest-looking dog that ever buried a bone. He had a high, melodious voice that was more refined than a bay and more pathetic than the lament of a lost soul on a dark and stormy night.

However, a sort of bond of friendship sprang up between Charley and the dog, which made them almost inseparable. When Charley went on a tour of the shopping district, he dragged Nightingale with him. The mongrel never went anywhere on a leash without being forcefully propelled. He had never been broken to the halter, and, if one were to judge by the expression on his face, he never intended to be. His canine ideas were fixed, and it was too late in life to change them.

Now, while it was true that the particular city where our old friend was stopping was not open to gentlemen

who were on the cross—in other words, living by crooked work—nevertheless there was nothing against Charley's looking around and getting acquainted with any persons of wealth. Several individuals came to his attention in the course of time, whose business interests centered about the jewelry trade.

Beecher Stack was a gem drummer, and about as glib a gentleman as ever packed a sample case. He met Big-nose Charley in the Hotel Sheehy lobby—by accident. Charley was dragging Nightingale in an easterly direction, when he crossed Mr. Stack's bow without blowing signals. The result was that the salesman stumbled over the dog.

"For the love of mud what are you doing with a beast like that in here?" yelled the irate Mr. Stack, climbing to his feet and aiming a kick at Nightingale. "Get out, you brute!"

"I beg yeh puddin'," apologized Charley, hauling the animal clear of the drummer's battling toe. "I'm sure it wuz a accident—wa'n't ut, Nightie?"

"I'll accident 'im!" fumed Mr. Stack. "You've no business having an ugly, scrawny pest like that in a place of this kind!"

"I'm sor-reh, adm'r'l," murmured the old rascal meekly. "Tch, tch!" He moved around Mr. Stack, brushing at imaginary specks of dust. "I assure yeh ut won't happen again. Most unf'r't'nate thing I ever see. Oh, my, yea-ah!"

Big-nose Charley moved one way, and Nightingale suddenly took a notion to scramble the other. Beecher Stack, representing a large jewelry firm in New York, and having two fat wallets in an inner pocket of his vest, desired to see just exactly what was coming off behind him. He turned around, red of face and still fuming. In so doing, he backed over the tow-rope which stretched between Charley and the dog, and fell heavily against a potted pal-

metto plant, behind which Nightingale was seeking refuge.

"What the whooping, dad-busted Sambo are you trying to do, you cussed old idiot?" roared Mr. Stack, coming up like a porpoise, but with one leg encircled by the leash. "Take that devilish hound off me! Untie him! Unwind the cur! Where's the proprietor? This hotel was all right once, but it's a zoo now. Mr. Jones, Mr. Pulsifer, you at the desk, get a porter to throw these condemned lunatics out of this place!"

"*Wheet, wheet, wheet!* Nice doggie! Nice Nightie!" Big-nose Charley sought to pacify the thoroughly alarmed animal, now "ki-yi-ing" for all he was worth, in anticipation of further hostilities on the part of the dancing, swearing personage beyond the palmetto.

However, Nightingale was becoming more apprehensive each instant. He backed away frantically, twisting his head and pawing and thrashing disastrously. Charley still clutched one end of the leash, and at the same time endeavored to soothe both the animal and Beecher Stack. The latter was now swinging wildly with his fists and calling down the righteous wrath of the gods.

Also Nightingale had cast aside the last particle of restraint and was howling in a manner that was calculated to acquaint the populace with the fact that he was one scared dog.

Two porters, three bell hops, a clerk, the house detective, and four guests closed in and attempted to effect a rescue. Mr. Stack kicked at the dog's chops, a mean sidewise thrust of his left foot, while with his right hand he jabbed at Charley's nose.

"This is going to cost somebody something—as sure as my name—is Stack!" gasped the gem drummer. "A—a man, minding his—own business in—a hotel he's been—been—patronizing for ten years—is set upon by a—a dirty, dashed,

blinking mongrel—right in the blank-blank lobby!”

Somebody tried to pull Mr. Stack clear of the melée and in consequence contracted a claret nose. Charley, now a resplendent center of a rapidly increasing attraction, sought to pry the drummer in the opposite direction from that in which the dog was pulling, and in so doing ripped open the gentleman's vest.

Beecher Stack reached for the thong of leather which was about his right leg, and while in this stooping position his precious wallets slipped from their resting place to the floor. A loud outcry escaped the gem drummer as he reached frantically for his precious stone containers. He seized one, and Big-nose Charley secured the other, which the latter squeezed apprisingly for the briefest fraction of a second; then he returned it with as polite a bow as the general turmoil would allow.

Slowly calm succeeded chaos. Nightingale was freed from Mr. Stack's limb, and the animal promptly backed away with his tail between his legs and a distrustful eye on the still seething individual from New York. Charley himself at once waxed eloquent in his attempt to smooth out the drummer's feelings in particular and the hotel employees' in general.

“Yuh know,” murmured Charley, smirking at Mr. Stack, “ol' David says, ‘F'r dogs have compassed me, an' the assembly uh the wicked has enclosed meh.’ Oh, yea-ah, that's what he says. So yeh see yuh ain't the first un a kioodle has been the downfall uh.”

“That's all right!” yelled the drummer. “But I'll be the last guy that hungry wolf trips up! I'll break his con-founded neck”—rubbing the dust from his knees. “And what's more, I'll hang a wallop on your ear if you say so!”

“Tch, tch!” Charley looked aggrieved. “D'ye think that's purty?”

“Get out, you brute, before I break

your back!” Once more Beecher Stack charged threateningly at Nightingale, but a polite and suave clerk diplomatically headed him off, while he assured Mr. Stack that both the hound and its owner would be requested to leave the hotel at once.

“Don't kick 'em out on my account,” growled the distressed salesman. “They can stay here until Gehenna freezes for all I care—if you can stand 'em. But I do want to boot that hungry-looking mutt just once for luck.”

However, cooler heads prevailed, and peace was restored. Charley and his dog retired, both looking hurt.

Mr. Stack loudly expressed the yearning to remain long enough around that particular hotel to get a crack at a human riot that didn't know any more than to inflict his presence on a long-suffering public by appearing with a scrawny beast.

“I'd rid the community of the thing if I was hanging around here a great while,” he proclaimed violently, leaning against the desk and glaring toward the corner where Big-nose Charley and his fellow sufferer had retreated. “If I wasn't going on toward the coast tonight,” promised Mr. Stack contentiously, “I'd just take the evening off and put that pair out of their misery. Bah! Look at 'em! My soul, where'd he ever get that porcupine? Whew! And the old stiff himself! Brains he has nix, and he wears clothes like the Chelsea fire.”

Big-nose Charley and his dog had been the principle topic of conversation about the Hotel Sheehy lobby for a number of days. If there was ever a cur, a mongrel, a dilapidated, misused imitation of a dog, Nightingale was that animal, and yet the resplendent old shyster who towed the brute around maintained that the beast was a thoroughbred and worth a startlingly large sum of money, much to the amusement of the guests.

Charley certainly had lavished a lot of cold cash on Nightingale, so far as care and board and a bell hop to take the purp sight-seeing in the park went. People nodded their heads behind Charley's back, and wagged the fore-fingers of their right hands in little circles directly above their right ears, in indication of a firmly rooted belief that the silver-haired personage in the shrieking clothes was "gone," loco, squirrel food, and so forth.

But Charley himself took everything seriously, while he discovered what he could about the business of some of the gentlemen who were forever quick to make him the butt of facetious remarks.

The night that Beecher Stack boarded a Pullman sleeper, westward bound, Big-nose Charley and Nightingale, also, appeared at the station and secured accommodations on the same train.

And immediately matters began to approach something of a crisis.

## II.

The baggageman on the Southwest Express received Nightingale into his keeping with certain appropriate remarks about the animal's appearance, and asserted, loudly and earnestly, that he was no animal tamer, nor did he wish it understood that he looked gleefully upon the proposition of acting in the capacity of nurse for a hyena such as stood before him.

"If I'd wanted to 'a' been a animal tamer, buddy," he said, "I'd be with a circus instead of railroadin'. You hear me. I don't want the job 'of herdin' a thing like that. What breed of a dog is he, anyhow?"

"He's a full-blooded meat hound," explained Charley with a little touch of pride in his voice, "an' his name is Nightingale. He's pedigreed, an' rare as yeller-haired Eskimoos."

"I'll say, he's rare," agreed the baggageman. "I never saw anything like

him, and I never expect to again. Huh! Meat hound, eh? Well, he don't look it. If that bow-wow ever saw a piece of meat he'd drop dead. Why don't you feed 'im better?"

"He's been sick," Charley explained; "that's what makes 'im look like that. Anyhow, them kind of dogs don't get very fat. Mm. An' speakin' uh lookin' out f'r 'im, tch, in course I'll make ut wery easy fer yeh t' jest sort uh keep Nightie company. I'll be in t' see 'im oncet in a while, an' feed 'im. Yuh see I has t' be careful uh the meat I give 'im, him bein' diliket some. Probably 'bout twelve o'clock I'll come in an' give 'im suthin' t' eat."

The old rascal, his brain alive with a busy little plan concerning the diamonds which he knew the gem drummer carried, fished a huge roll of bills from his kick and peeled off a twenty. This he held out toward the baggageman.

Promptly the latter reached for the bill, and at the same time took the leash from Charley's hand.

"I'll watch over this hound like he was a first cousin of my aunt," stated the railroad man promptly, his enthusiasm mounting. "Come in as often as you want to. Does he howl?"

"Does he howl?" Charley glanced at the other reprovingly. "He sings," he corrected. "I pretty near had a couple chancets to put 'im in grand opray, but he don't know enough furrin language."

Big-nose Charley moved down the lane between the trunks. The baggageman dragged Nightingale to a corner of the car and fastened him to a slat over the steam pipes.

In a Pullman near the rear of the train, Beecher Stack was loafing in a borrowed section, while George, the porter, made up his berth. After a little he arose, stretched, and made his way to the smoking compartment. Here he came up abruptly.

Slumped far down on a black-leather

cushion was a gaudy gentleman who was boring three others with weird tales anent a wonderful dog in the baggage car ahead by the name of Nightingale. Presently Mr. Stack snorted with derision.

"Some cur!" he exclaimed. "Huh! Gentlemen, if you ever had the pleasure of seeing that hound, and on top of that had him wound around your legs, you'd be in a position to understand what a big blow-hard this man is. Why, that beast hasn't got even the mark of a dog about him."

Big-nose Charley glanced at the newcomer and smiled warmly, almost affectionately.

"Mm. Good evenin', Mister Stack," he said by way of greeting. "Hope I sees yuh well. Funny thing, but I wuz j'st tellin' these gentlemen about Nightingale. 'N' say, do yeh know what ut says in th' Good Book? 'Don't f'rget t' entertain strangers, f'r some has entertained swell hombres without knowin' ut.' That's what ut says."

"It does, does it?" grunted Mr. Stack ungraciously. "Humph! What are you doing, following me around, you and that dad-bunked bloodhound?"

Suddenly recognition flashed in the eyes of another of the smoking party. He got up.

"Excuse me just a minute, friends," he murmured half aloud.

A moment later he drew the gem drummer back out of sight in the narrow corridor.

"Hello! Hello, there!" Beecher Stack held out his hand. "I didn't know you at first."

"How are you, Stack? I thought your face was familiar. It took me a minute to place you."

"Well, and what's on your mind?"

"Say, do you know that old devil in there?" The man's voice dropped to a whisper.

"All I know about the confounded yap is that he came into the lobby of

the Hotel Sheehy to-day with a blasted dog and somehow walked around me, and before I knew it I was tangled with the two of 'em."

The other grunted.

"Did you have any diamonds on you?"

"Yes, by time! And before we got unsnarled both of my wallets fell out on the floor."

"It's a wonder you've got 'em now," stated Mr. Stack's acquaintance. "That man is Big-nose Charley, and he's one of the slickest crooks outside the pen. I didn't work for the Jewelers' Protective Union ten years for nothing. I haven't seen the old sinner since he pulled a job in Denver in 1910. It was like most of his stuff—any fool could see that no one else got the diamonds, but it took a wise dick to pin it on him."

"A crook, is he? The condemned old psalm-singer! Why, dang it, Bax, he picked up one of my cases and handed it back to me as polite as pudding. Thanks for the tip. Say, what do you know about that dog? Man, but you ought to get a slant at the brute. What did he do with it, I wonder?"

"Oh, the animal's in the baggage car. He says he gave the baggageman twenty dollars to take care of it. Why, Lord love you, he's got a little box of meat in his pocket for the darned beast. You'd think it was caramels; a lot of little cubes, and each one is wrapped in tissue paper. He was showing us. He says the stuff is scientifically prepared meat, and he doles out about eight or ten of those inch-square pieces at a feeding. How big is the purp?"

"Big! Thunder! The animal is most as big as a calf. That's rich—ten little squares of meat. Well, Heaven knows the dog looks it. Let's take a walk up ahead and look at it by and by, just for the fun of it. Honestly, I think the old coot is bugs. By the way, what are you doing now, Baxter? Still an old gumshoe, I suppose."



"Oh, yes. But I haven't been with the Jewelers' for a couple of years now. On the pay roll of the American Agency at present. Well, what do you say? Let's go in and kid this old hyena. He don't know me; I got most of my dope on him through circulars years ago."

The two men entered the smoking compartment and settled themselves with a self-satisfied air. There was ahead, they believed, a little enjoyment at the expense of the lanky gentleman in the fancy clothes.

Big-nose Charley eyed them, first one and then the other, with almost fatherly toleration, and began carefully to roll a cigarette.

"Mm," he murmured at last, pausing before touching his tongue to the poised flap of the bit of rice paper. "Yeh know, ol' Solomon says, he says, 'Debate the cause with yuh neighbor, an' discover not the secret of another hombre, because he will maybe savvy ut an' give yeh the ha-ha.'"

### III.

George put the car to bed and then wrapped himself in a blanket and proceeded to take a nap in an empty section near the end of the Pullman. The lights were low, and a number of gentlemen were snoring industriously. Included in the syncopated chorus was the voice of Mr. Beecher Stack. Mr. Baxter crawled behind the curtains of his berth with the intention of keeping an eye on Big-nose Charley, so to speak.

In the course of time, well along toward morning, the tired American Agency man began to doze. Following several jerky awakenings, he reached the conclusion that, after all, the old crook was entertaining no evil designs concerning Mr. Stack's samples. Once he made his way down the curtain-shrouded aisle past No. 10, that he might satisfy himself as to whether or not Charley was asleep. Apparently,

the old box-man was deep in slumber, if one was to judge by the way he snored.

The detective retired to his berth and partially disrobed; then settled himself for a nap. Nearly an hour passed. Dawn was but a little more than another hour distant. Suddenly the curtains of No. 10 stirred, softly, gently, and a silvered head appeared. A pair of keen old eyes ranged up and down the aisle.

At last the head faded from sight. In the privacy of his berth, Big-nose Charley snapped on the tiny electric light, then gave himself over to a careful study of a time-table. A few moments later the man from the city of culture, fully dressed, stood a few feet distant from the head of the section where slept Mr. Beecher Stack.

Big-nose Charley had given long study to the customs of jewelry salesmen. Consequently he was more or less conversant with the habits of the species. Nine times out of ten, he had learned, the representatives of high-class jewel-houses traveling in a Pullman sleeper, upon retiring, removed their wallets from an inner pocket of their clothes and transferred the precious leathers to a place beneath their pillows.

Now the old rascal, partially hidden by the green curtains of the berth, which he pulled about him, crouched low and began the task of carefully removing one of the gem drummer's wallets.

Mr. Stack moved uneasily and partly rolled over. Charley rested on his labors, waiting until the gentleman began to snore regularly again; then he resumed his crafty attempt at lifting the leather.

Something like fifteen minutes later our old friend of Kerry Village held in his hands a wallet which contained a small fortune in unset diamonds. Swiftly Charley removed eight stones; then quietly he crowded the pocketbook back to its place beneath the pillow of

Beecher Stack. At last he sighed softly and straightened up, glancing both ways to make sure that he was not observed.

A few seconds later the veteran of the underworld was making his way forward to the baggage car. The baggageman was warming a pot of coffee over a small oil stove. He greeted Charley with a grin. Apparently it was not the old crook's first visit to the car ahead.

"You have to feed that hound mighty regular, don't you, neighbor?" the railroad man wanted to know. "I should think it'd make you thin, losing your sleep that a way."

"Well, yeh see, me reg'lar walet what nurses Nightingale is went t' his wiff's ol' lady's funeral, so I give 'im a couple days off. He's goin' to meet meh at Cheyenne. Oh, yea-ah, I allus has me a walet. Handiest things yeh ever see. I us'ter has three or four on 'em before I lost my fortoom. Mm."

Big-nose Charley removed a box from a pocket of his coat, which was approximately the size of a one-pound candy box. He lifted off the cover and made his way toward the expectant Nightingale. The dog strained forward, licking his chops. His meals were never overhearty, but what there was of them, was tasty.

Charley carefully selected a small square of meat and removed the scrap of tissue paper which protected it. By now Nightingale was drooling and whining. The old-timer with the flashy clothes worked the morsel between his fingers for a moment, then tossed it to the straining dog. Nightingale was an expert at taking his lunches on the fly. He opened a yawning cavern of a mouth and then gulped once—and was ready for the next consignment.

It was about this time that Mr. Baxter, of the American Detective Agency, awoke with a vague feeling that all was not well along the Potomac. He grunted sleepily and rolled over, but the pre-

monition that had seemed to invade even his dreams persisted. He swung his stockinged feet out of his berth and for a time sat listening.

A few seconds later he walked down past section No. 10. Something seemed to be lacking in the general air of things. There was no sound coming from the berth that had been occupied by Big-nose Charley. The detective paused abruptly, his head turned slightly sideways; then he pursed his lips together and carefully pulled aside a corner of the curtains that shielded the berth which Charley had occupied.

A very short time thereafter Mr. Baxter peeped in on his old friend, Mr. Stack. This gentleman evidently had suffered no disturbing dreams; he was sleeping lustily.

The detective returned to his own berth and slipped on his shoes. Thereafter a brief interval elapsed before he entered the baggage car. Big-nose Charley was just tossing the fifth cube of nourishment to Nightingale. The detective snorted.

"My soul! Do you get up every hour to feed that scrawny cur?" he demanded peevishly, watching Charley unwrap cube number six, soften it in his fingers, crumple the tissue wrapper into a small ball, and then toss the meat to the dog.

"Why, how d'ye do, Mister Sangster," Charley greeted the gentleman, beaming in a fatherly way on the ex-Jewelers' man. "Ain't ut good uh yuh t' get up a purpose t' see that Nightie gets his food reg'lar! Was yeh afraid I'd sleep over—or suthin'?"

Mr. Baxter was still carrying a hunch that everything was not as it seemed. Either this fellow was a fool, and a big fool, just fit for a padded cell, or—huh!—or there was something in the wind that hadn't come to the surface as yet. The detective recalled having heard of a case where a smuggler had fed some precious stones to a dog in

meat. Now there was something behind this confounded crook's actions—or there were grounds for having the fellow turned over to the police to be held for observation.

Mr. Baxter turned on his heel and moved back in the general direction of the Pullman sleeper occupied by Mr. Stack. He had suddenly resolved that it would not be amiss if he awoke the other and made certain that both of this gentleman's wallets were intact.

The gem drummer sat up and rubbed his eyes in prompt acknowledgment of the shaking which the detective gave him.

"What's the matter?" he cried. "What is it, a train wreck?"

"Look and see if your wallets are all right," directed Mr. Baxter. "That old fool is up in the baggage car feeding that accursed hound again, and I don't know who's crazy around here."

Mr. Stack snatched hastily at his pillow. When it had been tossed aside both men uttered exclamations of relief.

"Everything's all right," said the salesman.

"I must be off," admitted the detective, "but I could have sworn that something was in the wind. I had a hunch that we were going to pin a jolt in stir on this guy. Well, what do you know about that?"

Almost mechanically, the jewelry drummer picked up one of the wallets and opened it. He examined its contents under the rays of the electric light in his berth, and nodded. A moment later he was checking up the contents of the second.

Suddenly a cry shattered the quiet of the Pullman.

"My Lord!" yelled Mr. Stack. "Part of 'em are gone! They're not all here! one! Two! Three——"

The detective groaned and then swore mightily.

5F—DS

"I knew it!" he shouted, prancing in the direction of his berth for his artillery. "He's feedin' 'em to that blank-blank meathound! Sure as you are born, Stack, the whole thing was a plant. Nobody knows how long he has been trailing you. Billy Howland, traveling partner of Kleinschmidt & Howland, Maiden Lane, was followed all over New England. And finally right in New York, on a Twenty-third Street crosstown car, they slit his pocket and got a wallet with thirty-eight thousand dollars' worth of diamonds in it. Come on! Come on! We'll get that old devil—and we'll get the dog!"

#### IV.

Big-nose Charley has said: "Ten years is a lon' time to spend thinkin' how yuh might have saved yerse'f a trip t' the pen. Ut's better t' use yuh skull in makin' a get-away, than yuh feet.

"Yeh know Solomon says, 'The legs uh the simple ain't equal, an' wisdom is better than yeh second wind.'"

Big-nose Charley stumbled slightly in his quotation, or it may have been that he thought Solomon stumbled, and he felt that there was room for improvement. Be that as it may, when Charley conceived the idea of robbing a gem drummer, he began to prepare the way, as he expressed it, with no little thought and deliberation.

The old-timer realized fully that he was going up against the Jewelers' Protective Union when he stuck up a jewelry salesman, and it was said that once a detective of this association took the trail he seldom failed to get his man. It was, accordingly, necessary that he perform with the utmost care.

Charley had felt that the gentleman spoken to as Baxter was a dick, and he was sure that both this gentleman and Mr. Stack had a bee or two in their bonnets, and yet this did not deter him

from carrying out his original scheme for robbing the drummer.

What Big-nose Charley desired when he came away from the scene of his latest escapade was a clear slate, or there would be a dick shadowing him for the next twenty years. He had no wish for long periods when it would be as much as his liberty was worth to appear in any city in the United States. He hoped that Fortune would smile and allow him to pass on to new pastures, richer in purse and still in possession of his good name.

Came Mr. Beecher Stack, Mr. Baxter, the train conductor, George, and a brakeman. The aggregation were just in time to witness the eighth cube of meat taking flight in the general direction of Nightingale's red chops.

The arrival of the gentlemen was accompanied by loud acclaim of mouth, and Mr. Baxter, well up front, was flourishing a gun. This was at once trained on Big-nose Charley with a disconcerting promptness.

"Put up your hands!" bellowed the detective in regulation police tones. "You're just about one jump behind the parade. No funny business. Up with those mitts, Big-nose Charley! I know you, and your little game is mud."

"Oh, my!" murmured Charley, half raising his hands. "Ain't this sudden. Tch, tch! Wh—what is ut, gentlemun?"

"You're it!" cried Beecher Stack. "You've just been tagged! Where are those diamonds you took out of my wallet?"

"Di'munds?" murmured Charley dolefully. "Di'munds? Ain't there some awful mistake been made?"

"No mistake at all!" cried Mr. Baxter snappily, moving toward the silver-haired and very-much-dressed-up old thief. "You took them, eight of 'em. We've been watching you. You fed them to that blasted, overgrown koodle. Just make up your mind to take it

quietly, because the two of you are going to get off at the next stop and make a little visit to the police station. Get that?"

Charley nodded. He was almost as sad-faced as the dog now. Life was certainly full of pitfalls for the innocent as well as the guilty. It was a hard old world.

Nightingale cowed back, a distrustful eye on the loud-voiced and threatening Mr. Stack. Attention immediately centered on Charley's meat hound. If what Mr. Stack and Mr. Baxter suspected, were true, the animal was a valuable dog. Yes; he was worth four thousand dollars if he was worth a cent. Of course, under the existing circumstances, the animal was not exactly a treasure on the hoof.

The scraps of tissue paper which had so carefully encased the meat cubes, Big-nose Charley crushed in his right hand. After all, life was but a sin and a delusion. Even a hard-working thief couldn't get a show.

Mr. Stack turned from a contemplation of the dog to the baggageman.

"What's this fellow been doing, feeding the beast?"

The other nodded. It wasn't every trip that he was entertained as royally as he had been to-night, and he'd made twenty bucks on top of that. Had the old beezer been feeding the koodle? Huh!

"He give 'im some beef cubes," stated the railroad man, with a grin.

"How many did he give the brute just now?"

"Eight. I been counting 'em for the last ten minutes. He says if he fed 'em to the dog too fast the purp would probably choke himself. Oh, my, gorry!"

Charley casually tossed the crumpled papers which he had been holding in his right hand to one side.

"Get those!" commanded Mr. Baxter. "Don't let's allow the old bluff to

put anything over. We'll search him now—and the dog later."

The engine of the train whistled its shrill station signal and a few moments later began slowing down.

"Selby Junction," said the baggage-man, moving toward a side door. "I've got a couple trunks going off here."

"We'll hold this pair until we get to Elkins," said the detective. "You fellows go ahead if you've got work to do here"—with a nod at the conductor and brakeman. "Stack and I can take care of his majesty and that big mutt with the yellow hair."

It was at that instant that there was a commotion in the corner. Nightingale got just one whiff of cool night air, which came to him through the open door of the baggage car, and decided that here was where he disembarked. Charley, earlier that night, had accommodatingly loosened the animal's collar, and now the dog merely reversed ends and settled back vigorously while he fairly backed out of the hateful ornamental thing that fettered him.

"That's a boy!" encouraged Big-nose Charley, scuffling his feet as a means of provoking the dog to greater efforts. "Sic-c-ck 'em up! Go to ut!"

And Nightingale went. If he ever lived up to his name, this early morning hour at Selby Junction was the crowning moment of his career as a soloist, strategist, and annihilator of distance. It is within the suitable bounds of reason to believe that the dog is going yet.

There was a series of yelps and howls, and then a ball of hair hurtled across the baggage car toward the exit. A troop of infantry couldn't have stopped Nightingale, let alone one detective armed only with a .38 and hampered by inconsiderate gentlemen who hopped around in the way.

Mr. Beecher Stack saw visions of four thousand dollars' worth of precious stones fleeing in a dog reincarnated as a

humming bird. Eight pieces of meat! Eight diamonds!

He made a flying tackle as the dog came by, but he might just as well have attempted to grab the tail-end of a thunderbolt. Nightingale had made the acquaintance of Mr. Stack before, and he had no desire for further relations with the gentleman.

"Stop 'im!" bawled the gem drummer. "Hey-y, you guys out there, grab 'im! Holy cats, there's diamonds in him! He won't bite! Muckle 'im! Oh-h, Maud, gracious, what a bunch of dubs! There he goes! There he is!" as Nightingale flickered under a baggage truck, rustled past the corner of the station, and headed toward Omaha. "Shoot 'im, Baxter! What's the matter with you, for the love of mud?"

Mr. Baxter opened fire, but unless he had practiced on a sparrow at fifty yards he stood absolutely no chance of winging Charley's meat hound. The baggageman affirmed later that without doubt there was either ether or gunpowder in the food that the lanky gentleman in the handsome clothes had doled out.

Be that as it may, when the clouds had passed and the dust had settled, Big-nose Charley was proudly awaiting the pleasure of Mr. Baxter. The old crook had made no attempt to escape. Instead, he had offered several mild suggestions concerning the possibility of heading off the dog by wiring promptly to Sioux City.

The old-timer unlimbered a calabash pipe, lighted it, and began applying a forced draught to a stem which seemed to draw not at all well.

A short time thereafter, Charley submitted to a half-hearted search of his person with a bored air that said all too plainly, "Gentlemen, you are wasting your time."

Both Mr. Baxter and Mr. Stack were convinced that the loot had disappeared with the going of Nightingale, and,

much as they might suspect that Big-nose Charley was the thief, there was little enough to attempt to hold him on.

Later that day our friend from the city of culture, privately dissected his calabash pipe and removed from its flowing bowl eight diamonds that old

Solomon himself could not have failed to admire.

Big-nose Charley had alternately tamped away at the pipe, which he had been a long time filling, between each cube of meat which he tossed to the animal in the corner of the baggage car.



## CONVICT SHIP ON EXHIBITION

**I**N the Hudson River, near One Hundred and Thirtieth Street, New York, the *Success*, the oldest ship now afloat, is moored at the present time. This ship brings vividly to mind the treatment of criminals a century ago. Manacles, leg irons, whipping posts, branding irons, leaden-tipped cats-o'-nine-tails, and a brine vat, all ingenious devices whereby jailers made life miserable for convicts in those days, may be seen on board this vessel.

The *Success* was built in India in 1790. It is constructed of teakwood, and is one hundred and thirty-five feet long, with a thirty-foot beam, and has a tonnage of eleven hundred.

In the old days it was used by the British authorities to transport men condemned to the penal colonies of Australia. The journey took several months, and usually twenty-four per cent of the prisoners died of disease or were killed by their brutal keepers on the voyage. Until 1885 the *Success* was used as a convict ship; then it was scuttled in Sydney harbor. Later it was raised and used for exhibition purposes.



## ATTEMPT TO REVIVE EXECUTED CRIMINAL

**B**ECAUSE information reached Sheriff Peters, of Chicago, Illinois, that an attempt had been made to restore life to a criminal hanged in that city, the sheriff is having the bodies of executed men guarded by two deputies for an hour after death.

Nicholas Viana, in whose behalf the unsuccessful attempt at resuscitation was made, was hanged on December 10, 1920. He was pronounced dead after fourteen minutes, and the body, still warm, was removed to an ambulance. Immediately a surgeon and a nurse began to work upon it. They rubbed it with liniment, wrapped it in blankets, and placed heaters beside it, while the driver drove rapidly through the Loop district.

At the undertaker's the body was laid on a warm slab. A waiting pulmotor was hastily adjusted. Then, while friends of the dead boy stood about, hospital attachés manned the oxygen pump for more than an hour, listening through stethoscopes for the stilled heart to pulse again; but the attempt failed.

Assistant Jailer Lorenz Meisterheim admitted the audacious plan had come close to accomplishing a miracle.

"We investigated the story," he said, "and learned that Viana's body had showed signs of returning life. One witness said the heart had once actually begun to beat."

# Private Lessons

By Hugh MacNair Kahler

Author of "Local Talent," etc.

**F**ROM the window of the little brick bank Rufus Tench could see most of Sparta; his glance included the dingy courthouse in the delta of the road on one side, and the frame station between the two warehouses for cotton and tobacco on the other—a somnolent, threadbare little county seat, already beginning to drowse through the blazing day, although the sun barely had lifted above the roof the Mackrimmon House, and a broad belt of shadow lay along the farther side of the highway.

Mr. Tench frowned as he inspected the familiar setting; Sparta perpetually offended his sense of fitness, and the offense deepened as his attitude became more and more proprietary. He resented the deep dust of the road, the paintless buildings, the languor of the few inhabitants who were visible, the air of apathetic shiftlessness which lay over the village as perceptibly as the film of summer dust which grayed the sod and shrubs about the courthouse.

Properly managed, Sparta might have been busy, prosperous, alive, like the faraway towns Mr. Tench remembered. There was plenty of money to be made here; the surrounding country had proved fertile, and no rival settlement was within a radius of fifteen miles. Rufus Tench had chosen it with an eye to these conditions; he had made a good thing of his little private bank, very largely because his brisk energy set him apart among the drawling, shambling natives. In one of those bustling communities he thought

of, it would have been harder to start a bank, harder to make it pay, harder to retain a monopoly of the business. Rufus Tench was perfectly aware of this, but, because he had come to feel that Sparta belonged to him, he was ashamed of the characteristics which had mainly contributed to that result.

He scowled as he watched two slouching darkies shuffle across the road from the jail in the basement of the courthouse, carrying a huge basket between them. If Mr. Tench had held the contract for feeding the prisoners there would be money in that empty basket; he was irritated by the reminder that Sheriff Dan Mackrimmon pampered the jail inmates on regular hotel fare, instead of giving them their bare legal allowance.

His eye followed the pair to the corner of the rambling wooden building which housed the hotel, and rested speculatively on the two-story porch which masked its streetward face. It could be a little gold mine, that hotel, if a business man owned it. When the court was in session every bed was in demand; even during the dullest months there were a few daily visitors, marooned in town between the morning train from the main line and the afternoon "mixed" back. And the jail contract alone would pay expenses.

He would not have regarded the double galleries so bitterly if Sheriff Mackrimmon had been enjoying the revenue which Mr. Tench had estimated a hundred times. It was the knowledge that Mackrimmon barely made ends meet,

which exasperated him. The sheriff just about supported himself on the proceeds of his several activities: the meager fees of his office, the slender margin of profit on the jail contract and the hotel itself, the occasional windfall from the livery he operated in connection with it. Mr. Tench would have made every one of those sources more productive, and the daily contemplation of a potential gain going placidly to waste had come to seem almost an affront.

Mackrimmon wouldn't sell, even at a figure well above the presumptive value of his property. He would not consider incorporating himself and permitting Mr. Tench to secure an interest. He was contemptibly content to drift along, earning a bare living from a business which ought to have made him rich.

The shoofly train groaned to a halt at the station. Mr. Tench watched a little group descend from the single coach, his eye sifting out the aliens from the homing native traveler. He scowled more acidly than ever as he saw the five salesmen march along the strip of shade to the hotel, instead of scattering at once to their work. It was after eight, and these men had been riding nearly an hour, but they had waited for breakfast, nevertheless. Mr. Tench knew why: at the Mickrimmon House they could buy a dollar meal for fifty cents. Mackrimmon couldn't seem to realize that prices had gone up!

He stood in the window, thinking wistfully of what he could do with such an opportunity, hugging his contempt for the sheriff and the community which tolerated him. His lips tightened and drew down as he saw Mackrimmon leave the courthouse and come toward him, a great, swollen figure in faded blue serge, a rusty, wide-brimmed black hat casting a shadow like a mask across the upper part of his red, plump face. The man's very walk was shift-

less, he thought. But the frown faded when he realized that the sheriff was headed for the bank, and guessed his errand. There was a solace in the thought of the coming interview.

Mackrimmon nodded gravely and said good morning in a slow, thin drawl. The banker answered briskly.

"Well, sheriff, what can we do for you? Decided to sell me that hotel, after all?"

Mackrimmon shook his head, without a smile for the mouthworn jest.

"I wanted to talk to you about that Lovatt sale, sir."

"Oh, that's set for to-day, is it? I'd forgotten——" Mr. Tench assumed the expression of one preoccupied by a multitude of concerns.

"No—to-morrow. But I'm kind of busy, and I wanted to talk to you beforehand."

"What about? There's no hitch, is there?" Mr. Tench spoke sharply.

"No, sir. That's all right. But I come over to see if you wouldn't let up on young Jeff a mite. Seems like it's kind of hard on him to lose the place, after the way he's worked on it."

"It is hard on him—of course. It ought to be. A man who buys land without having the title searched, and then neglects to record the deed, deserves to suffer smartly, sheriff. What about it?"

"I know the law, sir. It's on your side, sure enough. Your title's good, and Jeff's ain't, and it's your land, according to the court. But Jeff don't see it that way. Looks to him like you and the law had cheated him. And he's worked right hard for three-four years on that place—cleared the scrub and planted peaches——"

"Sit down, sheriff. I want to explain this thing to you."

Mr. Tench placed a chair importantly. Mackrimmon shook his head.

"Reckon I'll stand, sir. But I'm listening."



"Just as you like. You sympathize, I take it, with young Lovatt, or you wouldn't be here pleading his case. I want you to understand why I'm insisting on my rights. It's not money, sheriff—it's principle."

He achieved the expression of conscious virtue with which he invariably accompanied the useful word.

"You'll agree, I think, that if you didn't arrest lawbreakers, and if the court didn't punish them, we'd have a great many more crimes than we do. I mean that mercy would be bad for the community, perhaps bad, too, for the offender himself. He'd go on breaking laws until he got himself into worse trouble."

"That sounds like sense, sir. But young Jeff——"

"You'll say that he hasn't broken any law. That's exactly my point, sheriff. He has. He's broken a law that's older and stronger than any statute on your books. He's been a fool. And the law of nature herself is that a fool shall suffer for his folly."

The sheriff pondered this deliberately. "Maybe it's like you say. But on the other hand——"

"Stop and think. If I let young Lovatt escape the just consequences of his neglect and stupidity, as you want me to, I suppose, I should encourage him in this folly. He wouldn't learn anything by this experience. And I should encourage others like him in similar foolishness. By standing on my rights, I teach him that it comes high to be a fool, and I teach the whole community that same lesson."

"You aim to take the place away from him, then?"

"Excuse me—that's not the way to put it. I intend to keep what the law says is mine. The place never belonged to young Lovatt. He only thought it did."

The sheriff nodded. The door behind him opened, and a man came in, a neat,

alert young fellow in linen clothes—one of the arrivals on the morning train.

"Don't let me interrupt, gentlemen. I'm in no hurry." He stood back, as if withdrawing, removed his hat, and turned to look out of the window.

"Then I reckon it's no use me talking to you," said Mackrimmon slowly. "As long as it ain't the money you're after. Principle's different. If you feel like it's your duty to put Jeff off his land, I expect you got to do it. I'm right sorry. Jeff's going to be kind of hard to arrest."

"Arrest?" Tench lifted his brows again. "You must misunderstand. There's no criminal charge against him. He's possibly guilty of technical trespass, but I haven't any intention of making such a charge. You have only to dispossess him, formally——"

"I know all that. They's no charge against him now. I was lookin' ahead, sir. You go through with this, and I'll be arresting Jeff right quick."

"What for?" The banker scowled.

"Why, for murder, sir. You don't think a hill boy like Jeff Lovatt'll leave you take his farm from him and not do anything about it, do you? I expect you don't know the breed, sir."

"Nonsense!" Tench spoke impatiently. "I'm not afraid of anything like that. He's not fool enough to risk hanging for a bit of spite——"

"Excuse me, Mr. Tench, but wasn't you just saying that he was a fool, and that you had to learn him not to be? He's this kind of a fool, sure enough. And when you take that land he won't have nothing to lose. I notice a man shoots quicker when he's got nothing 'n when he's well off. Jeff'll sure try to kill you. And he's right apt to hit what he aims at, sir."

The stranger half turned, Tench saw. The banker tried not to believe Mackrimmon's even, drawling speech, but a persistent memory brought young Jeff Lovatt's face before him, long narrow,

lean, the cheeks concaved, the eyes deep-set and dark and steady. He broke out hotly.

"That's a fine statement to come from the sheriff of the county. If you think he intends to kill me it's your duty to prevent it."

"Yes, sir. That's why I'm here. The only way I know of keeping Lovatt from killing you is to go easy on him, or kill him first. I can't lock him up on suspicion. I'd have to wait till he got you and then go after him. And that'd be a mean job, Mr. Tench—yes, sir. Right mean. I know Jeff."

"I take you to witness that this amounts to intimidation!" Tench appealed to the stranger. "Here is the sheriff practically threatening me with murder if I don't surrender my unquestioned legal rights!"

"You can look at it like that, if you're a mind to!" Mackrimmon nodded. "I'm only telling you what I know. Suppose you take Jeff's note for what you're out of pocket on this deal, and give him a clean title to the place. Wouldn't that be better'n waiting for a bullet the first time Jeff got a good bead on you? Teaching fools is all right, Mr. Tench, but it looks sort of risky to me."

The stranger met Tench's eye over the sheriff's shoulder. Mr. Tench distinctly observed a faint, droll droop of one eyelid. It puzzled him.

"I suppose I've got to," he said sulkily. "Bring me his note, and I'll have the deed ready. But I won't forget this, sheriff. You've threatened me, acted as spokesman for a man you admit is practically a murderer—"

"You're welcome to remember it, sir. I do the best I can. And I hate killings in my county. We ain't had one for quite a spell. I'll fetch you that note right away. I got young Jeff over at the hotel." He plunged a great hand into a sagging coat pocket and exhibited a cheap revolver. "Lucky I saw him first, Mr. Tench. A six-gun

and a grudge and a quart of blockade liquor mix mighty mean in a hill boy. Good mornin', gentlemen."

He slouched heavily out, leaving a thick silence behind him. It was the stranger who broke it, in a cautious, significant whisper.

"You've dropped a bit of coin, Mr. Tench. How'd you like to get it back—with some interest?"

Tench surveyed him shrewdly, his grievance retreating instantly as the hint of a business transaction challenged his sagacity. His lips drew back from his teeth in a flat, mirthless grin.

"I thought so. You don't want me to cash a check, do you? Because I wouldn't! What's your game?"

The stranger chuckled. "The same as yours, Mr. Tench. Teaching fools the high cost of foolishness. I make it pay me. Want it to pay you?"

Mr. Tench gestured toward a chair. "Sit down and go on," he said non-committally. But his eyes glittered.

## II.

The other crossed his legs comfortably.

"I expect to do a little business with some of the farmers around here, and I'm going to take their notes. I'll want to discount them—quick. That's where you come in."

Mr. Tench grinned faintly, but he did not permit his caller to see it. His guess, he saw, had been accurate. This man used his wits actively.

"I see. And what do I get for obliging you?"

"A flat fifty-fifty split. Thirty-day paper. You choose the signers yourself. That's part of it. Tell me a few names that are good for real money, and I'll do the rest." Again his eyelid drooped slightly.

Mr. Tench meditated. He had heard often enough of such transactions, but it had never happened that one had been

proposed to him till now. He knew that the innocent third party in a swindle occupied an unassailable legal position. And his lips went dry at the thought. Even when one could charge twenty per cent a year for a loan, it was slow business, with a small capital. Here was fifty, in thirty days!

"That sounds rather good," he said quietly. "Go on. What's the scheme?"

The stranger regarded him shrewdly. "How much of it do you want to know?"

Mr. Tench grinned. "Begin, anyway. I'll tell you when to stop."

"Oil stock, that's all. I sell 'em ten-dollar shares for ten cents, and take their notes in payment. That enough?"

Mr. Tench frowned. "You think you could sell any stock to these people back here? You couldn't give them government bonds!"

"That's my job. I'm betting I can. If I don't, you're nothing out. If I do, you're in just half what I get. You can't lose, either way. Just leave that part of it to my silver tongue."

The banker saw the force of this and caught the undertone of confidence in the man's speech. This fellow knew that he could sell that stock. He must have some special method, or he wouldn't be so sure.

"How do you work it?"

"Oh, I'm a good salesman, for one thing. And I get to 'em by leasing their own land, first. Pay 'em spot cash for a five-year oil lease. Sell 'em stock for a thirty-day note. Don't worry about my end of it. I can attend to that."

Mr. Tench saw through it instantly. That lease would have to be signed by the lessor, and his wife, too, probably. And when it had been cut along the proper lines it would become a simple promissory note, perfectly collectible at law by any innocent third party. It was, in short, nothing but the ancient swindle of the seed-oats contract, modernized and improved. He chuckled as

he saw the beautiful simplicity of it. Everybody felt sure there was no oil within a hundred miles of Sparta; to be offered real cash for utterly worthless oil rights would seem to these hard-working farmers like a sheer windfall. They'd bite—and bite hard.

"Let's see your lease," he said shortly. The other hesitated.

"Sure you want to? All you know now is that I told you I was selling oil stock and offered you good paper for discount that I said I'd taken in payment. Better let it go at that, hadn't you?"

"Who's going to tell what I know or don't know? Let me see the lease."

The stranger produced a printed sheet of fine type and spread it on the desk. Mr. Tench went through its clauses methodically. He had seen oil leases often enough to recognize this as a usual form. Only at the bottom, where blank spaces had been left for figures and signatures, did he find any departure from the ordinary. He saw the break between the words where the scissors would cut; the note form stood out like a framed inscription.

"That seems quite regular," he said dryly. "But I don't think we can do business, Mr.—"

"Layton," said the other. "And you're dead wrong. We can do business, and we're going to. This is a quick turnover—the softest money you'll see in a lifetime—and the safest. You don't risk a cent. And——"

"I don't like it. It's not in my line."

"I won't split any better than fifty-fifty," said Layton tartly. "No use trying to boost me that way."

"I'm not interested," repeated Tench. He meant it. He had steered fairly near the wind in the matter of the usury laws, but this was different. No scruple restrained him, but fear was more potent. This was fraud, safe as it seemed. He ached for the easy profit it offered, but he was afraid.

"That's too bad." Layton half closed his eyes. "I was rather counting on you. You'd like a chance to get back at the sheriff, wouldn't you? I thought I'd begin with him. I heard he had a little farm outside of town——"

Mr. Tench jumped. "You mean you'd have the nerve to try it on him?"

"Would I? Why, I'm going to charter him and his buggy to drive me around to see the others. I'm going to make him help me sell 'em. When the plug's pulled he'll be holding the bag and looking foolish, too! You watch me!"

Mr. Tench leaned forward. "I'll do it," he said huskily. "Take down the names. Daniel Mackrimmon up to—up to fifteen hundred. H. D. Fraser, a thousand; Lawrence Neil, a thousand and——"

"That's enough," said Layton presently. "I'll be in with the notes some time this afternoon. Have the cash ready."

Mr. Tench nodded. A brilliant idea came to him, and he instinctively avoided Layton's eye, lest his own reveal too much.

He saw Layton cross the road to the hotel, and a few minutes later Mackrimmon brought over Jeff Lovatt's note for a thousand dollars, with a quit-claim deed for Tench's signature.

Mr. Tench signed it almost happily.

### III.

"Son, I need the money, but I'm bound to tell you they ain't a drop of oil anywheres around here. It's plumb foolish to fool with this idea you got." Mackrimmon wagged his head.

Layton chuckled.

"That's my lookout, sheriff. If I want to throw my money away, it shouldn't worry you."

"Maybe not. But I wouldn't feel right about leavin' you throw it away into my pocket, son."

Layton hesitated. He leaned toward the other confidentially.

"I see I'll have to tell you, after all. But I wish you'd keep it quiet, if I do. It's just a gamble, of course, like any oil speculation, but it looks good to me. I've had a man scouting around here, making sure, and I'm putting a small bet on his report. I don't know that there's oil here, but I think there is—think so hard enough to risk a little change on leases and trial wells. Now you know where I stand."

"You'll lose it," persisted Mackrimmon. "The best oil folks have looked us over——"

"And they've overlooked a good many other winning bets, too. Don't you worry about me, sheriff. I've been in this game quite a while, and it's paid me good money right along."

The sheriff inspected him attentively over the lifted lower lids of very bright blue eyes.

"Well, if you feel that way about it, I reckon I can stand it if you can. Let's see the lease."

Layton exhibited the printed form, and Mackrimmon read it carefully. He nodded. "It looks all right to me, son, but I reckon I better take it up to Judge Keever and leave him go over it. You don't object to that, do you?"

"Glad to have you. I'll save argument with the others if you're satisfied that it's all right." Layton spoke heartily.

Mackrimmon plodded away, returning, after a quarter hour, with Judge Keever's assurance that the lease was entirely in order. He signed it, forming the letters clumsily.

A barefooted negro boy fetched a horse and buggy to the front door, and the two men climbed into it, the sheriff taking the reins. As they drove down the main road Rufus Tench stood in the bank window, watching. Layton did not glance at him.

"Pretty sharp customer, that banker of yours," he said.

"Reckon so, son. Rufe Tench is mighty near as sharp as he thinks he is." He chuckled. They drove out of the village over a deep-rutted sandy road which wound between fields of cotton and tobacco and lifted over ridges crowned with thrifty orchards of young peach trees.

Before noon they had made two calls and secured signed leases at each; the sheriff, to Layton's relief, advised his constituents to accept his offer.

"It's twenty-five dollars sure, Hobe, and a seventh of all the oil they find on your place, and you get the rights back in five years if they don't strike oil before then. Judge Keever advised me to lease my place, and I done it."

He drew up at a rickety cabin in a hollow, after leaving the Fraser farm.

"You didn't say nothing about leasing this here land, son, but I reckon you ought to have it, and Sim Pittenger he needs the money right bad, too."

Layton shook his head. "Don't want it. The report doesn't mention him. His land doesn't lie right, I'd say. Better get on—want to finish up in time to catch that afternoon train out, sheriff." Mackrimmon did not argue the matter, and they reached the Neil place at dinner time, sharing a meal in the open gallery between the two wings of the farmhouse and signing another lease before Neil went back to the fields.

It was drawing on toward four o'clock when they reached the town again. Layton mopped his neck with a wadded handkerchief.

"Guess I've got time for a quick bath before the train goes," he said. "I'll take a room——"

"No need to waste the money, son. You're welcome to use the bathroom."

"Want room to dress in," Layton said, laughing. "You ought to soak me for it, sheriff. You hotel folks have to make your money when you can."

The grinning dorky shambled around the corner of the porch and took the bit while the two climbed down. Layton laughingly insisted on renting a room, and Uncle Jimmy Stygall, interrupting his afternoon perusal of yesterday's paper, laid aside the thick reading lens with which he helped his purblind eyes, and stumped upstairs to pilot him. The sheriff lowered himself to a wide chair in the dusky coolness of the office, folded his hands across his stomach, and let his head droop forward.

Uncle Jimmy found him so when he came back, and did not interrupt him. He read diligently, the thick handglass lifted almost to his nose, the newspaper hardly an inch away from it.

"You'll wear them eyes plumb out, Uncle Jimmy," said the sheriff mildly. "Have one of them headaches if you don't quit."

The old man grumbled, but yielded, laying the glass on the counter beside the register.

Layton came to the inner door. He was in his shirt-sleeves.

"Say, sheriff, what's the matter with your lights? None of the bulbs upstairs seem to work."

Uncle Jimmy snickered. "Ain't nothing the matter with them lights. Come sundown they'll work, all right. What'd anybody want of a light in the daytime?"

"I like to shave by electric light," said Layton quickly. "Not till sundown, eh? What time is that?"

"Lights go on at seven," said the sheriff without looking up. "Have to let the pond fill up, daytimes, 'r they wouldn't be no power at all."

Layton hesitated. "Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I'll get along without the shave." He stopped. "What time does that train go, did you say?"

"Five-four," said Uncle Jimmy. "You ain't got much time for a bath, mister."

"I'll take a quick one." Layton disappeared, and a hissing sound in the pipes presently announced that the tub was filling. The two men sat in the darkened office, the sheriff nodding over his folded hands. There was a long silence. Then Uncle Jimmy said:

"Fine thing! Lights in daytime! 'Like to shave by one,' the feller said! Never heard of such a fool business!"

"It ain't so foolish as it sounds, Uncle Jimmy." The sheriff still spoke mildly. "You take and lay down a spell, while I tend the office. I got some thinkin' to do, Uncle Jimmy."

The old man shuffled away, and the sheriff resumed his meditations. He glanced up at the noisy clock from time to time. At five o'clock there was still no sign of Layton, and Mackrimmon stumped to the foot of the stairs.

"Hey, son! Train starts in four minutes."

A violent splash answered him. Then Layton's voice:

"Gad! I forgot all about it! Can't make it, now! Have to take the next one."

"That's to-morrow morning, you know."

"Pshaw! That's too bad! I wanted to get the express north. Say, sheriff, couldn't you drive me over to the main line, after supper? That train doesn't go up till eleven something, and it's only twelve miles, isn't it?"

"Guess I could." Mackrimmon nodded. "Have to charge you pretty high, though."

Layton laughed. "That's all right—stick me all you please. I deserve it!"

The sheriff went back to his chair. His eyes sagged shut, and he sat very still, a feeble grin showing at the corners of his mouth. He was still sitting so when Mr. Tench closed up his bank and came across the road to supper.

Mr. Tench was in a bad humor. He had spent nearly two hours looking out

of his window at the doorway of the hotel and waiting for Layton to appear. He scowled at the drowsing sheriff and stalked past him, going upstairs to his room. There was no sound from the lower floor, as he waited in the upper hall, listening. He identified Mr. Layton's room by a cheerful whistle from behind its door, and he tapped carefully at the scarred panels.

Mr. Layton thrust a bath-wet head into the hall, and shook it warningly.

"After supper," he whispered. "I got him, all right, but we better play it safe. He looks pretty soft, but you can't always tell."

Tench grumbled under his breath, but his eye lighted, nevertheless, at the news that the sheriff was hooked. He possessed his soul in as much patience as the circumstances permitted, while he waited for the brazen summons of the supper bell. His thoughts were pleasing.

If the sheriff had really signed a presumptive note for any considerable sum, Mr. Tench's ancient ambitions concerning the hotel were already well on their way toward fulfillment. When the note came due there would be no cash to meet it; there never was any cash in Sparta unless it was borrowed from Rufus Tench. And it wasn't likely that any outside bank would care to loan money on a property like the hotel. It couldn't show a profit, on paper or otherwise, under the sheriff's management. Nobody except Mr. Tench himself saw any possibility of gain in its tumble-down, paintless building. The property would go under the hammer, as a good many others had gone since Mr. Tench had come to Sparta.

He grinned acidly at a bright mental picture of Sheriff Mackrimmon engaged in selling out Hotel-keeper Mackrimmon, to satisfy the judgment which that note would surely yield. And he foresaw, too, that the sheriff would loudly protest when the trap closed, and thus re-

veal himself to the community as a person of such simplicity that he could hardly be considered a fit occupant of such an office as he now held. Everybody would laugh at him; Mr. Tench was comfortably certain of this.

The liberal supper he consumed presently, he resented as if it represented a loss to his own pocket. When the hotel belonged to him he would speedily alter this wasteful habit of over-feeding guests at a ridiculously low figure. He'd fire those old darkies who wasted money in the kitchen, and put in a businesslike cook the first thing. And he'd send that doddering old fool Uncle Jimmy packing off to the Veteran's Home, too. He was just a dead weight on the business.

A little paint, he told himself, and some new furniture, not too expensive, would bring the place near enough to modernity to warrant doubling its present schedule of prices. He'd make it show a pretty profit from the first week.

His impatience brought him to Mr. Layton's elbow the moment the meal was over, and the stranger left the table for a cigarette on the gallery. Layton shook his head again.

"Wait till dark," he whispered. "You be over at your office in about an hour, and I'll drop in when it's safe. You don't want to figure in this thing any more than you have to."

Mr. Tench saw the force of this advice. The fewer circumstances indicating a close acquaintance between himself and Layton, the safer the subsequent proceedings must be. He crossed the road and unlocked the bank door. It was beginning to darken, now, and the filament in the bulb over his desk glowed to a feeble red as he pulled down the green window shades.

He unlocked his safe and extracted a compact sheaf of worn bills, which he laid on his desk and counted lovingly. Most bankers would have re-

turned money in this condition to the treasury, but Mr. Tench hated to think of a bill being destroyed. He liked the look and feel of old bank notes far better than of new; there was an effect of value in soiled, crumpled bills which endeared them to him. New money represented nothing but the government's assertion of worth; old, hand-worn notes somehow had acquired an intrinsic value. They stood for the labor by which calloused hands had wrung them out of the earth or nimble wits won them from trade. Mr. Tench caressed the rough surfaces affectionately as he counted. One bill had been torn almost across, and he stopped his count long enough to repair it carefully with neatly scissored strips of gummed paper.

A thousand dollars, in fives and tens and twenties, made quite a respectable bundle, he thought. It was a pity to spend it. Perhaps he could avoid even that, if he was clever about it. The strategic advantage in the coming interview lay altogether with him. Layton was nothing but a common crook, who couldn't run any risk of exposure; Rufus Tench was a respectable and honest banker, whose position was legally unassailable. Why should he throw away a thousand dollars when a hundred would suffice?

He meditated leisurely over this idea, finding it more and more appealing. By the time a quiet tapping at his window glass announced the arrival of his fellow conspirator he had definitely decided to try it.

Mr. Layton sidled nimbly past the edge of the door, his keen face alert.

"Must hurry, now. I've got the old boy out of the way, hitching up to drive me over to the main line. Let's hustle. Here you are."

He put a handful of documents on the counter. Mr. Tench snatched at the uppermost one. He could see where it had been cut from a larger

sheet. The margins were so narrow that the type nearly fell over the edges, but it was a note, in due legal form, for fifteen hundred dollars, and it bore the signature of Daniel Mackrimmon. Mr. Tench was wholly familiar with that awkward, clumsy script. His fingers trembled a little as he held the paper.

"I've got a total of four thousand there," said Layton. "Hurry up, brother—there's no time to lose."

Mr. Tench deliberately examined the remaining notes. They were all in order, and each signed by a man perfectly good for the amount. He knew that he could force collection of every penny of their value, or, if he was obliged to take judgment and levy on property, he could probably collect a great deal more than the face of the notes. It was not a speculation, but a sure thing.

"I been thinking it over since this morning," he said, "and I don't feel like going into it. It's too dangerous."

Layton's eyes narrowed, and his lips tightened flatly over his teeth.

"I was waiting for that," he said quietly. "I suppose you figure that you can only afford to pay about fifty cents for this little wad of paper, eh?"

"I don't want it at any price," said Mr. Tench.

"You don't, eh?" Layton's eye glimmered oddly. "You were never more mistaken in your life! You want it so badly that you'll pay me sixty per cent of the face, instead of fifty. And another crack like that will cost you another ten-per-cent boost. Trot out the coin and quit bluffing. You'd buy that Mackrimmon note at par, if you couldn't get it cheaper. I know your number, Tench. Think I make my living out of this game without spotting a cheap crook when I meet one? Come through!"

Mr. Tench made a feeble attempt at bluster. Layton interrupted him tartly.

"Seventy per cent, now. And in ten seconds more it'll be eighty. Come on!"

"I—I can't. I've only got a thousand dollars on hand," quavered the banker. He did not like the ugly glint in the other man's look; crooks were dangerous people, he remembered. Men had been killed for less money than lay in his desk drawer.

"Hand it over," said Layton curtly. Mr. Tench, observing that one of his hands rested conveniently in the pocket of his coat, tremblingly opened the drawer and produced the bills.

"Now the other thousand—and quick," said Layton.

Mr. Tench protested, quite truthfully, that he had no more currency on hand. He had taken the precaution to put the rest of his cash under the safe, so that when he opened it and allowed Layton to look for himself, his statement had a color of fact. The swindler glanced at his watch, hesitated.

"All right. You get by with it," he said, and snarled. "But you'll wish you hadn't, before I'm done with you. I'll come back here and trim you right, one of these days."

He thrust the bills into his inner pocket and sidled out. Mr. Tench watched him through a gap in the curtain as he crossed the road and entered the hotel. He reappeared almost at once, climbed into Mackrimmon's buggy, and was driven briskly down the road and out of sight. Mr. Tench lovingly recovered his cash from below the safe and locked it away, with the precious notes. He was distinctly pleased with himself. He'd made a cold profit of three thousand dollars—a thousand more than he'd expected. It was the best day's work of his career.

#### IV.

Mr. Tench was still awake when Sheriff Dan Mackrimmon came in after his twenty-four mile drive. It was almost morning, but the banker had not been able to sleep for thinking of the



sheriff's face when that note should be presented for payment. His mind was full of plans for the reconstruction of the hotel, when it should come into his hands at the auction sale which that note would precipitate.

He heard Mackrimmon come up the creaking stairs, and he felt his face twist into its nearest approach to a smile. The sheriff was humming faintly, under his breath, a plaintive negro hymn.

"You won't see me here again;  
Goin' to heb'n onna mornin' train.  
My sin been taken away!"

Mr. Tench chuckled. The sheriff never lapsed into music except when he was in excellent humor. Probably Layton had paid him five dollars for that all-night drive, thought Tench, and the old simpleton was all swelled up over such a profit!

He overslept and came down late for breakfast, in a sullen humor. Mackrimmon greeted him with his usual reserved courtesy, and the banker growled in answer. In thirty days he'd have a pretty bomb to explode under this fat, stupid fellow!

The time passed slowly, while he waited for the calendar to bring him his triumph. The last week of that month seemed endless; every meal he ate at the hotel impressed him as a deliberate theft from him. In any live town that much food would bring a dollar or more; it was assassinating value to feed casual travelers so. Sometimes he almost protested, and restrained himself only by a sharp effort.

On the thirty-first day he stopped at the office on his way out.

"Oh, sheriff—there's a little note of yours due to-day. I'd like to have you drop in and settle it, if it's perfectly convenient."

Mackrimmon regarded him placidly.

"Reckon they's some mistake, Mist' Tench. I ain't signed ary note."

Tench smiled thinly. "I'm afraid

you have, sheriff. I've got one which is certainly signed by you. Drop over and see for yourself."

He went out, hugging his exultation. He had rehearsed the coming interview over and over, as he waited for to-day to come. He knew exactly what he would say when Mackrimmon came over to the bank.

At ten the sheriff's big form appeared in his doorway. Tench bustled over to his safe and extracted the envelope in which he had filed the notes.

"Here we are, sheriff. Take a look at that!"

Mackrimmon bent over the paper. Tench watched him happily, waiting for the explosion he was sure would come. But Mackrimmon only nodded slowly.

"I kind of thought it might be that," he said. "When I see that feller in here in the mornin', and come over again after supper—that oil feller, I mean—I had a notion he might be goin' to do business with you."

"Oil?" Mr. Tench lifted his brows. "This man brought me some perfectly good paper, which I discounted for him, but I don't remember anything about oil. Hold on, though—he did tell me that he'd taken the notes in payment for stock in some company; it might have been an oil company, too. I hope you haven't been speculating, sheriff. Oil stocks are risky investments."

"That's how he worked it, eh?" Mackrimmon nodded. "I was wonderin' what story he'd give you. O' course a smart man like you, Mist' Tench, wouldn't buy paper from a stranger without some pretty good yarn to explain it. He didn't sell no stock—all he wanted was leases, and he paid cash for 'em. I was with him eve'ywhere he stopped. These notes ain't notes at all—reckon he must have clipped 'em out of them leases. I've heard of such games before now."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Mr. Tench bit off the words.

"The note's in order, and I'll need the money, sheriff. I hope you're ready to——"

He stared as the sheriff produced a thick roll of bills.

"I did come over here to pay a note," said Mackrimmon gently, "but I reckon I won't pay this here one, sir. I didn't sign it—all I signed was a lease for the oil rights out to my farm,"

"I have nothing to do with that. I've bought this paper in good faith, and I must insist on your settling it, or I shall be obliged to protest and sue. I need the cash for other investments."

"I wouldn't, if I was you, sir." Mackrimmon spoke very quietly, but a curious hardness appeared in his blue, gentle eyes. "If I was you, sir, I'd put them notes back in my pocket and say nothin' to nobody about them. You know it's a swindle, sir. You must have knowed right along that we-all never signed any such papers. It wouldn't look neighborly for you to help a stranger cheat us folks around here, sir."

Mr. Tench laughed shrilly. "That's good! I'm to lose four thousand dollars because you people have been foolish enough to bite on some crooked scheme! You tell me that this man wanted oil leases, eh? Well, why did you take his money when you knew there was no oil there? You thought you were cheating him, eh? And he's cheated you. It serves you right!"

"Maybe." Mackrimmon's broad, pink face settled to its normal placidity. "You aim, then, to sue on these here notes? You aim to help this slick feller swindle us home folks?"

"I certainly do mean to collect what's due me. If you've been fools you deserve to suffer. I've told you before how I stand on that, sheriff. It's my duty as well as my right to collect these notes—it'll teach you and the others not to be so easy next time. You're not being cheated—you're paying for your education. A wise bird like Sheriff

Mackrimmon caught on that moss-grown swindle! I don't see how you can afford to have this get out, sheriff! You'd better settle quietly, and keep your job. You'll be laughed out of it if the county ever hears about this."

Mackrimmon was silent for a moment. Then he spoke slowly.

"You figger that's square, Mist' Tench? If it was you 't had bit on a hook like that, would it look decent and neighborly to you if the other feller was to haul you in and string you through the gills?"

"Of course it would! I'm always willing to pay for my education. If I needed to learn a lesson like this, sheriff, I'd not only pay the man who taught it to me, but I'd thank him. It would be cheap at the price!"

The sheriff settled his chin comfortably on his flat collar.

"That's what I thought, sir. It makes me feel all right about this here business to know you look at it that a way. I ain't forgot what you said about Jeff Lovatt that time you was fixin' to take his land off'n him. Guess it comes high to get sense, sometimes. But as long's you're satisfied, I reckon eve'ybody is."

"I don't know what you're talking about, sheriff."

"No? Well, I reckon I can make it clear, if you give me time. You remember that oil feller 't sold you these here notes? He tackled me first off to sign that there lease of his'n, and right then I kind of smelled a rat. I knowed they wasn't no oil in this county, and I told him so. But he said he was willin' to risk it. So I took Uncle Jimmy's readin' glass and had a look at the lease. It was all right. I took it up to Judge Keever, and he said it was safe to sign. So I done it, and let four-five other folks do it, too."

"That's got nothing to do with me. It may be as you say, but it doesn't matter. All I know is that these notes are perfectly legal, and that——"

"Wait. This feller was in a mighty hurry to get back to town in time to catch the shoofly back to the main line that same afternoon. He kep' me drivin' along right fast. But when we got to the hotel what does he do but hire a room and start in to take a bath? Funny, eh? What'd you think if you'd been me?"

"It has nothing to do with me——"

"Maybe it has. I'm gettin' there, sir. You jest wait a mite. This feller Layton went up to his room. But he come down again in a minute and wanted to know why the lights wasn't on. I told him we only had lights at night, and he looked sort of mad, but he went back upstairs and started in to take his bath. Stayed in the tub till train time. That's how come he missed it, and stayed over for supper. Got me to drive him over, remember?"

"Yes, yes, no doubt. But all this is quite beside the point, sheriff."

"Maybe. You see, Mist' Tench, when he started talkin' lease to me I figgered that he must be up to some trick 'r other, and right away I thought of the old swindle they used to work, years ago—get a feller to sign some perfectly harmless paper and then cut it in half and have an iron-clad note! But me and Judge Keever we looked all over that lease of his'n, and they wasn't no way it could be cut so's to make a note out'n it. I saved the one he give me. You c'n see for yourself."

Mr. Tench barely glanced at the printed sheet. He guessed that the astute Mr. Layton had furnished a harmless specimen for purposes of examination, and secured his signatures to a slightly different document.

"I don't know anything about all this. It's nothing to do with me, sheriff——"

"Not even when I told you he wanted a light—in the middle of the afternoon, and missed his train, so's to stay here till the lights come on? I'm right disappointed in you, Mist' Tench. I sh'd

think a thing like that'd make you guess right off that he was up to somethin'. It only took me a coupla days to figger it out, and I ain't what you'd call smart."

"What do you mean?" Mr. Tench was vaguely aware of a sudden coldness in the pit of his stomach. Lights? What had lights to do with this?

"I guess I know now how he done it," said the sheriff. "I found the glass loose in a picture of General Jackson 't hangs in the room he had. Kind of simple trick, too. He got us to sign them leases, and then he carried 'em up to his room and laid that pane of glass on a coupla books or somethin' so't he could plug the light connection and run a light under the glass. Then he jest spread a lease on the glass, laid one of these here note forms over it, and traced the signatures, as easy as winkin'. I've read about that trick, but I never seen it done."

He fumbled in his breast pocket and drew out Uncle Jimmy's thick-lensed reading glass.

"Take a look at that writing, Mist' Tench! See how the lines is made up of a lot of little strokes? Nobody never signed his name that a way. It's a plain forgery, and I reckon, if this gets to a co't, we-all c'n prove it."

Little beads of sweat broke out on Tench's face as he stared at the magnified signatures and confronted the realization that he had no possible redress at law, except against the vanished Mr. Layton.

"I'm right glad you ain't complainin', Mist' Tench, because it'd only make folks think you wan't much of a banker," drawled Mackrimmon's gentle voice. "An' maybe you're right about a lesson comin' cheap at the price. I reckon you won't have to learn this one again, sir." His eyes narrowed. "What floors me, sir, is the way he fooled you. That writin' don't look

very good. I been wonderin' whether you wasn't maybe expectin' him to bring you some notes like these here—expectin' so hard that you didn't look at 'em close. But that's jest guessin', o' course."

Mr. Tench's mind moved quickly. He couldn't afford to complain too much, or other people would ask exactly that question. A thousand dollars—he quivered at the thought of losing it. But there was no help for it. And the sheriff's next speech brought him a measure of comfort.

"The note I thought you was wantin' me to pay was different, sir. I come over here to see you about that paper of Jeff Lovatt's. It ain't due yet, but if you're a-wantin' to get in some cash I'd jest as lief buy it off'n you."

Mr. Tench stared. Buy it? Where? How? But he couldn't speculate about that now. A chance to recoup his losses was too precious to be missed. He fetched the Lovatt note, and the sheriff tendered a thick wad of bills. Mr. Tench counted them, his fingers shaking.

Suddenly he looked up, and his mouth opened. One of the bills had been torn

half across and carefully mended with gummed paper. His memory groped toward a sudden, incredible suspicion. The sheriff had driven Layton over to the train, with this very money. He caught his breath for an accusation, and then, under the unwinking gaze of the placid, blue eyes, he realized the hopelessness of it.

He signed the note as paid and slid it over the counter. The sheriff folded it deliberately and sighed.

"I guess we-all have learned somethin' out'n this here business, Mist' Tench. You can buy right smart experience with a thousand dollars, sir. I wonder how much this here thousand's done paid for, sir."

And he slouched away, leaving Mr. Tench to guess at the reason why he had come home singing, after that night drive over to the main line, and to wonder whether Mr. Layton had also secured a thousand dollars' worth of education out of that excursion. As for himself, although he had emerged exactly even from the two transactions, he resolved that he would take no more private lessons from Sheriff Daniel Mackrimmon. Not at any price!

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## AUTOMOBILE BANDITS DEFY PARISIAN CROWDS

**F**OUR automobile bandits perpetrated a sensational daylight robbery in Paris recently. Descending from a big limousine which they had stolen a few hours before, the quartet smashed the show window of the Levi Jewelry Store on the Boulevard St. Martin, in the center of the city, and made off with about forty thousand dollars' worth of gems. The supply of gasoline in the car was exhausted when the robbers had gone a short distance, so they abandoned the automobile and escaped on foot with their booty.

The robbery was committed at eight o'clock, when many persons were on the boulevard. Four men, wearing ultramodern suits, caps, and gloves, drove up to the jewelry store at high speed. One broke the window with a hammer, and another fired pistol shots into the store to terrorize any one who might be within, while the other two, armed with a cavalry carbine and an automatic, fired volleys in opposite directions along the boulevard as a warning to passers-by not to interfere. Two of the thieves gathered up the trays of diamond rings, watches, and necklaces of pearls and precious stones and tossed them into a sort of apron one of them wore. Swiftly but coolly then the four regained the limousine, and, still firing their pistols and carbine at random, dashed off up a side street. The whole affair happened in about six minutes.

# Masked Revenge

(A serial in four parts)

by Edward Wainwright Brunsen

## SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A CIRCUS tent suddenly collapses in a storm and injures a young girl rider. George Winters, a wealthy old bachelor, and his sister open their home to the injured equestrienne. Despite the diversity of their ages, Winters falls in love with the girl and marries her.

Mrs. Winters chafes under the loneliness of the farm and the gossip of a neighbor, one Mrs. Fred Woodburn. The latter, who has entertained hopes of inheriting some of Winters' wealth, spreads a scandalous story about the old man's young wife. Mrs. Winters summarily silences her, in a heated interview.

That same evening Mrs. Woodburn's little son rushes into his mother and declares "a big hair man," out in the tree near the barn, tried to get him. Mr. Woodburn investigates but fails to find any explanation of the child's strange story.

Then a hurried telephone call is sent to the Winters home for the old man's foxhounds. Sheriff Millar's daughter is reported strangled. Winters hurries to the scene of the assault with the hounds, but the dogs, after picking up the scent, immediately lose it. The child has been more frightened than hurt, and she can only explain that something with hair grabbed her from behind before she fainted.

Some days later Winters fails to return at the expected hour. Mrs. Winters decides to ride out on her horse and seek him. While the old man stops to see Mrs. Woodburn, who has had a strange encounter near the tree by the barn, his wife is brought home dazed and hysterical. She can only explain that some giant man, wearing a fur coat, attacked her. Again the hounds are brought out, and again they lose the scent.

Excitement has subsided, and Winters is engaged with a young man by the name of Robert Harding who has stopped to ask for some gasoline. Mrs. Winters rushes out to tell her husband that a desperado has taken refuge in a deserted house and is using little Rosie Millar as a shield to hold the sheriff off. Harding and his small brother, Jim, rush off in their divver to the deserted house. Later Jim sees Bob sneaking up to the desperado in the guise of a convict when he is brought down by a bullet from the gun of one of the sheriff's deputies. Then another deputy whispers to him: "It's all faked."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RESCUE.

**T**HE story of Bob's splendid attempt to rescue Rosie Millar is quickly told. In the hope that the child would be spared, as long as no attempt was made either to carry the house by storm, or enter it from the rear, he conceived the idea of taking the big convict by strategy. To make the plan effective he had first to impersonate the smaller of the convicts. In this he was aided by a photograph of the man who had just been caught, and of whose capture the giant was fortunately unaware. Bob further reasoned that by creating an apparent disturbance among the deputies and then dashing for the house he might deceive the giant into the belief

that his companion had but just been discovered and was trying to escape. If he succeeded in reaching the house he was to shoot the outlaw on the instant.

The plan, so simple in conception, was yet so seemingly difficult in execution that Sheriff Millar at first flatly refused to countenance it, on the ground that Bob would be shot down at the very start. But at last he yielded, and it was arranged that a volley was to be fired after Bob should have broken away from the deputies. He was then to stagger and fall, and, to make the deception complete, he was to carry red paint in his hand, with which to smear his face at the moment of falling. A revolver was to be concealed under his coat. To prevent his being shot by the mob, the deputies were in-

structed carefully to explain the plan to every person who was armed.

"But supposing you don't fool him?" the sheriff asked.

Bob glanced toward the window. "Do your part in the plan. That's all I ask," he said shortly. His lips were quivering when he added: "Tell Jim it's all right."

"Mr. Harding," Sheriff Millar said, impulsively grasping Bob's hand, "I'm not acting on the square with you. I haven't been. I've made a bluff about not letting you take the risk, but all the time I've been praying in my heart for you to take a chance. I'd not let you do it if my lame leg wouldn't give me away. But you——"

"I know," Bob answered quietly, even as he fought against the strain of the supreme uncertainty.

To all appearances the plan of rescue was working without a flaw, for as Bob, after falling under the first volley, rose and continued his dash, the doubting deputies looked on with rising optimism. Yet there was a disastrous flaw. For it transpired that two men, either as the direct result of carelessness, or through a cruel misunderstanding, fired with too accurate an aim. Bob was shot in two places, one bullet grazing his temple, and the other passing through his left side, just above the hip.

He was not conscious of having fallen, but, as he dragged himself up and started again, he heard the shouts of the crowd and the sound of many rifles. All about him rose little clouds of bullet-tossed dust. As he ran he knew he was growing weaker, and he strove to hold on until the time for using his revolver. Then more shouting and another volley. The sounds came to him faintly, yet they aided him in his struggle for self-mastery. Still unbeaten he looked again toward the house and, to his dismay, saw the outlaw in the act of aiming the great re-

volver. A groan was forced from him as he tottered forward, waving his hands in mute protest. Then, through the maze of his weakness, he saw dimly one faint, vapory, final chance and took it.

"Don't shoot, Joe!" he exclaimed, calling the outlaw by name and dramatically reaching out his arms, as he plunged forward. "You know me! Don't let 'm git me! Let me in!"

He had no strength for further entreaty. His distress was real, his appeal that of a man desperately in need of friendly help. The big outlaw raised the revolver, aimed quickly, and fired. The bullet, speeding harmlessly over Bob, plowed its way into the thigh of a deputy. Shouting a warning to the crowd, he left the window, taking the child with him. As yet he was unsuspecting of the trick that was being played to his defeat. Bob was now within twenty-five feet from the house, but those few feet seemed to him a great distance which he might never cover. He called upon his shattered resources to meet the final, the real encounter, and reached for his revolver. It was gone.

But he must not turn back, he must keep on and on until he reached the house. He must be at the door when it should be opened, and then he must put all his remaining strength into one supreme effort. He reached the door. There was a sound from within. Some one was coming to the door. He braced himself, ready to spring. "Quick, Joe! Quick!"

He saw the knob turn, and the door cautiously and sparingly begin to open. He flung it wide and dashed in.

The outlaw was holding the little one under one arm, while in his other hand he held his revolver. It was cocked. Bob grasped the giant's wrist and gave it a wrench and a twist that brought forth a sharp cry of pain. The revolver fell to the floor and went off

with a loud report. The murderer screamed. He had been shot in the foot. Before he could recover from the shock of his surprise and pain, Bob twisted and held his arm in a manner that made resistance torture. In his attempt at self-defense, the fiend dropped the child. But Bob gave him no chance to use his great strength. Tightening a relentless jujutsu hold on his wrist, he dragged him roughly from the house, calling to the child, as they struggled through the doorway: "Shut the door, Rosie! Quick!"

But the little one was terrified beyond the power to reason. At the moment of her release she had rushed into an adjoining room and shut herself in a closet. With the front door still unfastened, the fate of the child was still in doubt. In his struggle to reënter the house the giant ignored his wounded foot, but his desperate resistance against the cruel hold on his wrist caused him to repeat his outcries. Yet he fought on with the ferocity of a trapped grizzly and slowly drew nearer and nearer to the entrance. Once more Bob called to the child, then strove, with all his fast-waning strength, to retain his scientific hold on the giant.

Of his final struggle he had but a vague, dreamlike recollection. He remembered being thrown about and crushed under a great weight, wondering all the while why the sheriff did not help him. Through it all he kept his hold on the massive wrist, while the cry: "The child! The child!" went ringing through his brain. To save her was his supreme thought, his last sustaining link between consciousness and oblivion. But the strain was too great, and he suddenly lost his hold and was hurled to the ground. Yet he had played his part well, for, as he yielded to his weakness, the crowd closed in.

The outlaw fought with the frenzied fierceness and brute strength of a maniac, yet with the cleverness of a

trained athlete. He knocked strong men insensible by blows from his great fists, and others he lifted and hurled through the air as if they had been mice. A bullet grazed his temple. The blow from a billy cut an ugly gash in his forehead. He only fought the harder. For the moment he seemed more than a match for the combined forces against him. It was the sheriff who, evading a powerful blow, slipped between his legs and tripped him. Instantly several determined, stalwart men were upon him, and the fight was over.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BOB TURNS DETECTIVE.

AT the home of Sheriff Millar, under the care of an old colored servant, Bob fought a winning battle with death. The faithful woman never left her patient during the trying days of his unconsciousness and delirium, and it was her soft-spoken words and gentle touch alone that soothed him in those dangerous moments of his violent ravings. Not until the crisis had passed would she leave him.

Touched by his courage and patience and his thoughtful consideration for others, she grew to love him with that spirit of devotion so deep-rooted in the character of the old-time colored servant. With her love for him went her trust, and she gossiped freely about the people and things identified with her immediate world. She took particular delight in talking about the Winters, and, while she had a great fondness for the old man, she could not indorse his act of marrying a woman so many years younger than himself.

"No, Mist'r Bob, dat ol' man nebber hed no right t' marry dat chile," she declared. "She's too wild an' 'ritable t' hang roun' yhere an' nebber go no-whar. W'en she fus comed she laff right hard, jes' like you'n me. She jes' like a bird. But now she jes' takes on

mos' de time. Oh, she nebber does dat in plain sight! But de serbants ober t' her home seen her sobbin' her heart oud when she did'n' know no one was roun'. Ol' George Winters ought t' knowed better'n keep her penned up so long. She ain' no common circus trash, she's a reel lady! An' now, jes' w'en he's crazy t' git her off t' some uv dem big places, he try t' break his ol' fool neck."

"Break his neck?" Bob questioned in surprise. "I never heard about that! What happened? Where?"

"Now yew jes' hol' on, askin' all dem questions t' wunst," she answered with a chuckle. "I specs de ol' man is some hurtid. He sorter fainted comin' down de front steps, an' Doctor Eastman say he done twisted de right ankle an' suth'n else, dey doan jes' know what."

"But when did it happen?"

"De eebnin' yew try t' stop all dem bullits. De doctor say dat yew mus'n know till yew got fru habbin' dem 'citable fits. Dey done say dat de ol' man jes' gin oud, all t' wunst. An' den she took on suth'n turble. She say she sho suth'n's gwine t' git ol' Uncle Winters, she doan know jes' what." The old servant glanced cautiously about and, drawing nearer, with bulging eyes, tragically whispered: "I haf specs dat she's right. I sorter feels suth'n mu-self!"

Bob felt an unaccountable chill creeping over him. "But what's she afraid of now?" he asked. "They've got that big convict where he can't possibly get away."

"I reck'n dat's so, Mist'r Bob," she agreed. "I reck'n he doan kill no mo' folks."

Bob gave a slight start. He interpreted in her words a hidden meaning, and he asked his next question before he was conscious of having formed it. "Where is he?"

"Y' see, Mist'r Bob," she began uneasily, "de' sheriff he did'n hab quite 'nuff off'cers, an', when folks done

t'ink yew wuz dade, dey done say dey'd jes' sabe de State 'spense. Den afterward they——"

"I see," he broke in. "But now there's all the more reason for Mrs. Winters to quiet down. And you'd better do the same."

She gave a deep sigh and admitted reluctantly: "I reck'n dat's right." Then with her usual directness she declared: "But dat convict nebber hed no long har all ober his body."

"Perhaps not all over," he said. "But what're you driving at?"

"Now, yew list'n t' me, Mist'r Bob," she answered, bending still closer. "Dey ain't ketched de reel thin' by fo' thousan' mile. Dat's suth'n dat I knows!"

Sincerity of belief and alarm were clearly depicted in her emotional face, and Bob was more fully impressed than he allowed her to see. "Why do you say that?" he asked.

"Yew jes' list'n. W'en Mrs. Woodburn comed to, an' de doct'r he tole her t' talk, she say dat w'en she done git choked, she grab oud an' felt hold'r long har. Now how yew gwine t' tell me dat big convict made all the trouble!"

"So did I feel long hair when I was mixing it with the big brute," Bob argued. "But what did Mrs. Woodburn say it was that grabbed her?"

The old woman once more glanced uneasily about and said in a hoarse whisper: "Mist'r Bob, she doan know no mo'n yew'n me. She done saw nuth'n! Dar ain't nebber no one dat's saw nuth'n. Dat's what I feels ain't right 'bout all this biznis."

They were conversing on the front porch, and Bob, covered by a blanket, reclined in a steamer chair. A short distance down the road, riding leisurely in their direction, was Jim. He was mounted on a handsome horse belonging to the Winters', at whose home he had been stopping since the time of his brother's injury.



"I reck'n I's got t' git suth'n nice fo' dat young man, oud yond'r," said the old woman, rising in haste. "But now yew jes' list'n t' me, Mist'r Bob. Dar's suth'n what can't be saw prow'l'n' roun', dat I doan like t' t'ink 'bout. Yew jes' tell me what it are!"

With this she left him, and from that moment Bob took an active interest in the affair.

"Hello, Bob," Jim called from the road. "Uncle Winters wants to know when you're going to put in those two weeks with them."

"Doctor Eastman says I can go over day after to-morrow. How is the old chap?"

"Fine!" answered Jim, as he tied his horse. "Of course he's got to crawl round on crutches for a while, but he's coming out all right." Giving his horse a parting caress he hurried toward the house, and, as he reached the porch steps, he burst out: "I say, Bob, you ought to see Mrs. Winters working in her gym. And you just ought to see her put up the fifty-pound dumb-bell. Gosh! Talk about strength! Before long she's going to put up the sixty-pounder for me. She wanted to do it to-day, only she hasn't got over that banging she got the other night. And talk about fencing, Bob! I tried the foils with her this morning, but I couldn't touch her, and I used that last lunge you showed me, too. She disarmed me every time she said she was going to; gave me every chance and then some!" Bob tried to wedge in a word, but gave it up, and the enthusiastic youngster rattled on: "I told her what a crackajack you are with the foils, and she said she's crazy to have a set-to with you. And, take it from me, you won't have any soft snap, either. She's what I call a real peach!"

"She's a fine little woman, all right," Bob answered, "but——"

"Little!" exclaimed Jim, in his sur-

prise trying to talk and whistle at the same time.

Bob laughed and explained. "I suppose every attractive girl's 'little' with me; that's a weakness of mine. But where's her gym? We must have missed it the other day."

"You bet we missed it, and it's the only thing we did miss," Jim replied, as he balanced himself on the porch railing and began to swing one leg. "It's that little building, just to the right of the carriage house, and Uncle Winters hates it." Catching his brother's look of surprise and interrogation, he explained. "That's straight, Bob, for she told me so. You see she was always crazy to do a lot of wild stunts, and when she came here there wasn't any chance to do anything. Uncle Winters made a big kick when she asked why she couldn't have a gym. He said something about its being too much like a circus, but, of course, it wasn't, you know. Mrs. Winters didn't say any more about it, because, you see, she knew how he felt. But pretty soon she didn't feel well at all, and the doctor made a big kick about its not being right for her to cut out exercising, right after she'd been doing so much. And right there Uncle Winters caved and told her to go ahead and build what she wanted. But he's never been inside, and she says that every time he has to pass it he shuts his eyes!"

Bob smiled and held his gaze on nothing in particular. Presently he said: "Jim, will you keep mum about something?"

"Cross mu heart, Bob," said the boy, gripping the railing and leaning far forward.

"Jim, I've been hearing a lot about all this assault business," he began, his cheeks glowing with excitement. "I'm going to turn detective. You needn't laugh!"

"I ain't laughing at you, Bob. I'm

just glad that you're going to get busy," the youngster replied.

"I'm going to make a bluff at it, anyway," Bob rejoined. "I know what Sheriff Millar and everybody else around here thinks, but I don't believe that big convict, or the smaller one, either, ever touched Elsie Millar or the Woodburn's dog."

"Search me, Bob," said the young hero worshiper, his eyes aglow with expectancy.

"When all that happened they were miles from here. Of course the giant may have been the devil who waylaid Mrs. Winters and Mrs. Woodburn, but I'm not convinced. Now, I'm not going to try to say who or what's been prowling around or flying around and choking people and dogs, but——" He paused and unconsciously began to count the number of eyelets in one of Jim's shoes. When he resumed, his voice was low and restrained. "Jim, you know they found the Woodburn's big bull terrier hanging up in a tree. Now don't breathe a word about all this to anybody, not even to the Winters, for I don't want any one to know I'm on a still hunt."

"I'm a mummy, Bob."

"This is a new kind of stunt for me, this detective business, and I don't want to get in wrong at the start. I've found out for a fact that that dog of the Woodburns wouldn't have a blessed thing to do with anybody outside the family. He was kind enough until you tried to corner him, but one day a big, husky tramp got after him and had to go to the hospital. Now, there wasn't a mark on either of those convicts, so I'm going to leave them out, as far as the sheriff's daughter and the dog are concerned. I don't believe they were within a hundred miles of here at the time. But somebody else was here, but who?"

Jim shifted his position on the railing, but made no reply. He knew his

brother was reasoning aloud, and he did not break in upon his line of thought.

"I'm sure in my own mind that the dog was taken off his guard; that he was lassoed and then choked to death. Now, you can just bank on it that the fellow who killed that dog started to choke the sheriff's daughter." A close observer would have noticed that Bob's excitement was on the increase. "Jim, did you notice a fellow with a lasso and a coil of rope over his shoulder the other day?"

Jim's face brightened. "When you tackled that big jailbird?" he asked eagerly.

"Shure, Mike!" replied the boy.

"Well, I want you to find out all you can about him, only don't let on what you're up to."

"I'll let you know this afternoon," said the young hopeful, as he slipped from the railing. "Tell Aunt Cella to save those cakes for me. Can't wait, now!"

Bob, keyed to a high pitch, spent the balance of the morning mentally reviewing his self-imposed task. It was late afternoon when Jim, true to his word, rode up to the Millar's and, before dismounting, shouted: "I've got all the dope, Bob!"

Bob, in mingled consternation and amusement, cautioned him by a gesture.

"I've got it straight, Bob," Jim said in a whisper, as he tiptoed up the porch steps. "It wasn't any stunt, at all."

"How'd you manage to work it so soon?"

"Oh, I just pumped Uncle Winters' foreman," Jim explained, proceeding to establish himself in his old position on the railing. "He says that scout with the rope's nutty, but that he's safe. Then I sounded Mrs. Winters. When I told her that I thought that chap with the rope might be the fellow who's been doing all the choking stunts, instead of that big convict, she laughed at me so

hard I felt like a perfect simp. Then she said that he's no more dangerous than a three-months-old kid. She said he used to be a cow-puncher, but got a bad bump one day that made him nutty. When I told her how funny he acted with me she said that he doesn't often say 'boo' to anybody, and that he's been here for nearly a year and 's never done anything shady. But take it from me, Bob, just the samemee, I don't want to meet him alone till I've grown up as big as you are!"

Harding gave the well-knit youngster a look of admiration. "Jim, let me give you a pointer," he said impressively. "If you don't want to get hurt keep away from 'unloaded' guns and 'harmless' lunatics!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### "THE ETERNAL FEMININE."

WHEN Bob went to the Winters he was prepared to find his hostess the victim of morbid imaginings, or showing the traces of tears shed in secret. Instead she moved about with an enthusiasm and apparent lightness of spirit that gave the lie to some of the stories told to him by the old servant over at the sheriff's. When she took him under her care and showed him about the farm, or lingered with him in her gymnasium, she radiated a wholesomeness of mind and heart that proved a greater tonic to him than the drug prescribed by his physician. At no time did she allude to the recent assaults upon herself and others. Seemingly she lived only in the present, and she charmed him by her youth and beauty and her spirit of frank good-fellowship.

Perhaps that which impressed him most was her great strength. Jim was a wiry youngster and strong for his age, and he loved a tussle, the rougher the better. Yet he was no match for her. She tossed him about as a cat would a mouse, and, at the end of one

of their romps, she caught him by the ankles and, holding him head downward, swung him from side to side like a pendulum. Then she grasped the sixty-pound dumb-bell and, with one hand, lifted it from the floor and raised it to a position arm's-length above her head. She repeated the exercise with her other arm and, with the grace and swiftness of a lioness, bounded from the gymnasium out into the open, crying joyously: "Show's over!"

One evening, a few days after the beginning of his visit, Bob, upon entering the living room, was surprised to see her standing by a table, rigidly erect, her arms at her side, the elbows held slightly backward, hands clenched. To see her in her present attitude gave him a shock. Only a few minutes before she had left him with her face warm with smiles, and now she was fighting for self-control. Her back was toward him, and, in the instant of his embarrassment, he recalled the words of the old colored woman: "But now she jes' takes on mos' de time. De serbants, ober t' her home, dey seen her sobbin' her heart oud w'en she did'n know no one was roun'." As he watched her, a great sympathy swept through him, and he had to fight hard against the impulse that was urging him to go to her. Considering himself an intruder he turned to go, but, as he did so, she heard him. And, as he caught her expression, he knew that she was desperate, that the spirit of unfettered joyousness, that she had been showing him, was nothing more than clever masquerading.

"Well, you caught me, didn't you?" she asked, and there was no sound of music in her voice, only defiance.

"I beg your pardon. I—I——"

"Oh, you needn't apologize, and you can cut out the sob stuff," she said in a hard voice. Then her mood suddenly changed. "I'm an awful fool! But you understand, don't you?"

"Why, I—I suppose I do."

In his confusion it would have been impossible for him to have given a true interpretation of his conflicting emotions. One thing, however, stood out clearly defined and dominating, his desire to help her. Yet there was so much he might have said, so many things he desired to express, that he dared not trust himself to speak. She read him as clearly as though he had spoken freely, and the wild, strained look faded from her face.

"I know you do. I feel it. And it's a great comfort, just now," she said with a sigh of relaxation. "But I didn't use to be such a fool."

"You're not a fool," he protested, still holding himself. "Any one would be broken up who'd been through what you've been through. But, now that that brute's out of the way you'll have chance to pull yourself together."

She looked at him in a frightened way, then sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands.

Bob crossed over to her. He was young and impulsive and he longed to take her in his arms and comfort her, even as he would have held and soothed the little child for whose sake he had risked his life. Yet he could not shake off the thought that she was the wife of another man, a man old enough to be her grandfather, it is true, and who had selfishly neglected her, but still her husband.

"I wish I could help you to see things right. There isn't a blessed thing to be afraid of now," he said, when he dared trust himself to speak. "It hurts to see you broken up like this."

She took one hand from her face and touching his arm lightly, very lightly, looked up and smiled. In that look and in the light, fleeting touch of the hand were conveyed a message which thrilled him, even as it warned him to hold his grip upon his emotions.

"What a great, big, brave, generous-

hearted boy you are," she declared in a spirit of charming, bewitching frankness. "You make me feel ashamed of myself, and you give me a pile of courage, too. I'm going to try and behave myself, after this. And yet there's that terrible feeling which makes me know something awful's going to happen to Mr. Winters."

"That's only your nerves, and you'll get over it, just as soon as you get your strength back. I mean your nervous strength."

"I wish I could think so, but I can't. It haunts me!"

Bob had exhausted his resources as a comforter and looked at her in silent sympathy.

"Everybody round here puts all the blame on those convicts, but they didn't touch a soul here. I know it," she declared, once more growing excited. "It's something that will never be caught. When the hounds got left I knew it could never be trailed down. The minute it gets too hard pressed it simply dissolves. But it's going to show up again, you just take it from me! Gosh! I wish I didn't have to keep up this second-sight stunt, but I can't help myself."

"It's too bad you and Uncle Winters don't go away for a change," Bob dared to venture.

"In more ways than one," she replied, and he saw the look of fear in her eyes. "I've had my turn, and, believe me, Mr. Winters is going to have his, only I can't make him believe it. He was red-hot to pack up and hike out when I was brought home all squeezed out of shape, but, the minute they got those two convicts, he cooled off and asked me to postpone my 'wedding tour.' My wedding tour! I felt like kicking, but he's set with age, and I haven't always acted like an angel toward him, so I said nothing to hurt him." She was clearly distressed when she said: "But it's terrible to stay here

and know that he's going to get his. I'm just as sure——" She heard the sound of some one coming through the front hall and burst into a merry laugh. Bob marveled at a nature that could on the instant change from a mood of despondency to one of apparent mirthfulness.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### "TIPS" DISAPPEARS.

**A**MONG the old man's most cherished possessions was a large herd of registered shorthorns. Their crow-black coats were of satiny softness and reflected the sunlight almost with the brilliancy of polished metal. One day a heifer calf was born, distinguished from the rest of the herd by a white spot at the tip of each ear. The old man pronounced this marking a blemish which reduced the animal to the rank of a cull, and fit only for veal; in his herd there must be one solid color, and that crow-black. His wife, touched by the rare beauty of the helpless creature, pleaded for its life, and it became her sole property. She named it "White Tips," which quite naturally became "Tips" for short. Until she was seven months old, Tips was allowed to run with the main herd, but after that she was, from time to time, placed in a large corral in which was built a comfortable barn. In spite of these thoughtful arrangements, Tips was happiest whenever she was turned into the herd and cunningly tried to hide herself in the midst of her big family whenever the attempt was made to place her back in her corral. As time went on she became the pet of everybody on the farm, including the old man.

One morning she was not in her corral at feeding time. The foreman called to her, but she did not respond. He hurried to the old man for the key to the corral gate, only to find that the heifer was not in her barn. The circumstances of her disappearance were

peculiar, for the corral fence was eight feet high and studded on its top with sharp nails, pointing menacingly upward. Close inspection failed to show that either the gate hinges or the lock itself had been tampered with. But the heifer was gone and had left no trace as to the nature of her going.

The old man listened quietly to the news, but, as he toyed with a pencil his hand shook. His first comment was: "I hope we find her before th' wife hears." He then directed that a careful search be made through his herd of black shorthorns, and that a general alarm be sounded throughout the county. Then, having notified Sheriff Millar, he sent for his foreman.

"Now let's start at th' beginnin'," he said. "When was th' las' time y' see that heifer?"

"Last night, about eight o'clock, sir, when I went the rounds," the foreman answered. "She was lying down in the corral, just outside her barn."

"Eight o'clock," the old man repeated. "An' y're sure y' locked th' gate when y' come away?"

"Yes, sir, I'm sure I did. Mrs. Winters and Mr. Harding were out there with me, and they both saw me do it."

Bob corroborated this statement, and, to make it more conclusive, added: "Mrs. Winters even tried to open the gate to make sure it was locked. She seemed awfully nervous and said that she wished she could put the whole place in a strong cage."

The old man started and shot Bob a look of concern.

"I thought she'd got over havin'——" He checked himself abruptly. Addressing the foreman, he said: "Things don't look right, but how 'bout th' key? Sure nobody got hol' of it befo' y' give it t' me? Some one might have unlocked the——"

"There wasn't any chance for that,"

the foreman answered emphatically. "The minute I locked that gate I took the keys right straight to you. Then I turned in."

"I know y' give 'em to me, all right; an' I didn't go out th' house las' night," acknowledged the old man, adding dryly: "That is, unless I walked in mu sleep, an' I've never bin ketched doin' that!"

The foreman smiled and shook his head. Bob said: "I guess you'd have waked up, looking for your crutches. But what did you do with the key?"

"Why, I put it right straight in mu pant's pocket. An', when I went t' bed, I put them pants 'tween th' matrissis an' slep' on 'm." He turned to the foreman. "An' they was thar when you waked me up."

The foreman vouched for this statement with a nod.

"I'm wondering if anybody heard the hounds last night. Jim and I didn't hear a sound," Bob ventured.

"I never hear nuthin' at night!"

"I did, just once. One of the hounds gave two faint barks, but he didn't really get going, and I went to sleep," the foreman stated. "I didn't think anything about it at the time, for they often do that, you know, and for no reason that I've been able to find out. Anyway I was only about half awake."

They were standing near the entrance to the corral.

"I don't see how that heifer got out, unless somebody hed a key," the old man declared.

"But there weren't only two keys ever made for this lock, and you had them both," maintained the foreman. "That gate wasn't opened from the time I locked it last night until I just unlocked it."

The old man looked at the strong, eight-foot fence, with its array of sharp, cruel nails and shook his head. "She never jumped that fence, an' she didn't go through th' gate, nuther."

"Nor through the fence, either," rejoined the foreman. "I've overlooked every inch of it and not a board has been touched."

The three most reliable hounds were then taken to the inclosure and there released. They lacked incentive and, after yawning and stretching themselves, they kept close to the old man. At last, after persistent urging, they began languidly to move about with their noses held close to the ground; yet they made no sound other than that of their exhalations. When they were within twenty feet from the little calf barn they began to warm up. Their languor disappeared, and they became keen for the chase. The leader bayed and dashed for the barn, followed by the others in full cry. Presently they were heard from the inside, but quickly reappeared and followed the back trail. It ended where it had been picked up, twenty feet from the barn. Winters encouraged them to cover every foot of the inclosure, but, after a repetition of languid, aimless searching, they finally lost all interest in the fruitless chase.

The old man glanced nervously toward the house. He was trying hard to conceal the fact of his anxiety. Then, too, he was fighting a losing battle with his conscience, inwardly acknowledging the truth that he had only too gladly welcomed the injury to his ankle as an excuse for remaining at home indefinitely. At that moment he felt a greater respect for his wife's premonitions than he had believed would ever be possible.

"Git all th' hounds, and we'll turn 'em loose on th' outside. We've got t' be right smart," he declared with a sharpness that was unusual with him.

His prize pack, numbering twenty-five, was soon in full cry. The scent was picked up at a point about fifty feet from the corral and an equal distance from the main barn. It was hot and led

directly to the barn, where it took on a mysterious phase which defied further pursuit; for it left the ground and ran directly up the side of the building. This fact was made clear by the behavior of the hounds, several of the younger springing against the barn in an effort to climb its sides, and all the while they gave vent to their excitement by incessant baying.

"That's whar she went, boys, right up that barn," the surprised old man said. "It's hard t' believe, but I know them hounds."

The foreman had pushed his way in among the struggling hounds and was standing a few feet from the building, his eyes searching the place over which the trail was supposed to run. Presently he went close to the barn and, with contracted brows, studied its side. Then he reached up and took something from a slightly projecting nail.

"She did go up the barn, and here's the proof!" he exclaimed excitedly.

"What y' got?" asked the old man, striking out vigorously with one of his crutches, as he fought his way through the restless jam of hounds.

The answer gave him a shock. "Some of the heifer's hair."

The old man steadied himself on his crutches and gasped. "Up thar?"

"Yes, sir; up there, six feet from the ground."

The awed old man examined the tuft of soft, black hair. "Yas, that's Tip's har, but I can't hardly realize it. How do y' figger it out?"

"She was pounced on when she was in her barn," boldly asserted the foreman. "She was dragged for twenty feet out into the corral, and then she was lifted bodily over the fence and dropped again. So, you see, she was carried in all about a hundred feet. Then it dragged her to the barn and——" He looked helplessly from the old man to Bob, paused, and then exclaimed: "Well, I wasn't here when

it was being done, and I'm no clairvoyant, but you-all saw me take her hair from a nail six feet above the ground!"

The others listened in silence, and the foreman went on: "She was nearly eight months old and fatter than a caged duck. I don't know any one around here who could climb over that fence with five or six hundred pounds of ripping, tearing animal in his arms. There ain't any three men who could do the trick together!"

"But how was she toted off so slick that th' hounds didn't h'ar nothin'?" asked the old man.

"I don't know. That's another poser," was the blunt admission. "She's gone and here's a lock of her hair! That's all I know about it."

Bob, however, believed he had observed a phase of the situation that had escaped the notice of the others, a phase that might mean a clew. Though thrilled at the thought, he remained silent.

Heavy of heart, the old man returned to the house and, upon entering the large living room, went to a window from where he gazed blankly out over a part of his vast possessions. He thought that he was alone. The loss of the heifer brought freshly before him the remembrance of his sister's oft-repeated words of warning and the thought of his blind selfishness in his attitude toward his young wife. They were forces against which he could make no defense, and he sighed wearily. Then he felt the gentle pressure of two soft hands against his temples, and he turned to look into the beautiful eyes of his wife. He saw that she was smiling, and, in the stress of his anxiety and contrition, he knew that her cheerfulness had made the task just before him the harder. But the time had come for her to hear of the fate of her pet.

"Suth'n bad's happ'n'd. I've got t' tell y', but I——" He faltered and

placed a trembling hand reverently on her arm.

She went to his rescue. "Yes, I know. I heard the hounds and saw you-all coming from the corral. Then I knew," she said softly. "I'm sorry, awfully sorry, but you mustn't worry on my account, you mustn't. You've always been so good to me, so good. And I've shown so little appreciation, I've just accepted it all. But I'm ashamed of the way I acted the other day. I'm ashamed. But, then, I was frightened. I'm always frightened! But I'm trying to live it down. I'm going to live it down, no matter what happens. But, if—if——" She was on the verge of breaking, but gripped herself in time to prevent a scene. "I've been so selfish, but I didn't realize it. Your ankle is on the bum, and I know you have so much business worry."

She was very beautiful at that moment. The old man looked at her, half in awe. "I reck'n I've bin th' selfish one, wife," he said brokenly. "But I didn't realize it. But yew jes' wait a leetle longer, an we'll go t' New Yoke."

"You're a dear! I'll wait just as long as you wish. We mustn't think of going away until your ankle's all well," she replied with a smile that warmed him. She was looking through the window, and her gaze chanced to focus upon the large barn, just as the foreman and Bob were coming out. There was conviction in her tone when she added: "Then I'm not so crazy to go, anyway."

He stared at her in amazement. "Y' don't want to quit this ol' home, arter all?" he asked. "I reck'n, fer good an' all, I don't understan' th' wimmin!"

She answered him with a merry, winsome laugh and ran lightly from the room.

He had not recovered from his surprise when Bob entered and asked: "Do you know much about the hands on this place? Of course I know all about the

foreman, but I've only passed the time of day with the others."

"Reck'n I do," answered the old man without hesitation. "They is all a good lot of boys. Thar's one on 'm, Corbin, what drinks, but he only does that wunst in a while, an' he never comes back till he gits sober. Thar ain't none of 'm that I'm 'spicious of. No, th' han's is honest."

Bob did not pursue the subject and presently went to his room. He wanted to think and reason without interruption. Later in the morning he paid another visit to the corral and directly stole away in his car.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MAN OR BEAST?

THE next three or four days were busy ones for Bob. Following his own plan of investigation, he spent the greater part of the time touring the country within a radius of fifteen miles. Suspecting everybody in general and no one in particular, he endeavored to reach his early conclusions by a painstaking process of elimination. On the fourth day of his run he returned, late in the afternoon, with the comforting belief that he had made progress. He had left his car in the shed, which had been given over to his use, and was passing the large barn when he met the foreman.

"Heifer turned up yet?" Bob asked.

"No, and I guess she won't," the foreman answered. He seemed on the point of saying more, but hesitated. Then, lowering his voice and glancing cautiously about, he said: "Mr. Harding, there's something on my mind I want to get rid of. I've been keeping it dark for a long time, but something ought to be done. I want your advice. I haven't told anybody, but it's about the old man."

"You mean Uncle Winters?"

"Yes, he's a sleep walker."



Bob was speechless.

"I've seen him doing that more times than I can count, and he doesn't know the first thing about it," the foreman declared. "I've sounded him the next day, right after seeing him prowling round, but he thinks he was in bed all night. I've been afraid to wake him up or to tell him, for he's getting along in years, you know, besides he's had a heap of worry lately."

"But he's lame! What about his crutches?"

"Oh, he always has them, and he uses them just as slick as when he's wide awake. I've been afraid to tell Mrs. Winters, you know how unstrung she is just now. I've kept dark as long as I can, and I don't know whether I've been doing the right thing or not."

"When was the last time you saw him?"

"Two nights ago, and I won't forget it, either. He looked into my room, I never used to lock the door, but I do now, and I got a good look at him. The moon was shining right on his face, and any one could tell he was way off!"

"What did he do?"

"Nothing but just stare all about. Then he went out, and I put on my rubber boots and an ulster and sneaked out after him. I found him in the carriage house and saw him unlock the harness-room door and look at a new harness that had just come. Then he locked up again and made a bee line for the house. Sometimes he'd unlock one building, sometimes another, and he finally got on my nerves!"

"It looks pretty bad," Bob said. "If I were you I'd get hold of Doctor Eastman and tell him the whole thing."

"Well, I feel easier, anyway. If I'd done as you say, long ago, I guess that heifer'd have been in her corral, right now!"

Bob fought back an exclamation and answered lightly: "It's a bad guess, all

right, but we're a bunch of bad guessers when it comes to getting anywhere!"

After exchanging a few commonplaces, Bob left him and hunted up Jim, to whom he repeated the conversation.

"But Uncle Winters never ran off with their heifer, Bob," the youngster declared heatedly. "Any boob would know that he couldn't, with that punk ankle of his."

"That's right, Jim," Bob answered. "He couldn't have done it, and he wouldn't, if he could. So he didn't. But I'm sorry the foreman's got that idea in his head." He thought for a moment, then said: "We've got to knock it out of him before he really believes it!"

The next forenoon Bob received a registered letter, the contents of which drove him into a whirl of excitement. Twice he read it, then hurriedly sought his brother. He found him carefully grooming the horse that had been reserved for the boy's use. Having satisfied himself that no one was within hearing, yet controlling his voice, which he knew was betraying his excitement, he said: "Jim, we've won! We've cleared up all this funny business! No doubt about it!"

"Bob!"

"I'm just as sure as I am that I see you standing there, with your mouth like a gasping fish and your eyes as big as two full moons, popping out of your head!"

"Oh, Bob, Bob!" exclaimed the boy, rushing to his brother and grasping his arm. "I guess your eyes would pop out if anybody'd sprung that on you! But I don't see how you did it!"

"I thought it all out the night after the heifer disappeared. I didn't sleep a wink that night. I just went over every blessed thing that's happened since the Woodburn kid got scared. At last things began to shape up. There was only one break in the chain, and to-day I got the 'missing link.'"

Jim, overjoyed, leaned against his horse and stared at his brother in amazement. "Bob, you're great!" he said, his expressive young face glowing with pride and admiration. "I want to ask a billion questions, but don't know where to start in. But I would like to know where that heifer went to, if you've found out."

"No, I haven't," Bob answered frankly, yet with a shade of disappointment in his tone. "But I believe I know how she was got out of the corral. When we prove that we will know——"

"But it wasn't Uncle Winters, was it? That foreman——"

Jim's sentence ended abruptly, cut short by the sound of a swiftly running horse. Turning they saw Mrs. Winters riding toward them. She had just entered the grounds from the main highway and was urging Breeze to the limit of his speed.

"Christmas! How's that for riding!" Bob said in genuine admiration.

"Get the hounds! Get the hounds!" exclaimed the girl. "I've seen him! I've seen him!"

By this time she had reached the stable and, with a slight, but dextrous, tightening of the reins, together with a backward movement of her body, she had brought her horse to his haunches. Four of the hands, who had watched her coming, rushed up to hear her story.

"Quick, George," she said to one of them. "Ring the call bell. Ring it hard!"

"What's the matter?" Bob asked.

"The gorilla!" she answered, and her voice was almost a scream.

Everybody echoed: "The gorilla!"

The great call bell suddenly sounded, loud and ominously. The hands came rushing from every direction.

"Get the horses and the hounds," she commanded. "We can run him down if we start now."

She threw herself from her saddle and glanced at the saddle girth which had become dangerously loose. The act was more instinctive than voluntary.

"Never mind about that," Bob called, as he saw her about to tighten the girth. "Pile into my car. I can take you and three of the hounds, and Uncle Winters can come along, too, if he isn't afraid to risk it. Where'd you see that brute?"

"He was in that tree, where I got nabbed the other night," she replied. "I saw him just as he dropped into the road. There wasn't any mistaking him. I wasn't over a hundred yards from him, but that was near enough!"

They were now standing by Bob's car. Already the engine was in motion. One of the hands rushed up with three hounds on a leash. Four men, armed with rifles and well mounted, were dashing for the main highway. With them were the other hounds. The old man could not be persuaded to enter the automobile, and the two young people, with the three selected hounds, were soon scorching for the big tree with the overhanging branch. They passed the mounted men when about a mile from the farm, and Bob had the road to himself.

"How big was he?" he asked, speaking for the first time.

"I don't know. He was taller than I am, perhaps six feet. You see I was too far away to tell much about him. But I could tell that he was massive." She clutched Bob's arm lightly, as she said: "He didn't stand up straight, but bent over, and twice he went ahead without touching the ground. He——"

"You mean that he was flying?"

"No, not really flying, for he didn't have any wings. But I'm sure that twice he just floated through the air, just as he must have done the night he had me."

"Then he's something more than just plain gorilla," Bob declared.

"That's why I feel so frightened. I

mean that he's something more than an animal, something that doesn't belong here at all," she tried to explain, all the while tightening her grip on Bob's arm. "No real animal could move as he does."

Bob did not argue the point, and they reached the tree ahead of the mounted men and found the scent strong, but short. They lost it at a tree, near the brook. A significant phase of this brief trail was the fact that twice the hounds lost the scent and again picked it up again twenty-five or thirty feet from the spot where it disappeared.

"He must have wings after all. Sure you didn't make them out?" Bob asked lightly, almost facetiously.

She did not respond in the same spirit. "I'm sure he didn't have any wings," she answered, and the old look of fear crept into her face. "There's something terrible in all this. I know he isn't real, that he doesn't actually exist as other animals do. If he did, he simply couldn't disappear as he does."

"But he leaves a scent," he reasoned.

"Yes, but that's only a trick to make us think he's real. But he isn't, Mr. Harding, he isn't!"

The look of amusement had left Bob's face. "It's a terrible mess, Mrs. Winters, and I only hope that we'll land him before he has chance to harm Uncle Winters," he said gravely. "And I want you to shake off that feeling about his not being real, for he's just as much flesh and blood as we are."

"I wish I could make myself feel as you do, but I can't, and so far my fears have come true," she argued. Then softly: "I don't know what I—what Mr. Winters and I would have done without you."

"I say, Bob," said Jim, as he joined them, "I'll just bet that that scout with the rope's at the bottom of this stunt. He just sneaks out and——"

"But not this time, sonny," the fore-

man broke in. "He asked me for work this morning and I set him to splitting wood. He hasn't been off the place since."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### JARDEN GETS BUSY.

THERE followed a state of excitement bordering on panic. Those whose interests necessitated daily trips from home arranged to go in pairs, but rarely ever alone. The country school was closed. Neither by night nor by day did any one feel safe. It mattered not whether the creature were in reality a beast or some elusive manifestation of the supernatural, his presence was a menace. The news that Jarden, head of the State's detective force, a man famous for his work among criminals, was on the case gave only a moment's relief, because he failed utterly to get any result, and results were what the frightened people needed. This unhappy state of affairs continued for nearly a week and came to a sudden ending with the arrest of the man with the rope.

He quietly declared his innocence, then refused to speak. He even rejected all offers of friendly counsel, emphasizing his determined attitude by turning his back upon his visitor and sitting with arms folded.

"How'd you happen to nab him?" Bob asked the sheriff. "He never climbed out of the corral with that heifer in his arms."

"Jarden's orders!"

Bob, deep in his own thoughts, made no rejoinder.

"We've had our eyes on him for some time," Sheriff Millar explained. "Jarden says he ain't the half-wit he's supposed to be, and I guess that if we got a look at his brains we'd find the color's all right. I don't feel sure about his getting away with that heifer, but we're dead sure he killed Woodburn's dog. Jarden says he's got him on some other

things, and he's going to pump him so dry he'll wither up."

"But he won't talk," Bob objected.

"I know he hasn't yet, but wait until Jarden gets after him," the sheriff replied grimly. "You'll hear him all over the State!"

Bob, mentally speculating as to the nature of those "other things" with which Jarden claimed the prisoner was connected, made no reply. But the sheriff's next statement forced an exclamation from him. "Yes, he'll talk all right!" he asserted with conviction. "But I'd like to have somebody tell me what Jarden's got on Butler."

"What, Butler, Winters' foreman?" Bob asked.

"Sure! The old man's foreman!"

"But what's he been up to?"

"Search me, I never suspected him," Sheriff Millar answered, and the look of perplexity in his face was genuine. "Jarden isn't telling me any more than he's compelled to. But that's Jarden. It's the way he treats every one who's working under him. All he told me was that the fellow whom we jugged and the foreman have been seen together, and that they ought to be together right now."

"But where's the heifer? Has Jarden told you that?" Bob asked, and, as he spoke, he could not hide his sarcasm.

"He says she's been killed and either eaten or buried." He hesitated, as if in doubt, before he continued: "I say, Bob, Jarden's put some queer ideas into my head. Now, I'm not saying that I agree with him, but then you never can tell. Here's the part I don't like. You know the old man hasn't been any too rugged lately, and she's in no sort of mind to get any more shocks. We-all know that, but Jarden's heart would freeze cream. I never knew such a cold cuss. All he ever thinks about is getting his man. He don't care who he is, and he don't care whose feelings he hurts when he lands him. He's got

brains all right, but he hasn't got any more heart than a machine."

Bob could feel his heart being pressed by the weight of a new-born and intangible fear. "I guess you're right, but what are you driving at?" he demanded in the stress of his anxiety.

"Jarden ain't putting me wise to everything he's found out. I've done a lot of good work for him, but I know that he's doing a lot himself that he's laying low about. At any rate he seems to feel pretty sure of his grounds. Now, here's what I'm coming to, and I don't like it." The sheriff drew nearer and said with lowered voice: "He says that we've got to keep our eyes on the old man."

"Well, we haven't," Bob declared hotly.

"And to think that I'm paying that detective with the old man's money! And here's something else: Have you heard that the old man's been seen prowling round at night?"

"Yes, I've heard something about his walking in his sleep," Bob admitted reluctantly.

"So's Jarden, and he has an ugly way of hinting that the old man ain't asleep. Now, what'd you know about that!"

"Rotten!" Bob declared in disgust. "For the love of Pete get rid of Jarden. He makes me sick!"

Sheriff Millar shook his head and forced a sickly smile.

"Get rid of him—Jarden!" he asked with a low, uneasy chuckle. "It's too late. If I was to fire him he'd still follow the scent. We can't get rid of him. He's gone into this case for all he's worth. You see, he believes that he's struck the trail of a gang he's been after for years. Just where he figures that the old man comes in I can't guess for the life of me."

"Nor anybody else."

"When I told him that the old man would be satisfied to let the case drop with the arrest of the fellow with the

rope he said: 'Nothing doing!' He says that if I'm not satisfied with him I can get some one else, but that he'll stick on his own account. You see, we can't shake him."

A faint smile lurked about Bob's lips. "Perhaps he's got you and me shadowed, who knows?" he asked dryly. "If he keeps on he'll have everybody round here locked up. I believe he's bluffing, and it looks to me as if he's trying to peek through the keyhole with both eyes. Well, let him go ahead. Uncle Winters can show a clean slate."

"That's all very true, Bob, and it sounds well, but it won't work out the way we want it to. Jarden's no four-flusher, and, take it from me, he ain't bluffing. Of course he ain't got anything on the old man, but he certainly can cause him and her a lot of trouble, just when they'll have to have a let-up or go dippy." Sheriff Millar's eyes narrowed and there was a note of cautiousness in his voice when he added: "Bob, has it ever occurred to you that she may be just a little 'off?' You see, she's got herself pretty well keyed up, 'feeling' things that are going to happen."

"Mrs. Winters out of her head!" Bob exclaimed, with a laugh that rang true. "I don't care what she feels, she's got more brains than the rest of us put together!"

"I knew you'd say that about her," the sheriff declared lightly, yet in a manner which carried no offense. "I don't say that she's anything like being insane, but I do believe that she's got herself so worked up that she doesn't see what she thinks she does. I don't believe she really saw a gorilla at all."

"What about the hounds?" Bob asked. "You couldn't fool them, and they certainly hit a hot trail."

"Oh, she saw something, all right, which she distorted into a gorilla."

"You may be right," he admitted. But just at that moment he was not

seriously interested in the subject of the gorilla. His thoughts were occupied with a more vital question. Were he and Jarden secretly following the same line of reasoning in the establishing of an actual clew?

Alarmed and depressed, he sought his brother to whom he unburdened himself. Jim was an attentive and sympathetic listener, and the freshly revealed complications in no sense modified his belief in his big brother's ability to unravel the tangle.

"But I think Jarden's caught that chap with the rope 'with the goods on,' don't you think so, Bob?" asked the boy.

"Not unless Jarden's got hold of something that I've missed, and I've investigated every square foot in this county," Bob answered. Then to the youngster's delight he gave his reasons for taking issue with the detective. "The strongest evidence against your friend with the rope is the fact that he was once treed by Woodburn's bull terrier. He told a gossiping old woman that he was going to kill the dog. Not long after that the dog was found strangled, and the old woman swears that she saw the fellow near Woodburn's home that evening. That's the only evidence against him. And——"

"But that's real proof, Bob. I don't see what more you want!"

"But there is something more, so you just keep still. I've found out that the old woman had it in for him for a long time. I don't know what the trouble's about, but she's been waiting for a chance to get even. And she got it! So don't you take any too much stock in her. Now for point number two: At the time when Sheriff Millar's daughter was waylaid and Woodburn's dog was killed the fellow with the rope was seen near Birdsville by three men. Two are pretty sure about it, and one is ready to swear to it. Now, Jim, a man can't be in two places at the same

time, so you can draw your own conclusions as to the justice in nabbing the fellow. It's true that he was on hand at the time when they were trying to run down whatever it was that pounced on the sheriff's daughter, but that was long enough after the time of the assault for him to have got back from Birdsville. I've got an idea that Jarden made that arrest to keep everybody good-natured. People were getting too hot for him not to do something to show that he wasn't asleep!"

"You just bet that's why he jugged that scout," declared Jim, now wholly convinced that Jarden did not catch his man with "the goods on."

Bob made no response. He was thinking of Sheriff Millar's description of Jarden. "I wish I knew how much Jarden actually knows. He simply must be sidetracked."

"You're on the right lay, Bob, so why don't you strike now?" Jim asked, in an outburst of his native enthusiasm. "Don't give Jarden a chance to work any of his funny business. I'd pile right in now, Bob—now!"

Bob smiled in spite of his distress of mind. "That's just what I'd like to do, but this case is too ticklish to allow of any bungling. I believe I'm on the right track. I was sure of it the other day, but if I'm not——" He did not finish the sentence. "Circumstantial evidence has hung more than one innocent man, and that's all I've got now. Sometimes I feel that Jarden and I are working along the same line, only he's seven laps ahead and still gaining. We can't afford to let him strike first! Let's run out to Brentonville. It's our only hope now."

A few minutes later they left the farm in Bob's car. The sun had already set when they returned from their run.

"I guess old Jarden didn't gain any laps this afternoon, Bob," Jim said in delight, as he stepped from the dust-

covered car. "When do you think you are going to——"

Bob glanced about in alarm. "Don't talk out here," he said. "And don't look so blamed pleased with the world, either. We don't know who may be eyeing us this very minute." He had been speaking very softly, and he lowered his voice when he said: "I'm going to act to-morrow morning."

The coming of the old man caused a sudden change in the conversation. As Bob looked at him he could feel his heart throbbing in his throat. Then he steeled himself for his ordeal of the morrow.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### AT THE FOOT OF HIS BED.

THAT night the old man went to his room long after the others had retired. Though tired in mind and body and greatly in need of sleep, he did not dare to close his eyes. He was afraid to go to sleep, afraid lest he should suddenly open his eyes and find himself out in the cold night air, or in one of the several outbuildings on his farm. He fought against sleep as he would have fought against a powerful drug which, robbing him of his guiding conscience, would have forced him all unconsciously to the commitment of acts traceable only to the insane.

Only the night before he had awakened to discover that he was in the gymnasium, in the act of opening, or attempting to open, one of the lockers, the key to which was in his wife's possession. He was fully dressed, and on the floor by his side were his crutches. He did not remember dressing, in fact he had no recollection of having left his bed. But he was positive that he had undressed and gone to bed, and that, just before putting out the light, he had looked at the clock.

That last act was fixed in his memory. Then he had passed into dream-

less sleep, from which he had awakened to find himself in the hated gymnasium. He could not tell how long he had been there, and at first he tried to convince himself that he was dreaming. The situation was uncanny. The realization that he had quite unconsciously entered a building, the interior of which he had vowed never to see, that he had moved and acted like an automaton, unmanned him, and he began to shake like one taken with a chill. When he had last seen the candle, which he was now holding, it was on the little table by the side of his bed, and he wondered where he was when he relighted it. Had its rays betrayed him? The thought brought him to his senses. He saw that the window shades were raised, and the discovery added to his discomfiture. He hastily picked up his crutches and blew out the light. He could only hope that he had not been seen, for he was proud, and the thought of discovery was humiliating. A feeling akin to shame swept over him, for it was just a few days ago when he had boasted that he never walked in his sleep!

Putting the candle into his coat pocket he groped his way to the door and cautiously peered out. He had no idea of the hour, but he hoped that it was still too early for the hands to begin their first duties of the day. They were early risers, those sturdy toilers of the soil. But there was no light in any of their rooms, and he knew they were still sleeping. He felt relieved. He softly closed the door, fearful that its faintest sound might reach the ear of some light sleeper, or rouse the hounds. Once more he glanced about, then stole half crouching through the yard. In his efforts to crouch, he spread his crutches wide apart, and, losing his feeble balance, he fell. Fortunately his ankle suffered no ill effects, and, readjusting his crutches, he went the rest of the way boldly erect.

But the exertion was severe, and he was breathing hard when he reached his room. He did not undress, but, throwing himself upon his bed, he drew the comforter over himself and, unable to sleep, lived out the balance of a miserable night.

It was not until the day was well advanced that he felt sure that he alone held his secret, and the thought was comforting. But now as he lay in bed he was tormented by the fear that he might, within a few hours, repeat his act of the night before. For a long time he lay and tossed, resolved not to sleep. Then he dreamed.

He was lost in a dense forest. The air was dry and hot and was driven against him by a mighty wind. He could hear it roaring as it battled with the defiant, sky-reaching pines. Then he himself was the wind, and he was filled with glee as he saw all things bending and breaking under his force. Suddenly a great cliff loomed. He knew he could not shatter it, and he knew that so great was his speed he could not stop, he was doomed. Then he awoke with a jerk and realized that the roaring of the gale was the sound of his own labored breathing. Once more he drifted off into unpleasant dreams, again to awaken with a start. Then he slept the sleep of the exhausted. He no longer dreamed, but he awoke with an unaccountable feeling of oppression. He wondered why he should have awakened at all from such a quiet sleep. Within the house was unbroken silence, while from the outside, starlit world, there came no sound.

His room faced the east, and he looked toward the window in the hope of seeing the first, faint, pink tinge of the coming day. As he did so he caught his breath with a gasp and held it, while his heart seemed suddenly to beat. Trembling in every part he slowly raised himself to one elbow and looked. As yet he had not breathed.

Standing directly before the open window, its huge black form silhouetted against the soft, uncertain light of the sky, was an object. It might have been a man, then again it might have been an animal. It was impossible to distinguish which. Presently it moved.

The old man sank swiftly, softly to his pillow and pressed one shaking hand over his mouth and nose, lest the sound of his breathing should be heard. The thing had turned and was standing with one massive arm reaching out, as if about to feel its way through the gloom of the room. Suddenly it crouched, until only its head and shoulders could be seen, and began stealthily, noiselessly to creep toward the bed. It reached the foot and for a moment remained motionless.

The old man resisted a mad impulse to shout for help. Then, with what little presence of mind he still retained, he told himself that, with one ankle crippled and his revolver in his bureau drawer, his safest plan was for him to lie still and feign sleep.

On the table by his bed were his watch and several bills, besides numerous pieces of silver. These would be quickly discovered and appropriated, and then his guest would leave him to commit other robberies in the house. Yes, he would lie still and feign sleep. At the right time he would get his revolver and give the alarm. He was lying on his right side, with his legs partly drawn up. The left leg extended a little beyond the right, and he resisted an impulse to draw both of his knees to his chest. To have done so would have afforded him a sense of relief. He wanted to draw the bedclothes over his head, they seemed, just then, his only means of protection. But he did not stir.

He saw the thing sink slowly from sight and knew it was crouching. Something touched his left foot and

rested there. Then it moved, and he felt the pressure of fingers pass lightly about his ankle and steal softly to his knee. There the hand rested and gently, slowly moved its fingers. Again the old man wanted to cry out, yet he did not stir.

The hand left his knee and began slowly to work its way up his thigh. After an age it reached the hip and began to feel about the bedclothes. And all the while the thing had remained out of sight. Then stealthily, noiselessly, appeared the head, the broad shoulders, the huge black body. A hound barked, and the thing withdrew its hand and sank out of sight. Its movements were as silent as the passing of clouds.

The old man could control his breathing no longer. His breath forced its way through his restraining fingers, loud and rasping. He tried to cover the fact of his distress by pretending to snore, but the attempt was a failure. It was more like a stifled groan. The barking of the hound ceased.

Once more the thing loomed by the bed and leaned slightly over and again lightly placed its hand upon the old man's hip, but not to remain there. Slowly the thing drew so close that the old man could hear it breathe. Presently it moved a hand across the little table, brushing the watch and the silver to the floor. Next it quietly pushed the table, brushing the watch and the silver close that its breath touched the face of the old man. Then the hand reached the shoulder and rested there. The old man wanted to draw away from that hand, yet he knew that he must lie perfectly still. A sense of suffocation overcame him, and involuntarily he slowly drew his knees to his chest. But he knew that on no account must he again stir. Holding himself in agonized restraint, he dug his fingers into the bedclothes. Yet he knew also that he had reached the limit of self-control, that he had gone beyond it. He



felt that he must cry out; he knew he was going to cry out. And he also knew what that outcry would cost him. But the silent, methodical, creeping movements of the thing had shattered his nerves and destroyed the splendid power of his will.

Slowly the thing drew itself erect and, moving back, contemplated his intended victim. At that moment the old man knew that he was not at the mercy of anything human. His observation was brief.

The thing crouched and glided toward the bed.

The old man had passed the point of human endurance. In the unbearable agony of his horror and despair, he

suddenly thrust out his legs with great force and jerked his body to an upright position. His eyes were wild and glaring. His arms were raised in an attitude of defense. "Help!" he screamed. "Bob! Bob!"

He saw the huge black form hurling itself upon him, and the sound of his hoarse, terrified utterance was instantly stifled by a rough hand placed over his mouth. At the same instant another powerful hand grasped his slender throat, and he was forced to his pillow. In his feeble, yet frantic, efforts to tear himself free, he gripped an arm. It was covered with long, coarse hair. Then consciousness was lost in merciful oblivion.

To be concluded in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.



## CHILD TRIED FOR MURDER

**A**N eleven-year-old boy who recently stood trial for murder in Knox, Indiana, was released under a ten-thousand-dollar bond when the jury was unable to reach an agreement in regard to his responsibility for his chum's death.

The fatality occurred on Thanksgiving Day, 1920. Cecil Burkett, eleven-year-old son of Michael Burkett, a dredge hand, and one of six children, was playing in an adjoining yard a few miles from Knox, with his brother Alfred; Benny Slavin, son of a clothing merchant; Benny's six-year-old sister, Clara; Pearl Heinline, another little girl of the village, and one or two other children. Cecil had received a .22-caliber rifle for a birthday present. He carried it as he played with his companions.

Suddenly Benny Slavin fell to the ground screaming, and the children scattered, shouting: "Benny is shot!"

When several women who had seen this affair from a distance ran to the injured boy, he was unconscious, bleeding from a wound near the heart. He was taken to the hospital at Winamac, where he died the next day.

Cecil Burkett tells the story in this way:

"Frederick and I were cleaning out the martin house. We were taking out straw that sparrows had carried into it. My rifle was leaning against the side of the house. I was taking some of the straw into my house to burn it.

"I had not seen Benny. And I could not see the gun from where I was walking. I heard a shot and a yell. I dropped the straw and ran around the corner of the house. Benny was running, and the gun was on the ground. I picked up the gun and took it and the straw into the house. I did not know Benny was shot. I think Benny picked up the gun and was dragging it away when the trigger got caught in some weeds and fired it. I didn't have any quarrel with Benny."

Benny's parents say that Benny twice said just before he died: "Mother, Cecil Burkett shot me."

# When the Family Were Away

by Robert H. Rohde

**S**UDDENLY and painfully Macumber's strong fingers closed on my elbow. They applied the brakes just in time. Another step would have taken me into the path of a motor car scooting up the avenue at a clip that would have been excessive on a country road.

There was a look in the Great One's eyes that I attributed to solicitude as he chided:

"Eyes wide open on busy streets, lad! It's a duty you owe to your bad heart, no less than the leg the machine gun peppered."

"My eyes were open," I protested. "They scarcely could be expected to mark the course of a projectile."

Macumber grinned quizzically.

"Were they, now? Then maybe you could give me an accurate description that could be used to halt the offending machine farther on. Suppose I'd been hit by it, say?"

"Well, it was a large machine—probably seven passenger. And it was red. And——"

"And?" queried Macumber. "You've described the color and size wonderfully. You're wrong in only two particulars. And?"

"And the driver probably might be identified through a strong odor of synthetic gin," I finished.

Macumber's grin broadened. He nodded amused approval of the deduction. We had walked a block before he spoke again.

"Three years and more since we've been together, lad," he mused. "You in the war and not letting me hear a word of you but through the casualty list."

"It's scarce three years since I've seen you, though, *maestro*," I chuckled. "I have the advantage. Not more than two years ago I was one of three thousand fellows who enjoyed a very remarkable exposition of magic not so far behind the front. I'd twisted an ankle getting there, for I'd seen The Great Macumber billed."

"You didn't hail me?"

"Not in the midst of the illusions. Seeing them from in front at last after long familiarity back stage was too big a treat. And afterward the entertainment people were too swift getting you away."

"Magic," said Macumber gravely, "was but one of my war activities. I'll have some yarns to spin you by-the-by of misdirection as applied to the espionage industry."

"Still the detective, *maestro*?"

"Still the earnest student of applied misdirection. What's magic, whether stage or criminal, commands my attention always."

The Great One paused to light his stubby pipe.

"Crime," he orated, as we strode ahead again, "has fallen into low estate these days. There seems no more cunning in the underworld. The murderer leaves awkward boot prints. Great

robberies are interesting only in the volume of their proceeds. Methods employed are too simple and direct. There's no subtlety."

I wagged my head in sympathy with the Great One's mood. Crime was his hobby—the crime in a million in which the magician's own art of misdirection might be employed to take the investigation dashing off on false trails. Illegalities of the sort Macumber joyously hailed as "my very particular kind" had been few enough five years ago. Now none?

"None worth while," echoed Macumber. "The book of crime has become a primer. At this moment something that might be interesting is in prospect—but I fear it won't be."

"You have premonitions?"

"Strong premonitions," said Macumber, blowing twin smoke clouds from the corners of his mouth. "I shall at least attempt, in the fashion of the masterful deductionists, to make the imminent thing interesting for you."

He grinned down at me cheerfully. Then, with the burr creeping into his voice to tell me that some faint excitement stirred within him, he went on:

"Suppose I were to tell you that around the next corner, to the right, adventure awaited us?"

"And suppose I was to say that this adventure should have for its scene a four-story, brownstone house?"

"You become almost specific!"

"A beginning, lad. I will add, positively, that the adventure has connection with crime—and that the cr-rime will be mur-r-der."

"Splendid!" I cried. "Is that all now to be revealed?"

"All but the touch, the fillip," said the Great One. "Permit me to hazar-r-d that we shall be invited into the affair by a tall but undistinguished man with r-red hair and mustache, who will be missing the little finger-r from his left hand!"

We were turning the corner as Macumber finished his odd peroration. Halfway down the old-fashioned block, I noted with a thrill, a group of idlers had collected.

"It looks like score one," I said.

"Get out the pad and pencil, lad," snapped Macumber. "I was not entirely in jest. The scor-r-re will be mounting r-rapidly."

It did. Presently we were standing, with a grocer's driver and his helper, a messenger boy, a few housemaids, and a half dozen casuals in front of a residence that was of four stories, brownstone faced. At the foot of the tall stoop a policeman stood guard.

"What is it?" asked Macumber of the policeman.

My ears had just caught the man's unexpectedly civil answer—"Murder!"—when the door above was jerked open violently from within.

A tall man came forth and stood silent for an instant at the top of the steps. His hair and his mustache were a vivid red. For all his air of authority he was not a person one would have called distinguished.

"The wires here have been cut, officer!" he bellowed. "Telephone headquarters I'll not be back for siv'ral hours."

The Red One's eye caught the Great One's.

"Come in if you wish, profissor," he called hospitably. "It'll hardly be one of thim misapplication cases of yours, but ye can look."

He waved us a welcome with a hairy hand. It was his left—and the little finger most conspicuously was missing!

## II.

The body of an elderly man, clad in pajamas and house slippers, lay sprawled in the entrance hall. The man was on his back. The stiffened fingers of his right hand suggested their re-

cent grip on the revolver which a detective was examining.

Lieutenant Michael Clancy acknowledged my introduction to him with an abstracted nod.

"Warren Fleming," he was bulletining to Macumber. "Big lawyer in his way, but one of the kind ye hear little of. Stood well with old families. Will cases, mostly. Thoroughly reliable, and got good pay for it. Proud sort of man. His own family dates back to when there was guns at the Battery.

"Looks like he was game. Died with boots on, pretty near. Slippers on, anyhow."

"Burglars?" queried Macumber.

Clancy's tone bespoke his disgust at the suggestion of the obvious.

"Kidnapers, would ye think? Which-ever, I would be surprised but what Fleming punctured one of 'em. There's stains over there by the door, and more spots on the front steps. Fleming got five shots out of his own gun before they finished him. Not bad for an old man with a reputation for bein' quiet and conservative. They hit him twice. Once in the arm. Then in the heart. That settled it."

"How about the servants?"

"Not a soul in the place but old Fleming himself," explained Clancy. "Whole family moved out on Long Island to the summer place last month. Servants went along. Nobody living on the block now but a few caretakers. Fleming didn't have any. Just let the house stand."

"Family know?"

"Yep; I phoned from headquarters when I got the flash. Wife and older daughter have a doctor with 'em now. Other daughter's on the way in. Going to be married next month, they tell me."

"How did Fleming happen to be in town with the rest in the country?"

"Dunno yet."

Clancy led Macumber toward a rear

room. Uninvited but curious, I followed.

"I was talking to the man that discovered the crime when you come along, professor. He's a sort of general caretaker for a dozen houses along the row. Looks in once or twice a day. I'll get the rest of his statement."

"Proceed," said Macumber cheerfully. "I'll be with you when I've tied my shoe. This, understand, is a subterfuge of the high-class private investigator. I wish to examine the r-rugs carefully for the ash of the made-to-order cigarette which the cr-r-riminal smoked."

"Humph!" grunted Clancy. "Beyond doubt ye'll find a stub with the name and address lettered on it in gold. Dis-torb nothing ye see, though, or I'll be lockin' ye up for malicious mischief."

It was banter on both sides. But the Great One did remain in the hall as the Red One returned to the caretaker, and he did appear to make at least a cursory inspection. He walked slowly back toward the detective who still was minutely examining Warren Fleming's revolver.

"Is the key to the mystery there?" asked Macumber lightly.

The plain-clothes man favored him with a blank stare. The magician was a stranger to him, recommended only by the acquaintance of his superior.

"Is it a mystery, mister?" he retorted.

Then the man's voice sharpened.

"Look out there!" he called. "That's somethin' we're not touchin' ourselves till the medical examiner comes."

Macumber's gaze was not concentrated on the ground. His foot had stirred the dead man's extended left arm.

The Great One stooped with an apology and moved back the arm to its original position.

"Medical examiners are fussy con-cer-r-ning such things," said he. "But

accept my assur-ance no harm's done. What does the revolver-r tell you?"

The detective slipped the weapon into his pocket.

"It's an automatic ejector with six chambers," he said. "One cartridge is left in it. The lieutenant's got the five other shells. Maybe you'd better inquire of him if you want the whole story."

"No other shells found?"

"Nope, but all guns ain't automatic ejectors, are they?" asked the detective and turned a broad back on us.

I hesitated, in doubt whether Macumber would turn toward the door which led to the stoop and the street or that behind which Clancy was pursuing his questioning of the caretaker. The Great One, not hesitating, started for the rear.

"Are you developing an interest in ordinary burglars?" I asked with a smile.

Macumber's response was accompanied by no return smile.

"Haven't you the splendid mind to be so quickly assur-red they were ordinary burglars?"

He strode swiftly and softly into the rear room after the ghost of a knock and dropped into a chair at Clancy's side.

Clancy was a painstaking interrogator. He had the policeman's habit—an excellent one, Macumber has often asserted, though lacking the patience for it himself—of covering the same ground many times. Thus, though he had had a considerable session with the witness in hand, we missed none of the essentials of his story.

The man, a blond giant, was wrapped in super-Scandinavian melancholy.

"I find the body and know nothing more," he reiterated. "Every day before lunch I am hired to look into the house. I have a key. Yesterday it was all right. To-day when I open the door I see Mr. Fleming dead in the hall."

"How long did you stay in the house after you saw the body?" asked Clancy.

"Not one second, I can tell you. I ran to the corner and hollered."

"You heard shots last night, eh? Why didn't you 'holler' then?"

"Lots others heard the noise, too. My wife and Swanson at No. 38 and several. We all thought it was automobile back fire. Every night pretty near we heard something like it. There was no yelling or anything. Just the bangs."

"How many 'bangs'?"

"I wasn't counting them. Maybe six, maybe eight, maybe ten."

"What time was that?"

"I didn't look. It was getting light out."

"About half past three?"

"Maybe."

That was the substance of it.

Clancy, looking weary, turned to Macumber.

"All told there were eleven shots fired," he said, "unless some of 'em disappeared altogether. It don't make any particular difference, but everything's got to be accounted for. We may not always be what ye'd call brilliant at headquarters, profissor, but we're thorough."

Clancy lit a cigar, glared indignantly at the uninformative caretaker, and resumed:

"Fleming was asleep upstairs when the burglars got in. The business that kept him in town overnight may have had some bearing on the burglary. We'll hear of that later. Anyway, Fleming wakes up and hears somebody downstairs. They was probably in the next room, where he had a kind of office. Step in. I'll show ye."

Clancy threw open a sliding door, revealing a dimly lighted and disordered room, between what had been known, when the residence was built, as the "front parlor" and "back parlor."

In one corner of this room stood an old-fashioned roll-top desk, with cover

up. Next to the desk was a small safe, its steel door ajar.

"The safe is what is called nowadays the 'peterman's delight,'" said Clancy with sarcasm. "Any one that could open a child's bank would have no difficulty with it. Forty years ago burglars might have drilled and blowed it. Today a man with any cleverness at all could stand six feet away and hear the tumblers fall.

"So it wasn't any explosion that woke up old Fleming. The burglars had opened the front door with an ordinary key and lifted off the night chain as neat as ye please. Another key opened the office door. They didn't even have to have one made for that.

"Maybe where they made the noise was when they come to the desk. Ye'll notice it's been jimmed. But by that time the safe was open, and they'd picked out what they wanted, whatever that was. The desk was forced just to make sure nothin' worth while was being left behind. But by this time the old man upstairs is awake. He climbs into his slippers and gets out in the hall. That's where they hear him."

Macumber interrupted to beg a match for his pipe. His air was one of no more than polite interest as he inquired: "And how do you know that?"

Clancy relieved himself of an all-too-patiently patient sigh.

"Because," said he, "they began to shoot from below as Fleming started downstairs. They fired three times. The bullets'll be found in the wall at the turn of the stairs. We haven't dug 'em out yet, but maybe the holes'll satisfy ye. Take it for granted now.

"The old man came down shootin'. The holes that say so are in the wall at the foot of the stairs and in the floor. The direction the bullets took speaks for itself. Then there's a bullet hole in the front doorframe and more in the walls and another in the newel post."

"Making altogether?"

"Nine bullet holes in the floor and wall and newel post. Then there's another bullet in Fleming's left arm and a last one in his heart. Eleven, all told, as I said."

Clancy went fishing in his trousers pocket and produced a little heap of shells in the palm of his massive and hair-covered hand.

"Here's the evidence of the five shots that Fleming fired," he went on. "They got him when he still had one to go. That one's left in his revolver that my man's got in the hall."

With the burr more pronounced the Great One repeated the question which the subordinate already had answered once:

"Wher-r-re are the shells from the bur-r-rglars' revolver-rs?"

"I don't know where they are now, profissor," admitted Clancy amiably. "But they were in the chambers of the guns when the bullets were fired, and thereafter. The burglars had a different kind of weepoon, the old reliable. Their revolvers didn't eject automatically. For gentlemen in the trade of robbing and killing automatic ejectors are not advised."

"Inter-r-resting," remarked Macumber. "I've hear-rd as much, but I fear-r I've for-r-gotten why."

"Firearms," said Clancy, "have some of the characteristics of typewriters—and handwriting. When a revolver or a rifle has been used a bit it leaves its signature on the shell of every exploded cartridge. Just so a typewriter will turn out a letter different here and there than it would come from any other machine ever made. Just so an expert can tell ye whether it was Jones or Smith that signed 'Robinson' on the hotel register."

The Red One dropped the five shells into the Great One's hand.

"If ye'll examine these at the base ye'll find the indentical mark on each. It's barely visible now, but under a

microscope it'd stand out like a moon. It's a little crescent. Were a thousand bullets fired from Fleming's gun that same trade-mark would be on the shell of each."

Macumber examined the five shells and passed them to me. On each was the little vague crescent which Clancy had described. It was unmistakable, once one looked for it.

The ringing of a bell echoed through the house as I held the fifth shell in the bar of light from the rear.

"Reporters?" queried Macumber.

Clancy called back over his shoulder:

"More likely the daughter that's going to be married. The b'ys pay little attention to murders by burglars beyond what they get over the phone. We'll be hearing in a minute what the robbers came after."

### III.

Marcia Fleming was a little thoroughbred. I could see recognition of it aglow behind the pity in Macumber's gray eyes as she stepped into Warren Fleming's office.

There had been no breakdown—no sound from her—as she passed the body in the hall. She had had warning of her father's death and of the manner of it. That he should be lying there, in consequence, presented no reason why her grief should be paraded before strangers. She kept it valiantly to herself; a slip of a girl, true in her crisis to the tenets of a class which, say what you will against it, has the art of self-control.

The girl was composed, mistress of herself absolutely, as she nodded toward Clancy; her voice low and musical and even as she said:

"There is not much I can tell you. And yet I can certainly supply the motive which brought burglars into this house. Their motive for killing my father you have undoubtedly judged for yourself.

"My father put more than one hundred thousand dollars in currency in that safe last night. Some one must have known it. Find that some one, and you will have found my father's murderer!"

Clancy's jaw sagged a trifle, I fancied.

"A hundred thousand!" he repeated.

"That was a haul!"

Macumber, with a glance toward the police officer for his approval, asked:

"You were here yourself, Miss Fleming?"

"No," said the girl, "but I know what father's plans were. And with him plans were invariably executed according to schedule."

"What was the occasion for him having so much in cash?" queried Clancy, resuming the reins of the interrogation.

The girl glanced from one to the other, as if puzzled by the dual questioning.

"Father was an old-fashioned lawyer, with an old-fashioned practice," she explained. "Some of his clients were my grandfather's clients when the firm was Fleming & Fleming. Father of course had offices downtown. But a great deal of his practice centered here. He was more counselor than barrister. Some of his most important clients never had set foot in the downtown office. Some, I believe, indeed had never set foot in Wall Street."

"I see," said Clancy. "But you were saying about the hundred thousand?"

Gracefully excusing the interruption by ignoring it, the girl went on in the same low tone:

"Miss Fannie de Puyster was one of the oldest-fashioned of father's old-fashioned clients. For years he had held a large group of securities belonging to her. At quarterly intervals he collected and passed on to her the returns. For reasons of her own Miss de Puyster wished to convert these securities into cash. She advised father of her decision. At some time to-day she

was to have come here for the money. It was one of her peculiarities that she did not desire even a cashier's check."

"Do you know why Miss de Puyster wanted to—er, cash in?"

Marcia Fleming colored faintly.

"I do not believe that is entirely relevant," she said. "But I naturally have no knowledge of her purpose."

Clancy clasped his hands behind him and set himself to rocking judicially on his heels. After a moment of deliberate silence he inquired:

"You're going to marry Roland de Puyster, ain't ye? Isn't he Miss Fannie de Puyster's nephew?"

The color in the girl's cheeks deepened. She bit her lip.

"That is quite correct," she replied coolly. "But I am sure it has no bearing on your investigation. The fact is that father converted Miss de Puyster's securities yesterday afternoon. I know he did because he said he was going to. He brought the money here and placed it in the safe. That he did so, I know for the same reason. He said he would. I had luncheon with him yesterday. I know."

"I don't suppose," hazarded Clancy, "there's any other reason you could suggest why anybody should want to kill Mr. Fleming?"

"The motive for the murder appears self-evident, does it not? Father was a man of great pride. He was proud of his family, proud of his forbears, proud of himself and his position in the world. I don't want you to misunderstand. Father was not a snob in any sense of the word. His was a wholesome pride. And with it, as a matter of course, he had a high degree of moral and physical courage.

"When he heard burglars in the house he did what appeared to him his obvious duty. It would have been the same had the safe been empty. The intrusion was a challenge to his manhood. I wish he could have slept undisturbed. But

he awoke—and he came downstairs. A man's death awaited him."

The girl's eyes were brimming as she finished. I convicted Clancy as a brute for that last question. Macumber's notion of it seemed the same. He made excuses for the two of us, shook hands with Clancy, bowed low in the direction of Marcia Fleming—whose eyes missed the gesture—and headed up through the corridor where the medical examiner, lately arrived, bent over the body of Warren Fleming.

#### IV.

The crowd had melted from the sidewalk outside. Even the uniformed policeman had taken himself elsewhere. The smile the Great One turned on me was somewhat grim.

"What do you think of our mystery now?" he asked. "Is your opinion that of the public, which has long since gone on its busy way?"

"I must confess," said I, "to a certain amount of astonishment."

"In the particular of the young lady? Sur-rely she was a most impressive young per-r-son as she handled herself before the august Clancy. My hear-r-t went out to her as seldom it has gone out to living cr-reature—but you, lad."

"I share your sympathy for Miss Fleming," I said. "But the occasion of my astonishment is rather yourself. I have heard you rant—may I use the word, *maestro*?—against the 'fancy deductive processes' of some detectives. And you have repeated them to-day. Therein lies the one remarkable feature of what even I observe to be a thoroughly commonplace case."

"In regard to various predictions as to adventure which I may have made?"

Macumber borrowed a match to touch off the stubby pipe, and I saw his grin return, softened, through the flame. I nodded.

"Just that!"



The Great One shook his head sorrowfully.

"It was mental trash, so to speak," said he. "It was but my intention to show how r-r-idiculous and inconsequent are the vaporings of the deductionists. When they know a thing from beginning to end they pr-r-retend to have found no more than a thread, and from the thread to weave a shir-r-rt.

"The simplicity of this would need no exposition had you the eyes of Macumber-r and the knowledge of the people of the city.

"You will mind that some time since I plucked you by the ar-r-m and prevented you from danger-rously obstructing the path of an automobile which you insisted was lar-rge and red?

"The automobile was proceeding swiftly, so I knew the man in it was on hurried business. But with its speed I was not pr-revented from recognizing the genial Clancy in the back seat.

"So far, so good. I obser-rved the automobile turning into the street from which we have just come. It slowed immediately after the turn, which told me the stop would be somewhere within the block. Do you now per-r-ceive?"

"To an extent," said I. "Perhaps you will explain the reference to the four-story brownstone house?"

"As deep a mystery as the revelations concerned the red-haired man with the little finger missing from the left hand!" Macumber said, chuckling. "The entire block—as you will have noticed, maybe—is composed of houses that are four stories high and have brownstone fronts. The general description applies to the whole street, thr-rough which I have walked several times in my day."

I had been saving a poser. I delivered myself of it in triumph:

"Guesswork or the black art was somewhere. Be good enough to explain why you should have deduced the crime as murder?"

Macumber threw back his big head and laughed in his hearty, noiseless way.

"That is the poser, lad!" he conceded. "Your-r acumen is nothing shor-rt of sensational. However could I explain the wizardry except by saying that I know—as do quite a few others in our fair city—that Clancy is connected with the homicide bureau!"

## V.

At Macumber's hotel, in the Forties, the Great One indicated by a touch on my arm rather than by spoken word that he wished me to remain with him. He swept up an armful of evening newspapers from the stand in the lobby and spread them before me when we were in his rooms.

"Lawyer Dies Battling Burglars!" headlined the *Record*.

Another had it:

"Killed Defending Client's Fortune!"

Macumber read the newspaper accounts aloud. Their descriptions of the fight in the Fleming residence, reconstructed by rewrite men who had seen not even the outside of the place, were greatly at variance. On the routine details all agreed: Fleming had died as a hero, patently; the battle had occurred shortly after three o'clock in the morning; the street had been deserted at the time, and there were only the stains on the front steps to show that one of the intruders had been hit, and that this one, at any rate, had left as he had entered.

"And now what would you make of it all, lad?" he concluded.

"In what respect?"

The Great One deliberately refilled his pipe from the familiar battered tin box.

"And yet," said he, "does not the whole str-ucture of the mur-rder theory depend on so flimsy a thing as a tiny brass shell?"

He divined my mystification.

"The crime is so obviously one of mur-r-der that we can see nothing else," he continued. "We know that a great many shots have been fired, that a safe has been opened, and that a man whom the world regards as a good man is dead. Q. E. D.

"But one steeped, as myself, in the somber art of misdirection, cannot be blamed for seeing evidences of misdirection where crime has been committed. Per-r-haps my imagination is over-r-heated. Nevertheless, I make the point that no living man saw any one but Warren Fleming entering or leaving the house.

"Fur-r-ther, I make the point that the stains on the steps might have come from a tiny cut—such a one as per-r-haps you or Clancy did not notice on the ar-r-m of Fleming. I mean, their appearance on the steps might have been the result of design rather than of accident.

"Beyond this the eye is a true enough measure to justify the asser-r-tion that the bullets in the walls and floors and the newel post are of the same caliber as the bullet in Fleming's hear-r-t. Do you follow me?"

I nodded. The Great One rose and strode to the window. His voice came back over his shoulder as he gazed reflectively down into the quieting street.

"It would appear-r an injustice, mayhap, but let us assume that a man of worldly position and pride had taken the one misstep to which all of us are pr-r-one. Suppose that convertible proper-r-ties intrusted to him had been mis-applied. Suppose that, believing there would be plenty of time for adjustment, he had suddenly been called upon to pr-r-duce what he did not have.

"We might even go far-r-ther and suppose this man had a ver-ry fine daughter. That she was about to make a good marriage, we must concede, would but add to his distr-ress.

"There, lad, you have a hypothetical

case. What might we expect the man in question to do?"

"Kill himself? Aye, lad, that would be the impulse. But would not suicide be confession? There would be the disgrace of self-destruction, and, on top of it, where would be the secur-rities?"

"But we shall say our man has a lawyer's mind. Planning, planning, he sees the possibility of killing himself and making his death appear the wor-r-k of burglars. Where, then, are the secur-rities? Ah, lad, that is simply a case of 'Where are the burglars?' The memory of the man and the pride of his family are protected. He may have died wor-r-th not a penny, but the wor-r-ld can only respect him."

Macumber paused. The stubby pipe was out again. He dropped again into the chair opposite mine and puffed hard for a moment.

"I have stated only a hypothetical case," he resumed. "From bloodstains to bullet holes, from open safe to jim-mied desk, this would have been a case of misdirection.

"Misdirection is the magician's art, and the Great Macumber is rather magician than detective. It is only the theory I have stated that interests me.

"But to puzzle me another-r hypothetical case arises. Suppose there were another man, with pr-r-pper respect for the law, who had it within his power to tear the trappings of deceit from the suicide of a guilty man. Another man with due r-regard for property rights and the like. Should he expose the fraud, shame a family, halt a marriage, and br-r-reak the heart of as fair a lassie as ever walked?"

I looked for a light of mockery behind Macumber's steady and earnest glance. It was not there. He answered the question for himself:

"No, lad, the thing to do would be to wait. If the suicide had left a goodly estate, then the truth must be told to justify a legitimate claim against it.

If he died without estate, what would the truth's good be as against the harm?"

"But you are theorizing entirely?" I interposed.

Macumber slowly shook his head.

"There's something you haven't taken into consideration," I assured him. "There is the evidence of the exploded shells. That is clear enough. Fleming fired five times. There were only chambers for six cartridges in his revolver. One cartridge was left, unexploded, in the gun. And we know where eleven bullets went."

"An excellent point," acquiesced Macumber. "Indeed, the pivotal point! We know the five shells picked up by the police came from Fleming's weapon. The marks upon their bases are proof of it. Every one knows, after all the expert testimony to the fact, that a gun leaves its 'signature.' But suppose that the man in the hypothetical case—that Warren Fleming himself had first emptied his revolver, gathered up the shells, quickly reloaded, and finished the job?"

"What in that case would have become of the shells?"

"A fraction of a second," said Macumber, "would have sufficed to put them out of sight. Per-r-haps, and per-r-haps not, you will have noticed a grating in the floor near the body—par-r-t of a disused hot-air heating system. Sear-r-ch beneath it might have inter-resting results. But I shall not look, or suggest looking."

The room was in semidarkness. The Great One switched on the reading lamp beside use.

"On so flimsy a thing as a little shell," he mused. "The shots had to come quickly, you know, with no great space between the first six and the second five. Sharper ears might have been listening than actually heard. There would be haste in gathering up the spilled shells of the first series. Five might have been picked up instead of six. One might have been forgotten that to a shrewd mind would have told the whole story.

"That one, we'll say, might have been missed by the police, too. It might even have lain where the body, falling, covered all but a glinting rim of it. Some one with no official concern in the matter—some one with a less precise duty to perform than a policeman's—might have been first to see it."

"You!"

My mind darted back to the insignificant episode in the entrance hall—Macumber stumbling against the dead man's arm and bending to replace it. I looked at him hard.

"The same!" said the Great One.

He flipped on the table before me a little brass shell. I held it in the rose-colored light from the reading lamp.

It was not a strong light—but strong enough to illuminate, on the base, the identical little crescent I had seen five times before that day in the residential office of the hero, Warren Fleming.



### THINKS WELL OF MAN WHO ROBBED HER

SO favorably was Mrs. George F. Heubeck, of Baltimore, Maryland, impressed with the courtesy of the burglar who robbed her recently of one thousand dollars' worth of jewels, that she notified the police that she did not want him to be imprisoned if he should be caught.

"I feel sure he was a perfect gentleman," she said, "and I am sorry that he fell into such temptation. I am sure he is capable of more honorable employment."

# A Study in Green

by Scott Campbell

**S**HERIFF CUDWORTH was very skeptical at first. While riding alone into the attractive residential town about dusk one May evening, he was suddenly startled by appalling cries for help from the direction of a narrow road through the wooded country beyond that outskirts of the town.

Sheriff Cudworth sprang from his car and ran through the intervening woods and shrubbery. He soon came in view of the sandy road. A girl of nineteen, supporting a younger sister who was very near fainting, both of whom the sheriff knew well, uttered a cry of relief when she saw him approaching.

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed. "Courage, Mabel. Don't faint. Here's the sheriff. Oh, Mr. Cudworth, we have been terribly frightened."

"Frightened by what, Miss Venner?" he inquired, gazing sharply around.

"That man—that horrible man!" gasped the younger girl, still cowering close to her sister. "Has he gone, Clara? Has he——"

"Yes, yes, dear, he has gone. I never saw such a frightful——"

"There, there, calm yourselves," Cudworth kindly interrupted. He was a big, genial man around fifty and very popular in Shelby. "There's nothing to be afraid of. Where did you see the man? What sort of a fellow was he?"

"Frightful!" Clara Venner repeated. "He came through the shrubbery over there and stood staring at us. We were

afraid he was going to attack us. His eyes were like balls of fire. He was as green as grass."

"Green!" Cudworth echoed. "Do you mean he was a rube, a country-man?"

"No, no, not at all," Clara exclaimed. "I mean his color. He was bright green from head to foot."

"Nonsense!" Cudworth laughed. "Who ever heard of a green man? That's absurd. You aren't color blind, are you?"

"We aren't both color blind," said Mabel, hastening to corroborate her sister. "The man was green, Mr. Cudworth, nearly as green as grass. I saw him plainly. He was horrible. A half-clad, gigantic——"

"No, no, Mabel, not gigantic," Clara interrupted more calmly. "Don't exaggerate. He was appalling enough without that. He was quite tall, Mr. Cudworth, but not uncommonly large. Mabel was so frightened that he looked to her like a giant."

"How was he dressed?" asked the sheriff, scarcely able to credit the strange story.

"He wore shabby gray trousers and a flannel shirt, both very much soiled, and a tattered felt hat. He had no coat or vest. His shirt was partly unbuttoned, exposing his neck and breast. They were a striking shade of green, Mr. Cudworth, like his hands and face. I think he must be that color from head to foot. This sounds incredible, I know,

but it's absolutely true," Clara Venner earnestly insisted. "He looked like a crazy man, a maniac. I never saw such a shocking——"

"Stop a moment," Cudworth interrupted. "There comes Doctor Wykoff. He also has seen this mysterious green man, perhaps, judging from the speed with which he is riding."

Doctor Alexis Wykoff was a prominent Shelby physician. He had more than a local reputation, too, due to his frequent contributions to the leading medical journals, to his discovery of a valuable vaccine, to his successful experiments with electricity as a curative agent, and to his profound and practical knowledge of botany and chemistry, having for years spent half his time in a well-equipped laboratory in the grounds of his estate. He was a well-built, impressive man of forty-five, with a strong and somewhat austere face, smooth shaven, with a very dark complexion and heavy brows. They were knit with a frown over his dark eyes when, mounted on a powerful roan horse, he approached in a cloud of dust through the woodland road and stopped near the sheriff and his companions.

"Well, well, what's wrong, Cudworth?" he inquired familiarly, evidently somewhat excited. "Good evening, young ladies. What's the trouble, sheriff?"

"Something more singular than seriously wrong, doctor, I imagine." Cudworth eyed him a bit curiously. "What led you to think there was any trouble?"

"I heard screams and cries for help, or thought I did," said the physician. "I came to find out what caused them."

"You heard them, Doctor Wykoff, all right," Cudworth told him. "These girls were badly frightened by some fellow, either a lunatic or the good Lord knows what, who has stained himself grass green and——"

"Grass green!" Doctor Wykoff exclaimed, interrupting. "Incredible!

Where did you see him, Miss Venner?" He turned abruptly to the elder girl. "What was he doing? Where did he go?"

"He ran in that direction when we began to scream," said Clara, pointing into the woods. "He appeared like a wild man, Doctor Wykoff, and vanished as quickly as he came."

"I'll look for his footprints," Cudworth remarked. "I don't think, however, that we could trace him."

Doctor Wykoff dismounted and followed him, while the girls remained by the side of the road. The sheriff soon found several footprints in the damp earth under the shrubbery, one of which he carefully measured while telling the physician more precisely what the two girls had stated.

"I don't take much stock in it," he quietly added. "There was a man here, no doubt, but I guess the green stuff was an optical illusion. They were deceived in the dusk, or got their absurd impression in some way from the surrounding foliage. There's no lunatic asylum near here from which an inmate has escaped, and surely no sane man would stain himself bright green."

"He'd be a bird," Doctor Wykoff said dryly.

"Bird is right," Cudworth muttered.

"That really is your opinion, sheriff, is it?" Doctor Wykoff inquired casually.

"Certainly." Cudworth paused and nodded. "Have you any other?"

"None whatever," said the physician. He turned to remount his horse. "I'll ride on a bit, nevertheless, and try to find the fellow. If I succeed——"

"Grab him and bring him to me," Cudworth interrupted. "Take it from me, doctor, I'll put him through a laundry that will wash the green off him. The girls still are nervous. I'll take them home in my car."

But it is doubtful if Doctor Wykoff heard the last, for he was already riding away at top speed.

Sheriff Cudworth was not deeply impressed. He did not think the incident of serious importance. He decided that the Venner girls were mistaken, that in their sudden excitement both had received a wrong impression of the unknown man, whom they had seen only for a moment in the twilight. That he was really green seemed too extraordinary, too absurd and fantastical, for serious consideration.

But Sheriff Cudworth soon changed his mind. Other persons saw the mysterious green man. They confirmed the statements of the Venner girls. None had more than a brief glimpse of him, however, always in some part of the woods, into the depths of which he fled when discovered, uttering wild, discordant cries and making fierce gesticulations. Children playing in the woods caught sight of him and ran home in frantic terror. Petty thefts soon were reported. Footprints identical with that measured by the sheriff were found in back yards and alleys. The marauder was prowling into the town by night. Women became alarmed and dared not venture out. Doors and windows were kept securely locked. Men who never had owned a weapon, and who scarcely dared to fire one, bought guns, revolvers, and pistols. All efforts to trace and capture the "green man" were proving futile.

Shelby was becoming terrorized. The report went abroad that in the woods was a dangerous madman, a green maniac, whom the police could not capture. Sheriff Cudworth found himself with his reputation at stake and his official head in danger.

"It's got to be done! I've got to get that green guy, by thunder, if I lose a leg," he told himself.

Sheriff Cudworth was alone late that evening in his office on the ground floor of the county court house. He had been detained by a storm, which still was raging. Vivid lightning flashes il-

luminated the two uncurtained windows behind him, while he sat at his desk and tried to solve the exasperating problem.

"This alleged green man can't be any different from other men," Cudworth grimly reasoned. He did not pretend to be an expert detective, but he had plenty of good common sense. "There must be some natural cause for his extraordinary color. He can't be simply perpetrating a hoax. He wouldn't prolong it day and night for two weeks. Furthermore, he could not have come from any great distance, or he would have been seen in other localities. He must be some local man, therefore, familiar with the town and neighboring woods, or we very soon could have run him down. He sure is not green in woodcraft. Green be hanged! I don't believe it."

Cudworth's frowning gaze rose a little. It rested on a mirror on a wall back of his desk. He felt a sudden chill. A vivid lightning flash illumined the window directly behind him, and he saw a man gazing through the window, his eyes were abnormally bright, and he had a round, repulsive face, drawn and tense, but void of any definite expression and of a peculiar shade of green.

Cudworth did not stir. He saw that his discovery was not suspected. He watched the uncanny figure in the feeble light from within when the glare without had vanished. Then the sheriff got up deliberately and removed his coat, as if the room was too warm and he had no intention of going out. Presently, without having glanced toward the window, he sauntered into the adjoining corridor. Then he hastened to the front door, stole quickly around the building, pistol in hand, and crept toward his office window. But his design had been suspected. The green man had fled.

Sheriff Cudworth made the most of what he had seen and of the deduc-

tions mentioned. He called late the following afternoon on Mrs. Dudley Carroll, a wealthy widow, prominent in local society, and whose home was the most beautiful in Shelby. She was a very attractive woman of middle age and was well acquainted with Cudworth and his family.

"What have I done, sheriff?" she said jestingly, laughing when she received him in her library. "Are you after me for something?"

"I would be, Mrs. Carroll, if I were a single man and about your own age," Cudworth dryly told her. "No, I'm not after you," he said more seriously when seated. "I've heard that your colored chauffeur, Sam White, has been away for a month or more."

"Sam?" Mrs. Carroll queried. "Yes, sheriff, he has. You surely don't want him for any offense. He has grown up in my employ. He's as honest as the day is long. He's the best-natured man in the world."

"I agree with you," Cudworth told her. "I merely want to learn where he has gone."

The sheriff was acquainted with Sam White. He had often seen him going to church on a Sunday with Mrs. Carroll's youngest servant, a pretty mulatto girl, named Eliza Black. Their names had always seemed to him to be absurdly antithetical, for Sam White was very dark, and Eliza Black almost fair by comparison.

"Well, to tell the truth, sheriff, I don't know where Sam has gone," Mrs. Carroll admitted. "He asked permission to go away for a week or two about a month ago," she explained. "I gave him some money and told him to go ahead and enjoy himself as it was his first holiday."

"Did he say where he was going?" Cudworth inquired.

"He did not," Mrs. Cudworth said more gravely. "He was very reticent about it."

"What did he say?"

"He stated that he had a little scheme in view, strictly private, and that he wanted to investigate it. He did not tell Eliza about it, either."

"Did he say when he would return?"

"Probably in a week or ten days was the way he put it. He admitted, however, that it might take a little longer."

"Have you heard from him during his absence?" Cudworth's calm blue eyes had narrowed slightly.

"Only once," said Mrs. Carroll. "Eliza received a letter from him three days after he left. The poor girl is dreadfully anxious about him. Perhaps he has been killed by that terrible madman we are hearing so much about. She made herself so ill over it that I called Doctor Wykoff yesterday. He prescribed for her, and said he thinks the madman will soon be caught. In fact, he is spending much of his own time trying to catch him."

"I heard so this morning," Cudworth informed her. "Did he say why he was specially anxious to secure the man?"

"He did not."

"He may want to diagnose the extraordinary case," Cudworth allowed; "experiment to learn the cause and cure of so singular a malady. He has a very strong propensity for that sort of thing."

"Very true; that same propensity has made him quite famous," Mrs. Carroll reminded him. "You may question Eliza if you wish, sheriff, but I feel sure she can add nothing to what I have told you. I guess Sam will return safely sooner or later."

"I think so," Cudworth told her. "Do you know what he wrote to Eliza?"

"Not a word relating to his little scheme, or regarding his whereabouts. He did say, however, that he was with a friend, that he was feeling fine, and that he reckoned as how she wouldn't know her big stick of licorice when he came back home," Mrs. Carroll told

him, laughing. "That was just the way he put it."

"Do you know where the letter was mailed?" Cudworth inquired.

"In North Shelby," Mrs. Carroll quickly informed him. "Eliza called my attention to the postmark. So you see, sheriff, Sam has not gone very far away."

"Yes, I see." Cudworth smiled a bit oddly. "No, I won't question the girl," he added as he rose to go. "You know, Mrs. Carroll, I've always thought pretty well of Sam."

"Why not?" she inquired. "He's an honest, simple, kind-hearted darky. Everybody thinks well of Sam."

Sheriff Cudworth had an idea that very few thought well of Sam about that time.

## II.

Sheriff Cudworth had rather more than an idea, when he first learned of Sam White's absence; when he also recalled the hurried arrival of Doctor Wykoff upon the spot where the Venner girls were so badly frightened.

Cudworth's idea had become a theory, and he looked more grimly determined, when he left and started for the home of the physician.

But Sheriff Cudworth did not call on the physician immediately. It was after six o'clock, and he figured that Doctor Wykoff probably was at dinner with his family, and that he could make the investigations he had in view secretly.

Cudworth strode on more rapidly and soon brought up at a low wall in the rear of the physician's extensive estate. It was about a quarter of a mile from the woodland road where the green man first had been seen. The sheriff deduced a point from the last, and hidden from observation by the intervening orchard, a stable, a garage, and a large cement laboratory, all of which occupied the rear grounds, he began an in-

spection of the earth on both sides of the wall.

Cudworth soon discovered what he was seeking, several footprints corresponding with that of the much wanted man. He found them on both sides of the wall, and he soon observed that all of them pointed away from the estate and toward the distant woods.

"Not one points toward the place," he muttered. "Plainly, then, he did not come this way and afterward depart. Instead, he only left in this direction and escaped toward the woods. The space between the tracks shows plainly that he was running. Directly in a line from the laboratory, too. Humph! I'll find out about that."

He sprang over the wall and stole through the orchard, where apple and peach trees were in blossom, sweet and beautiful in the softened light of the setting sun. He paused at the rear wall of the laboratory, where he briefly inspected two ground glass windows and peered through a small hole where a piece had been broken from one of the panes. He could see indistinctly that slats appeared to be nailed across the window, and that the room contained a cot on which a wrinkled blanket and pillow were lying.

Cudworth's features had hardened. He stole around to the front door to be sure it was locked and that the building was unoccupied. Then he returned to the rear and quickly broke the other window sufficiently for him to open it and enter.

He climbed over the sill into a shelved closet, where there were countless bottles, phials and jars, each labeled with a red sticker. It obviously was a closet in which poisons were stored for safe keeping.

Cudworth found the door unlocked, however, and he entered the adjoining room, a spacious, finely equipped laboratory. He had no immediate interest in the details of it, but hastened into a



small rear room, instead, where he soon confirmed his suspicions. Stout slats were nailed across the window casing. The cot and the room itself were in some disorder. In one corner was a canvas extension case containing a quantity of clothing. The most of it had not been worn since it was laundered.

Cudworth crouched in the corner to examine the garments. The sun had set and the light in the room was waning, but after a brief search he found what he was seeking, the man's initials on one of the linen shirts. He was so intent upon his inspection of the garments that he had no thought of an intruder until a threatening voice spoke.

"What are you doing? Get up!"

The sheriff sprang up as if electrified, turned sharply toward the door, and saw Doctor Alexis Wykoff.

"What are you doing?" he repeated.

"Put down that gun." Cudworth eyed him sternly without moving. "It may go off by chance. You may end with killing me."

"You broke in here like a thief," Wykoff accused him with increasing severity. "If I were to kill you, Cudworth, I could justify it in any criminal court."

"Could you justify it in your own conscience?" Cudworth demanded. "How about that?"

"A man with his liberty menaced, his reputation at stake, with his entire future involved and the happiness of his home and family, does not confer long with his conscience," Doctor Wykoff retorted. His voice trembled slightly, but he still maintained a threatening attitude.

"Put down the gun," Cudworth repeated. "You don't intend to shoot me, Wykoff, or you would have done so at once. Men bent upon murder don't stop to discuss the crime, or to point out to their victims the occasion for it."

"What are you doing here?" Wykoff again demanded.

"I want to learn what you know about Sam White," said the sheriff bluntly.

"Why do you suppose I know anything about him?"

"I know you do," Cudworth said sternly. "He has been confined here. That barred window tells the story. These garments, one bearing his initials, establish his identity. Come to your senses, Wykoff, and come across with the truth," he advised. "What experimental trick have you pulled off on Sam White, that has caused him to lose his head and turned him as green as a melon? Come across. Shooting me won't get you anything."

Doctor Wykoff drew up stiffly and tossed his pistol on the cot. "I did not intend to shoot you, Cudworth, as you inferred," he said coldly.

"That's more like it," said the sheriff.

"I would not kill you, Cudworth, or any other man, to save my soul from perdition," the physician repeated.

"Now you're talking, Wykoff," Cudworth said approvingly. "What the deuce is the meaning of all this? I know you have something to hide, or you would have come forward at once with a frank and open statement. It goes without saying, Doctor Wykoff, that I'll do anything that I can for you," Cudworth assured him in a kindly manner characteristic of him. "If it is necessary to suppress——"

"No more of that." Doctor Wykoff checked him gravely and drew back into the laboratory. "Come this way, Cudworth, and sit down. I'll tell you all about it."

"Take your own course."

"I have repeatedly been impelled to do so. There is so much at stake, however, that I refrained as long as I had any hope of getting hold of Sam White again and setting him right without exposure. There is a point, you know, beyond which a physician is not justified in experimenting on a human subject. I went a step too far."

"I suspected it," Cudworth told him as they sat down in the laboratory. "If Sam White——"

"I thought I possibly would find him here," Doctor Wykoff interrupted. "I hoped that I would, but I was not sure in what condition I would find him, or how violent he still might be. That's why I entered quietly and discovered you. I had my pistol only to awe and intimidate him. It's a singular case, Cudworth, and a most deplorable one."

"Tell me about it," said the sheriff. "I'll do all I can to aid you."

"You're very good." Doctor Wykoff thanked him with an appreciative nod. "But I must not go into the details at this time. It would take hours for me to state the scientific features of the case. I will tell you the superficial facts, however, and later give you all of the details."

"Very good," Cudworth said approvingly. "That may be sufficient."

"It is by no means a new thing, sheriff, for human beings to make alterations in their personal appearance, changes which they regard as improvements upon nature, or which fashion arbitrarily dictates. It began in the Garden of Eden and has been continued in every country and by every race up to the present day. Beauty is really a matter of taste and custom. Small feet is a requisite in China. The Fiji Islanders dye their hair various bright colors. Stained teeth and nails, painted bodies and—but, Lord Harry, why attempt to enumerate them!" he broke off abruptly. "You know all that as well as I."

"Certainly." Cudworth nodded. "Go on."

"It's common enough right here at home," Doctor Wykoff continued. "Women paint, pencil their brows and stain their lips. Specialists study the problem of removing wrinkles and the telltale traces of approaching age. One's complexion is often one's chief con-

cern. Observe my own. I am very dark and swarthy. That is one reason, perhaps, why I have made a special study of the skin and sought ways and means to modify the pigment causing one's color and complexion."

"I follow you," said Cudworth. "I anticipate what is coming."

"Quite likely." Doctor Wykoff smiled faintly. "The color of the skin has always held an important place among physical criteria of the human race. Physiology explains color as a consequence of climate and even diet. This pigment, or coloring matter under the epidermis, or rather under the second skin, is not peculiar to the Negroid or other colored races, but is common to all human beings. It is simply more abundant in certain people."

"I understand," said the sheriff.

"But I must come to the point," Doctor Wykoff said, stiffening. "I have been trying for a long time to find some way to reach and modify this coloring pigment so as to permanently alter one's complexion. I thought I had succeeded, both by means of an ingredient taken internally, and by the injection of a chemical composition into the skin. I have invented an electrical machine with which the injection may be accomplished, somewhat as tattoo work is done.

"Having faith in it, I was very anxious to get a willing subject for the experiment. I realized that my reputation would be placed in jeopardy, but I felt so sure I was right that I resolved to risk it. It so happened, however, that the subject came to me voluntarily."

"How did that occur?"

"It appeared that Sam White heard me discussing the possibility of altering one's color with a friend one day," Doctor Wykoff explained. "Well, he came to me a little later and wanted to know if I could reduce his color, as he put it," said the physician. "I asked him why he objected to it. He said he didn't

specially object to it, but that he was in love with a mulatto girl, Eliza Black, who joshed him a good deal about his color, and that he feared she would not marry him because he was so dark."

"I see." Cudworth suppressed a smile.

"I told Sam I thought it could be done," Doctor Wykoff went on gravely. "I also was perfectly frank with him. I told him he would be taking a chance, that it was only an experiment, but he was very anxious for the operation."

"Sam is very fond of Eliza," Cudworth remarked.

"Well, to make a long story short, Cudworth, I consented to attempt it," said the physician. "I bound Sam to absolute secrecy." He paused, then shrugged his broad shoulders remorsefully. "Well, I performed the operation. Words could not describe my horror when I found, Cudworth, that the process not only had turned him green, but that the ingredients injected into his blood had also affected his brain.

"Sam went violently insane for a time," Doctor Wykoff continued. "I drugged him heavily to prevent his escape and kept him in the laboratory for two weeks, hoping his abnormal condition would in time be dispelled. It had begun to do so, I think, when he escaped. That was just before he terrified the Venner girls one evening. I was after him when I joined you at that time."

"I suspected it," Cudworth informed him.

"Since then I have been trying to get him back here," Wykoff went on. "I shall be ruined professionally and criminally liable unless he can be found and cured. I feel reasonably sure that he is gradually returning to a normal condition. I base that belief upon the latest descriptions of those who have seen him and say that his color is becoming darker and taking on a mot-

bled appearance. If he could be found and brought here where I could give him proper treatment, I feel sure I could restore him to his normal condition. On the other hand, I will be hopelessly entangled——"

"Stop a bit!" Cudworth leaned forward. "Hush! Not a sound!"

"What do you hear?" Doctor Wykoff whispered.

"Wait. Not a sound. Don't move."

Sheriff Cudworth arose and tiptoed toward the open front door. His trained ears detected a sound like stealthy footsteps back of the building. The physician waited, with ears strained and eyes aglow, his nerves quivering with suspense under a sudden unexpected hope the sheriff had inspired. Then he heard his voice from some point back of the building, shouting sternly:

"Hold on! I'll have you this time! Don't you bolt again, Sam, or I'll wing you with a chunk of lead. Come here. Come here at once, Sam, or I'll——"

Doctor Wykoff heard no more. He sprang up with a cry of relief and staggered toward the door just as Sheriff Cudworth, with a grip on the arm and neck of the much wanted man, returned to the laboratory.

It later appeared that Doctor Wykoff was right, that Sam White had begun to throw off his abnormal condition, that he had just begun to realize his own identity and that something was wrong with him, and he was returning to the physician for aid and advice.

It seems needless to add that Sam White received a generous amount of both. He came out of the experiment all right, and later married the mulatto girl. The true circumstances were never suspected by the public, much to Doctor Wykoff's relief.

The extraordinary feature of the case was that Sam White, when completely restored, was a shade *darker* than before.

# A Blocked Get-away

by

Frederick Ames Coates

Author of "The Wisdom of Fools," etc.

**S**O after that—well, after that the elephant just kept on living with his little friends, Tommy and Betty, giving them rides on his broad back and—"

Eunice Gay stole a glance toward the bed. The flushed little face, with tired eyes closed and red lips parted slightly, was framed in the mass of dark curls against the pillow. Carl was asleep.

"Poor little fellow!" said the governess, leaning over and gently closing the child's lips with her fingers to induce a more natural breathing. "Poor baby boy! One thing, at any rate, I know and will always be able to remember: he's had a better time since I've been here than he ever had before, in all his five soul-starved years!" She smiled with a mothering tenderness. "How breathlessly he hangs upon those stories of mine, and how eagerly he looks forward to bedtime each night, just for me to tell them!" She crossed to the wall and pulled the cord which reduced the light to a dim glare; then she tiptoed out of the room and closed the door softly.

Eunice Gay had seen other children who had claimed her sympathy and her pity, many of them. But they had been of the poorer classes, and their needs had been physical and material. But Carl Dodge, with the best of food and clothing, with the luxurious, airy surroundings of the Riverside Drive apartment and the park along the shore,

where he took his daily airing, little Carl was the surest waif of them all. For the thing that was missing in his life, except in so far as she, his hired governess, gave it to him, was the loving care and the sympathetic understanding which are far more to a child than all the privileges of wealth.

Carl's mother had died too long ago for him to remember; so the frosty-faced Mrs. Meath, the cook and housekeeper of the establishment, had told her. And Rufus Dodge, his father and Eunice Gay's employer since a month ago, seemed to have no spark of warmth or feeling in his nature. His business appeared to be the center and sum of his life. The girl wondered if all brokers, all financial people, were as cold as Rufus Dodge, and a protest rose in her mind. What could any man find more important, more enthralling, than the love and confidence of a little child, especially his own?

But these were no new thoughts to her, and she put them out of her mind as she made for the telephone in the living room and called a number which, from almost daily repetition, had become very familiar to her. Save for the sleeping boy and Mrs. Meath, who was preparing a late dinner, she was alone in the apartment. The butler, who was the cook's husband, acted occasionally as chauffeur for his master, and his absence was nothing unusual.

"Hello," said Eunice into the trans-

mitter. "This is Miss Gay. About that frock of mine: I want to find out. . . . What? Not ready yet! But you told me yesterday. . . . Yes, but I positively must have it to-morrow. To-morrow, yes; by ten o'clock in the forenoon, at the very latest. All right! Be sure, now. Ten o'clock to-morrow. Good-by."

She hung up the receiver with a satisfied air, turned out the light, and went to her own room, which adjoined that of her charge. There she took up a book which she had been reading and settled in an easy-chair, the light over her shoulder. But her mind did not immediately revert to the book. She thought again of the youngster in the next room, of the pity of it all. How hungrily he listened to the stories which she told him! And even in his play it was not the expensive, elaborate toys and mechanical contrivances in which he chiefly delighted, but rather the simple set of blocks which she herself had bought him, the blocks bearing pictures and letters stamped on their sides, from which he was already beginning to learn the alphabet. They had cost her only a quarter, yet Carl had played happily all the afternoon with them, under the big, sunny window in his father's study.

It occurred to Eunice that the blocks were still in the study. It would not do to have the father stumble over them. He made no allowances for the presence of a child in the house. She rose and crossed the lighted hall to the living room and then went to the study. The blocks lay piled in a fantastic "house" near the window. The girl spread out her apron, a badge of her position in the household, to form a bag to hold them. When she had gathered them all she switched out the light and made for the open door of the living room.

Suddenly she stopped and stood rigid, as she heard some one enter the living room from the hall. Before she could start again a voice came to her. "Well,

that ought to draw a herring across the trail!" It was the voice of Herbert Meath, the butler and chauffeur.

"Hush!" Her employer's voice came to her. "She might—where is that girl?"

Meath, in a lowered voice, which was yet plainly audible through the open door, replied: "In her own room. I looked from the hall. Her door's shut, and you can see the light over the transom. She always spends the evening in there reading."

"Just look again, then, to make sure."

Eunice Gay instinctively drew back against the wall of the study. Her discovery now would cause embarrassment at the very least; she must remain concealed.

"Yes, she's in there, all right," said Meath. "I listened at the door and heard her drawing down the window shade." It must have been the breeze rattling the shade, thought Eunice thankfully. She had left her window partly open.

The living-room lights were snapped on, and Eunice concluded that Mr. Dodge and the butler had seated themselves.

"Yes," said Dodge, "to-day's little business ought to make things perfectly safe. Not that any one had begun to suspect, but the fact that I myself have been victimized by the notorious gang of bond thieves ought to prevent any one from suspecting." He chuckled. "It will be in all the papers to-morrow. I had the police in, and a reporter or two asked to see me, also. I think I'll offer a reward for the recovery of the bonds, just to clinch the matter."

"And hire private detectives to run them to earth," suggested Meath sardonically.

"Yes, I intend to do just that. There's a young fellow, a licensed private detective, that's been specializing in these bond thefts. Can't have much other business to take his attention, I

guess. Old Barlow, that broker in my building whom we nicked for that big haul last month, was telling me about him. He hired this young detective to trace his bonds for him." Again a chuckle. "Wouldn't Barlow's old eyes pop out if he could see where his precious securities are at this moment? But about this detective. Maxwell, George Maxwell, that's his name. I called his office from in town, but he'd left. Look him up in the book, will you, Herbert? Call him at his house; I'll talk to him when you've got the connection."

Eunice, shrinking breathlessly against the wall in the next room, heard the butler turning the leaves of the telephone directory. Instinctively her eyes turned in the darkness to the square safe in the corner of the study. There, unless she was greatly mistaken, there was the hiding place of Barlow's bonds, and no doubt of others, belonging to various owners who had suffered recently from what had become a regular epidemic of thefts!

"Beverly eight-three-o, party J!" The butler repeated the number to himself. No doubt he was copying it onto a slip of paper. "Beverly eight-three-o, party J. Wait, that number is——"

"Well? Hurry and call him."

"That number," repeated Meath. "Wait! I've got it!" His voice sank to a hoarse whisper. "I knew I'd heard it before! That's the number that Miss Gay has been calling nearly every evening!"

There was a tense silence, followed at last by the crisp, cruel tones of Mr. Dodge. "You mean to tell me that that girl has been phoning to this Maxwell, this detective, from here? That you've heard her doing it?"

"I've heard her call that number," averred Meath. "So has my wife. But, from anything I heard her say, I thought it was some dressmaker she was talking to. The girl was quite open

about the calls. I wondered, though, why she had to talk to her dressmaker so often!"

"You're sure of that number?" asked Dodge. "That it's Maxwell's, I mean?"

"Here's the book, and there it is in plain print."

"Then," said Dodge slowly in a voice that was chilling in its harshness, "the girl's a spy! A detective herself, probably! That dressmaking talk would be some sort of code by which she could talk to Maxwell unsuspected. And, if she's a spy, she must have had some reason for coming here! She may have had opportunities to learn——"

Meath finished for him. "Oh, if she's a spy, and there don't seem to be much doubt about that, then the game's up! She might not have her case complete against us yet, but it's a cinch she's got something! And we can't stand an investigation."

"No," agreed Dodge. "And she's been reporting to this detective every night or so. No telling what he already knows, but we can prevent his learning any more from her!"

"You—you ain't going to kill her?"

The pseudo broker laughed shortly. "Not that she doesn't deserve it! But it won't be necessary. Here, you look up a train for Chicago that we can take to-night. We've got to pull out right away; no telling when this sleuth will be down on us. No use trying to leave the country. I've got it all fixed in Chi for lying low, just anticipating such a time as this. No, we won't kill the girl. We'll give her a free trip along with us. To think of her, with her doll's face, going around here so innocent! But, by Judas, she's going to live to see the day when it'll be the sorriest thing she ever did to come spying into my business!"

"But we can't take her, not on a public railroad train!" protested Meath. "Here's the one we want: leaves at one-ten. That'll give us five or six hours to

pack. But the girl would give us away to the conductor, to the police!"

"Don't you worry about that," said Dodge. "I've got something in a hypodermic, here in my pocket, that'll fix her! She'll just about be able to walk, to look alive, but she won't be talking, you can bet! For all practical purposes she'll be as good as unconscious. Your wife will be with her, and we can explain that she's my invalid sister, or wife, even!" He chuckled. "We'll get two staterooms in that one-ten. And, Meath, you better go and bring the girl in here now. Don't want any chance of her slipping out on us at this time! We'll let her know that we're onto her game; then we'll truss her up and gag her till we get ready to go. This drug only lasts a couple of hours; I'll save it and inject it just before we start. That'll keep her fixed until we're safely on the train and in our staterooms. Then Mrs. Meath can tie and gag her again."

The butler rose and took a couple of steps toward the hall. As he did so a distinct sound came from the open door of the darkened study, a sound as of a block of wood dropping on the carpet. Both men dashed into the smaller room, and Meath snapped on the light.

"So!" cried Dodge, grasping the shrinking girl roughly by the arm. "You're here, are you, my fine lady! It's just as well; it saves my repeating what I've just been talking over with Meath. Pretty neat you thought you were, didn't you?" He sneered into her face. "I'm just wondering what you'll be thinking after we get to Chicago! One thing I'm willing to bet: they won't be happy thoughts!"

## II.

George Maxwell paced up and down in the narrow confines of his office. The place, though small, had been furnished in a way to impress a possible

client with prosperity, a prosperity which had not as yet visited it. A few small jobs of a routine nature, mere crumbs from the table of a large agency which had formerly employed him, were the only bits of business which had yet come his way, except for the bond-theft affair. And in that he was a sort of volunteer, working without compensation, unless he should succeed in getting the necessary evidence against the criminal or criminals. In that case the rewards offered would more than compensate him for the time he had spent, not to mention the prestige which would accrue to him.

That he would succeed he felt confident. He had stumbled upon a clew which apparently had escaped the police and the other detectives. In following it he had directed his suspicions squarely at Rufus Dodge, a broker and speculator, a man of apparent respectability and integrity.

But between the clew, which, after all, lay largely in Maxwell's own intuition, and actual evidence remained a gulf so wide that it seemed impossible of bridging. The detective would have been utterly discouraged, and, in fact, had been, until Eunice Gay had suggested a method of getting close to the suspect without putting him on his guard. What a brick Eunice was! Just because a girl was engaged to a fellow was no reason why she should give up her time and convenience, make a sort of menial of herself, and run, besides, a possible risk to help her fiancé in a business matter. If they succeeded—well, neither of them believed in long engagements.

Just the same, it was hard to think of her up there in that apartment with a man who was a criminal and who might become a desperate one if he should discover the ruse that was being perpetrated on him.

It was thoughts like these that had led to the arrangement of the telephone

signals. It was bad enough not to be able to see Eunice at all, but he could at least hear from her every day and know that all was well with her. The harmless-sounding code which they had agreed on meant nothing at all except the single fact that when he heard from her he could know that she was safe and unsuspected. It had not seemed feasible to arrange for any elaborate method of communication. When the girl had any important disclosures to make, or any urgent need of consulting with him, she was to notify Maxwell in advance and manage to get out of the house and to a public telephone booth, from which she could talk unreservedly. Last night's message had been such an appointment, the first that she had made.

George Maxwell paused in his pacing and looked at his watch. Ten o'clock! He frowned nervously. For the past two hours he had stuck close to the office, his ear attuned for the tinkle of the telephone. When Eunice had made the appointment she must have had reason to think that she would be able to get away to keep it. And she had said ten o'clock at the very latest! But perhaps his watch was fast.

The slow, measured tones from the bell of a downtown church came to him. No, the watch was not fast. But surely Eunice would not fail him after making so definite an appointment. If her plans had been upset, she would feign illness or manufacture some other excuse to get to a secluded telephone. He knew that she was not one to forget. And she must have information to impart, important information. Had she, in getting it, unwittingly exposed herself to the suspicion of her employer? Could anything have happened to her?

As the minutes ticked on George Maxwell became more and more nervous. His fears refused to be quieted. At five minutes after ten he sat down at his desk and lifted the receiver of the telephone. It would not be especially dan-

gerous to call up the home of Rufus Dodge and ask for Miss Gay. Whoever answered could have no inkling of his identity.

He waited patiently while central rang the number. At last he received her ultimatum: "They don't answer." Slamming the receiver on its hook, he got his hat and started from the office. Of course, she might call later, but his fears would brook no delay.

When he reached the Riverside Drive apartment house, he was in no mood for diplomacy. After all, he could pose as her brother, since nobody knew him here. Even if the whole plan were given away, it was far more important to know that Eunice was safe than to succeed in trapping the bond thief.

Slipping a coin into the hand of the uniformed hallboy, he asked him to call up Mr. Dodge's apartment."

"Ain't nobody home there, boss," said the man.

"Not home!" George Maxwell felt a sudden terror. "How's that?"

"Night man says they all done went off on a trip last night. He helped to carry down their suit cases. Mister Dodge didn't say where they was going or when they'd be back."

"Every one gone?" asked Maxwell dazedly.

"Yes, suh. Kind of suddenlike."

With fear at his heart George Maxwell rushed from the building. Danger indeed! Why had he ever allowed Eunice to enter the place as a governess, to put herself in the power of this man whom he knew to be a crook? But self-recriminations would not help now. To the nearest police station he rushed and told his story, his original suspicions of Dodge, Eunice's subterfuge, her present probable danger. "Can't we get into the flat?" he asked breathlessly, "to try to find out where they've gone? Man, think of that girl! We've got to do something!" He was exasperated by the



indifferent attitude of the lieutenant who heard his tale.

"Well," said the officer, "you might get a search warrant."

"Then let's get one!" exclaimed Maxwell.

In spite of his frantic efforts, it was nearly an hour later when George Maxwell, accompanied by a policeman, secured the key from the superintendent of the building and opened the door of Rufus Dodge's apartment. There was little in the outer rooms to indicate anything unusual. It was only when they came into the bedroom of the child that the empty, pulled-out bureau drawers gave evidence of a hurried flight. The other bedrooms presented a similar appearance. No convenient timetable lay anywhere within sight to give a clew to the present or intended whereabouts of the refugees.

In the room which Maxwell identified as Eunice's there was nothing which he could possibly construe into a message for him. Some of her dresses and personal belongings were scattered about the room, but he felt sure that she could not have left voluntarily. Of course, it might be possible to find the taxi driver who had taken them to the station last night, but that would consume time. Besides, it was inconceivable that Dodge would fail to cover up the trail before it was many hours old.

The little study back of the living room seemed to afford the most promising clew. Here was the safe, and a tug at its closed door showed Maxwell that it was locked. Some scattered receipts and papers on a table near it led him to think that the contents of the strong box had been sorted and some of them carried away. The very furniture of the room seemed to indicate that a struggle had taken place there! Was it here that Eunice, alone and unable to summon help, had put up a single-handed fight against a criminal made

desperate by the knowledge of discovery? George Maxwell shuddered in impotent rage.

She had been here, at any rate. He stooped quickly to the floor to pick up an object which he recognized. A number of child's building blocks were scattered over the carpet in an irregular semicircular arrangement. On top of one of them was the article he had noticed: an engraved platinum bar pin which he had seen a hundred times at Eunice's throat!

He picked it up, made sure of its identification, and dropped it into a pocket. His eyes searched the floor for any other article which might have escaped his first scrutiny. There was nothing there, nothing but the square blocks with the letters of the alphabet on two opposite sides and pictures of animals on the other four.

Suddenly he seemed to see a significance in the blocks themselves, in their arrangement. Every one of them was turned so that a letter was upward. And the first four letters, reading from the left of the semicircle, were "Gone!"

He had an insistent feeling that he was on the verge of a discovery, and he called the officer's attention to what he saw. But the rest of the letters seemed to make no definite sense. It might be a mere coincidence that every block had a letter turned upward, instead of a picture, and that the first four letters spelled a word. Perhaps they had been thus arranged by the child who had played with them. Yet Eunice had been in this room not many hours before! She might have had an opportunity of arranging the blocks in a way to signal a meaning to him. Why, it was from the top of one of the blocks, the fifth one, that he had taken her bar pin! And that was scarcely a likely place for the pin to fall during a struggle. Had she left it purposely to attract his attention? If so, what was the key by which he could read her message, un-

less the message had been interrupted before she could complete it?

Another detail bore itself in upon his groping mind. Unimportant and grotesque it seemed, but each block had one letter stamped in red and the other in blue. And the ones that spelled the word "Gone" all had their red surfaces upward!

As quickly as the thought came to him he stooped and turned over every block which had a blue letter uppermost; he could scarcely wait until he had finished to read the result. The red letters now, from left to right, ran:

"G O N E C H I O N E T N."

For a moment he puzzled. "Gone Chi—Chicago—one—one—I've got it—one-ten!"

He rushed to the telephone in the outer room and called up a Broadway travelers' ticket agency. "Can you tell me about trains leaving New York at one-ten in the morning for Chicago?" he asked.

After a wait the voice at the other end of the wire replied. "There's just one passenger train leaving here for Chicago at one-ten in the morning. On the Central, the Sunrise Limited."

"And where would that train be now, the one that left this morning, I mean?"

"Why, let's see. They'll be due in Cleveland in about half an hour if they're on time."

"Thanks!" George Maxwell unceremoniously hung up the receiver and immediately took it down again and called a telegraph office.

"Chief of police, Cleveland," he dictated. "Arrest and hold Rufus Dodge, now on Sunrise Limited on way to Chicago. Wanted for larceny and abduction. With him is young woman and probably child and servants. May be under assumed name and disguised." He followed with a description of Dodge and Eunice and a request that he be immediately notified by wire at his office. Then he left the building and hurried downtown to await news.

It was long after his forgotten lunch hour when his jumping nerves were at last relieved by the telephone bell. He knocked over the instrument in his haste to answer.

"Telegram from Cleveland, Ohio: 'Dodge and Meath under arrest. Miss Gay recovering from effects of drug. Wire further instructions. Chief of police.'"

"Thank Heaven!" said George Maxwell. "I was in time, after all!"

The idea of the successful apprehension of the bond thief and of the reward that would come to him for it did not enter his head until, to his bewilderment, he was summoned to the phone to receive another telegram, not many minutes afterward.

"Wonderful work, George! Returning first train. Better take out that license to-day and prepare to start house-keeping with a ready-made family. Am going to try to have court appoint me guardian of Carl Dodge, the dearest little boy there is. You're not really little yourself, you know. Eunice."

## SECRET DRAWERS IN OLD CASKET

WHILE examining a large casket of great age, which was on exhibition recently in London, a reporter accidentally drew forth a small hidden drawer in which lay several metal locket, evidently much older than the casket. When the drawer was completely out of its socket there was observed still another tiny drawer at the back of it, and when this was opened there were found rarer and smaller lockets, to the great surprise and gratification of the owner of the casket.

# Headquarters Chat

**T**O paraphrase a remark attributed to Lincoln, you can *please* some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

Take "Thubway Tham," for example. We thought *all* of the people liked Tham all of the time, save for one exception perhaps. We refer to that chap over in Sweden, whose letter we printed here in the Chat not so long ago. But then he resides in a foreign country, far away from the atmosphere in which Tham lives and breathes and has his being, so we have never felt that he really counted as a person who was not pleased.

However, here is a fellow, "M. W. H.," he signs himself, of Fall River, Rhode Island, who certainly smashes up the please-all-of-the-people-all-of-the-time unity of opinion, so far as Tham in particular and McCulley in general are concerned.

Just listen to what M. W. H. has to say:

"DEAR EDITOR: I can't help wondering how some of your readers and you can find any merit in Johnston McCulley's stories.

"Of all the absurd and ridiculous stories and characters, his are past the limit. 'Thubway Tham' stories surely are not humorous; they are just silly. There is also 'The Spider,' another silly attempt to be interesting. 'My word,' 'Toddle along,' and 'What' in nearly every paragraph. How can any of your readers find merit or even interest in such rot, unless they are kids about twelve to fifteen years of age, either physically or mentally?

"Mr. McCulley is capable of doing some very fine work if he would stick to his plots without such absurd characters with their ridiculous mannerisms.

"I've forgotten who wrote the 'Black Star' stories, but whoever he was must be of the same ilk as Mr. McCulley. Can you imagine a more ridiculous and overdrawn character than the Black Star? Can you imagine anything more absurd and overdrawn than the Black Star's feats? Holding up an entire city was easy!

"Christopher Booth's 'Amos Clackworthy' stories are silly, too, so far as The Early Bird is concerned.

"Why do not the writers eliminate such foolish characters? Why do they spoil their otherwise good stories by such crazy rot that simply bores the reader?

"Doctor Poate is excellent. His Doctor Bentiron stories are wonderfully written, and so far above the attempts of the other writers that there is really no comparison. The "Umph" of Doctor Bentiron does not occur often enough to cause the stories to lose their wonderful merit.

"The last story by Doctor Poate was not in any way up to his standard,

for he attempted to create a silly and absurd character in Doctor Clarence Percy, à la McCulley.

"Tell Doctor Poate for goodness' sake not to spoil his wonderful work by trying to imitate the poor work of other writers.

"Permit me to join R. M. Petty in requesting Doctor Poate to 'sick' Doctor Bentiron on to Doctor Gorham, for surely you and Doctor Bentiron should not permit the 'villainy' of Doctor Gorham to be successful nor victorious.

"Oh, yes; Mr. McCulley's valet in the Thunderbolt stories is another example of a silly character. Why does he insist upon spoiling his stories?

"Why not some more stories by Achmed Abdullah? He is another fine writer.

"Your magazine is splendid, but could be wonderfully improved by having your writers omit such ridiculous characters with their silly sayings.

"Another silly character—'Big-nose Charley!' Such attempts at humor remind me of the old, so-called slapstick comedians.

"Do you dare print this letter? If you do so, I believe you will find thousands of your readers agreeing with me. I sincerely trust you are not peeved, for my criticism is purely a friendly one, and is written with the hope that you will make your magazine still better, for it really is a fine one, and I wish you great success.  
M. W. H."

As you all know, we have thousands of letters on file praising the Tham stories and McCulley's yarns—letters like this, from Robert C. Fuller of No. 740 Riverside Drive, New York. This one just came, and was directed to McCulley himself.

"The stories you have given me to read, particularly those featuring 'The Thunderbolt' and 'Thubway Tham,' have afforded me much pleasure and entertainment, and I want to tell you in a somewhat practical manner just how much they are enjoyed and appreciated in my home.

"It is my custom to read aloud to my wife the Thubway Tham stories, but in the case of the one in the issue of March 12th, dealing with his operation and subsequent hallucination, I read the story in my wife's temporary absence, and at dinner informed her that Tham had been sentenced to be electrocuted for the murder of Craddock.

"It is, I think, no exaggeration to say that she was the most disappointed woman in New York until I read the story to her, when she learned that she would probably hear more from Tham in the future. Yours truly,

"ROBERT C. FULLER."

But you never can tell, can you?

Speaking of Tham, we are getting a lot of letters from anxious readers who fear the elusive little fellow may up and marry this girl he has fallen for so hard. And if he does, they fear he will be cooked and done for; just settle into a staid old head of a family and have no more adventures worth recording.

You know he may get so good he will cease to be interesting—back and forth to the job, a pipe after supper, to bed, up in morning, and back to the job again; just make one entry in the diary, and then ditto to the end of the year.

This is a sample of the letters we are getting:

"DEAR EDITOR: I have taken the DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE for two years. Is not that enough to say that I have good taste? I received my copy for this week, and have read the story about Thubway Tham meeting the girl, and I believe I anticipate Mr. McCulley's motive in writing this story. Dear editor, won't you please ask Mr. McCulley—and keep me not in suspense—if he is going to marry Tham off to that girl and make him go straight? Hoping to see the answer to this in DETECTIVE STORY soon, I remain, yours in suspense,

"Louisville, Nebraska.

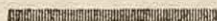
LOUIS REINHART.

"P. S.—If you quit publishing Tham's stories you may lose a devoted subscriber.  
L. R."

Well, we can't help you, brother. Perhaps McCulley can. Perhaps Tham can. Perhaps the girl can.

But, honest Injun, we doubt it. You know this love disease is a very, very serious malady, and it often, only too often, proves fatal.

Come, come, though, let's not get dismal; we must all brace up and hope for the best.



## INTRICATE ROBBERY BY FUR THIEVES

THE feat of two thieves who recently robbed Vogel, White & Co., Inc., in New York, of furs valued at one hundred thousand dollars was an extraordinary one. Working at night, the men lowered themselves and their loot by a three-hundred-foot rope from an eleven-story window, and crossed from one building to another on a narrow plank far above the ground.

Gaining entrance to a building at 35 West Thirty-sixth Street by jimmying a rear window, the two crooks made their way to the roof. They bridged the chasm to the eleventh-story window of 29 West Thirty-sixth Street with a plank. Breaking their way into that floor, they proceeded to loot the showroom and storeroom of Vogel, White & Co.

Ten large bags, each weighing two hundred pounds, and each containing seal, mole, caracul, leopard, muskrat, mink, Persian lamb, and squirrel coats, were swung from a rear window to the roof of a four-story building at 42 West Thirty-seventh Street. To do this it was necessary for one of the men to lower himself first, while the other held the rope. Then the bags were let down. Finally the man in the loft tied the rope to a radiator pipe. In some way he was able to loosen the rope after he had descended.

After crossing several roofs the crooks used the rope again to lower themselves and their loot to the roof of a small extension adjacent to another building. Here they jimmied a window and entered with the furs.

At nine a. m. the janitor of that building was called to a shop on the second floor. There he saw two strangers who seemed very busily engaged moving about some bags. He paid no particular attention to the fact that he had never seen them before because they appeared to be so much at home.

"If you please, hold the door open while we carry these bags to the street," said one of the robbers.

Willingly the janitor, thinking he was helping one of his tenants, held the door open. Down the stairs and out to the truck went all the bags. Then, tipping the janitor with a dollar, the crooks closed and locked the door and drove away in an automobile truck.

# What Handwriting Reveals

If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send Louise Rice, in care of this magazine, specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned, and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. She will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in the department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Rice cannot be responsible for them.

ALEXANDER.—A great many of the boys who were overseas for the duration of the war have written me that they find it difficult to settle down to their former jobs. Some of them blame themselves for this, and a number blame the jobs. In your case I would consider that your present state of mind is responsible for your attitude toward your world. Having been an officer, you allowed yourself to fall into the belief that you would always be one, or that you would be able to give and not take orders for the rest of your life. Your natural tendency is to be domineering, you know, and the taste of power that you have had has not been especially good for you. Best thing you can do is to face the situation squarely, own to yourself that this is the trouble, and try to take a different attitude toward everything and everybody, including yourself. Remember this: the finer and better a man is, the greater ability he has to obey and to give his employers respectful attention and loyal service. Since you like the work itself, strive to put yourself more into accord with all those with whom you are associated. No, I don't think that you are morbid at all. I have seen a great many of our returned men go through with this same process.

F. F. V.—And you, my dear, have a variation on the problem of Alexander. Having been brought up to think it a disgrace to work, and to believe that you and your family were a peg above us common mortals, you now heartily resent the fact that life is rapidly demonstrating to you the fallacy of your convictions. Now, don't think that I don't sympathize with you. In your case, I can sympathize from a very personal angle, having gone through that identical process myself. Your nature is excessively proud, excessively sensitive, excessively reserved, and these qualities have been exaggerated by your home training. No, indeed, I don't think it a tragedy when a woman has to work. I think the tragedy is when she doesn't and won't! Your writing shows good taste and unusual intelligence, F. F. V., and it is simply scandalous for you to be whining and weeping like this at the prospect of having to earn your honest bread. You, with those pioneer forefathers and mothers who dared to be the first settlers in that wild colony of Virginia! Just go and read some of the family records, my dear girl, and if you don't blush clear up into your hair you're not the fine woman, at heart, that your writing shows you to be.

S. G. T.—Your writing reveals a nature which is not sufficiently developed

as to courage and self-confidence. And you are too easily depressed. I don't like the way in which you suddenly drop the last word of each line. That shows a morbid tendency and a lack of physical resistance. Now, let me ask you a question: Do you really want to let life beat you? How does your pride accept the idea of defeat? Have you got enough good red blood in your veins to stand up like a man and take some blows in a fair fight? Why, of course you have. Well, then, even with what I acknowledge to be a pretty bad condition of affairs, call to your aid all that courage and pride which you have allowed to be beaten out of sight. Make up your mind that a man's will is a powerful weapon, and that you are going to use it. Your character is, as I have said, undeveloped, but you can do wonders with it in six months, if you will only try.

BOBBY.—Do you realize that all you have really asked me is, how can I make more money? That way of just thinking of money as an end in itself defeats its own ends. What you should ask me is: How can I better my education? How can I strengthen my will? How can I develop my resources so that I will not be so affected by every little incident of life? Your tendency, you see, is just to twist and turn and complain while you never really take a step forward or actually do anything. You are not alone in this. It's what most people do. You really have cleverness of the hand, and I have no doubt that you could learn many worth-while and profitable things, but to do so you must begin at the beginning. If I were you I would apprentice myself to a good, high-class dressmaker. You would find that you would like the work, but you would have to make up your mind that you would put in at least two years earning less than you do now. After that, though, you would have a real career before you. In addition to that, I earnestly advise you to go to night school.

PAULINE.—Your handwriting, my dear, shows a reasonably sensible, normal, friendly, and good-humored character.

Least please  
 writing and tell  
 I am best fitted  
 her and also a  
 marriage. But I  
 either. I have a  
 " " " " "

How on earth you could ever have brought yourself to marry this disagreeable writer whose extraordinary specimen of writing you inclose I can't imagine. You possess talent which could be used in some such line as that of hotel work, for instance. Plenty of opportunity in such work for a bright, well-poised, and self-confident girl like you. My advice to you is to turn your face resolutely to the making of a career for yourself. In doing hotel work you would have to start from, perhaps, the position of keeper of the linen room in some small hotel.

C. E. A.—Outdoor work, by all means! You are simply lost in office work

or routine duties. On the other hand, you do not seem to have much real self-confidence or directness of purpose, so it may be difficult for you to find anything that will give you a living wage. Ever think of surveyorship, of some of the phases of work with lumber, and so on? To find out what such lines really offer, get some of the lumbermen's magazines with which any good news dealer can supply you. I note your broad sense of humor and your very human love of change and interest. You are normally friendly, but not emotional, and, unless the circumstances were exceptionally propitious, I would doubt the wisdom of your marrying; unless, of course, you got a woman of your own temperament, undemonstrative, fond of change, and even much more reliant and aggressive than you are yourself.

ANNA LAS.—I declare, Anna, I don't know just what I ought to say to you. You really have some of the temperament which is most apt to give success on the stage, but I'm not entirely sure that you have more than the most mediocre talent, and I'm absolutely sure that you have hardly a particle of that courage, patience, will power, and self-control, without which those who go on the stage are foredoomed to ignominious failure.

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I am a stenographer  
t know if I like in  
or not. I would li  
be an actress, do r  
? I would make a  
' You can tell me

Now, consider, Anna. If you really did try to go on the stage I suspect that you would be able to get some fairly good jobs with road companies, and that that would be about as far as you'd get. You would be traveling all the time, on little money, stopping at fourth-rate hotels, never having enough money or half enough to eat, and in the off season be in real danger of starvation unless your people would take care of you. If you can face all that, my dear, take a try at it, anyway; but if you can't, for goodness' sake keep right on with your nice little stenographic job. One thing I will assert, and that is that while, by hard work, you may become a good actress you have none of that supreme talent which gives at least a promise of high success.

BERTHA.—Such serious questions of health as you propound should be answered by a physician. It is true that I occasionally give advice as to physical affairs, but only in the broadest way, and I would never think of even making suggestions in such a case as yours. So far as your character is concerned, I am sure that you have plenty of courage and good sense to keep yourself from the intense depression which illness often brings. Remember that the state of



mind of the patient has a tremendous influence, even when an organic disease is present.

ANNA'S FRIEND.—Where in the world did you get that most amazing "tail" to your y? The rest of your writing is rather wild, but that one formation is unusual indeed. It shows pride, temper, and great capacity for jealousy. Better look out, my dear—with a will which is so capriciously used, and with such emotions flying loose, and with no real steadiness of ambition, you are one of the kind who are in danger of making a mess of your life.

y Tuesday I u  
 to go with me  
 ial because I u  
 ee somebody the  
 know who.  
 Please answer

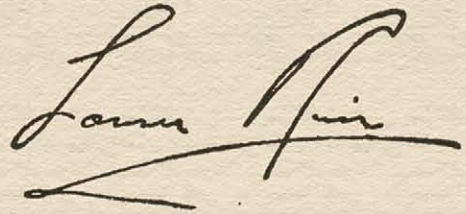
Don't marry early. Don't even associate with men, if you can bring yourself to such a life. Don't read novels. Study something, *hard*. Be an athlete. Interest yourself in women, their problems and interests, and make them your associates. If you will do this now, in your early years, you will develop into an exceptionally fine woman by the time you are about thirty, and then you will have compensation for your self-denial, for you will be popular and magnetic, and, with your acquired strength of will, you will be sure to have a worth-while life. I don't often say this sort of thing, so please take it most seriously. A girl like you, with her intense feelings and rich promises of ardor, needs a very prolonged girlhood if she is not to fall a victim to unhappiness and premature development.

M. M. C.—The specimen on which you want an opinion shows a nature which is an odd mixture of selfishness and fineness of feelings. I don't wonder that you are in doubt what to think about this person. The impulses and convictions, for instance, are really good, but the opinions as to surface things are exceedingly variable, and the disposition is so changeable that no dependence could be placed upon the same mood appearing once in a day. If you are thinking of marrying this person, as your letter would seem to indicate, I entreat you not to do so for the present. Wait. Test your own feelings. With your stability of character, your logical mind, and your lack of imagination, I am afraid that a year of marriage with this writer would drive you to distraction. At least wait until you are sure that you love this writer. Love, when real and not an infatuation, often endures much and is less affected than one would expect of strange matings.

URIEL B.—I don't like your partner at all, and don't wonder that you fail to get on with him. You are possessed of a broad, liberal mind, of pleasant reactions to the world, and of a fair amount of business vision, whereas he is a chronic grouch, is narrow-minded, and can see just about as far ahead of him, in a business way, as the end of his own nose. Apart from the disagreeableness of the association, there is no hope for business success in two people trying

to work together under such conditions. If I were you I wouldn't care whether he was displeased with me for getting out or not. His actions show that he is interested in you for selfish reasons only, and from his handwriting I know that it would be the rarest possible thing for him to be interested in anything or any one from any other motive. Besides, you would be far better off without a partner; for that matter, so would he.

SAMUEL F.—Decidedly mechanical, Samuel, decidedly. Don't let anybody shove you into clerical work, where you will be a nonentity. Go right into mechanics and try really to take a grip of the line into which you are led. What is more, try to train yourself into the power to concentrate. At present that's pretty poor with you, and such a condition is not a good guarantee for success of any kind. You possess a pleasing personality, and you ought to make a lot of friends. This capacity for making friends will help you in attaining success, too.




## The How, When, and Where of Success

Conducted by RUTHERFORD SCOTT

If it is impossible for you to wait for Mr. Scott to touch upon the work in which you are especially interested, in one of his articles, send a stamped, addressed envelope, and a careful, accurate, and brief statement of what your education is, what your experience has been, and where you wish to begin your career; also, the amount of time and money which you can give to your apprenticeship. He will write you a personal letter, and tell you what you wish to know.

### Canaries as a Side Line

EUROPE has a great deal to teach us, especially as to small thrifts. Here in America our tendency is to depend on the main industry, or on the main income of the family, as brought in by the father.

In Europe even the smallest children have some little occupation which not only is an interest and an education, but is a source of profit as well. Some little time ago I wrote of the possibilities of mushrooms as a financial side line, and the great number of inquiries which I immediately received by mail showed me that there is a great and growing interest in such possibilities.

The breeding of canaries and the training of them for the market is work which can be done by any intelligent boy or girl over, we will say, the age of twelve, while women physically unfitted for work outside the home, or wishing, as so many do, to add to the income of their husbands, would find it fascinating as well as profitable.

In a country home a porch can be screened with wire netting and provided with awnings in the usual manner. Six to eight feet square floor space, and not less than eight feet high, would suffice for ten males and thirty females, which is the usual proportion. The floor should be whitewashed and a number of perches, drinking pans, and gravel pans provided.

A nest for each female and about six over must be arranged, as some will be capricious, changing from one to another before getting suited. These nests can be bought from dealers at a very moderate price; they are of woven wire and

sometimes of tin, pierced with small holes for ventilation, and they should be placed at various elevations against the house wall.

A piece of cuttle bone firmly tied to a corner with a small perch on which the birds can stand when pecking at it is a necessity, as it contains minerals that they need. Lettuce, wild pepper grass, a few crusts of bread, and once in a while a bone with a little fresh meat on it will help to make sturdy birds; but feeding of bits of cake and other odd things is most injurious, and will not only cause disease but often death.

Birds reared in such an open-air home will be very sturdy, and the loss of the young will be slight, if pains are taken to keep that part of the house quiet, and that no sudden noises, no strangers, and no animals are allowed anywhere near. Heavy curtains of awning cloth should be attached to the outside of the porch, up under the eaves. They are kept rolled up during the day, but pulled down and securely fastened at night, except during the hottest weather. They are also used to darken the porch when the young ones begin to be taught their songs, as birds should listen to their instructors in a shaded place.

The instructor is a matured male singer, who is kept out of hearing of the young birds until the day when they are taken from their mothers. However, the best plan is to take the mothers away from them, leaving them to acquire their education in the first home. The mothers will be all the better off for a short period of rest before going into the breeding of the season's second batch.

When the instructor is to be brought to the youngsters his cage should be kept quite dark until he is wanted. Take him into the room from which the porch opens, darken the porch by pulling down the outside awnings, place his cage in the full light, and take off the cover. The result will be at least an hour of brilliant song, especially if the sun is shining brightly.

The performance must be repeated day after day, the young birds soon beginning to imitate the teacher's simpler strains. At this period the keeper should listen very carefully to the performances, and as soon as it is apparent that two or three are the best singers of promise, they should be put in another place by themselves, and the first and best moments of the teacher should be given to them, for they are the ones which will produce the real artists, and will, consequently, bring the largest prices.

Good, vigorous hen canaries, kept in such an open-air home, or transferred to it as soon as the weather is suitable, will bring off three nests each season without harm to themselves, and may be active breeders for four or five years. As the nests have from four to six eggs, and as infant canaries are not really as difficult to raise as young turkeys, the amount of profit to be derived from the number suggested—thirty females and ten males—will be by no means a light matter, especially after the first year.

TO BE CONTINUED.



## HID DOPE IN HAIR

**A**FTER the police had found a small bottle of cocaine which Michael Allico, seventeen years old, had hidden in his hair, they trailed the youth to an apartment and then raided the place. Allico and Mrs. Camella Bachi, who is sixty-five years old, were on the premises when the police arrived. A bag containing thirty-four bottles of cocaine was hanging down an airshaft, and two pounds of narcotics were stored in a closet. The boy confessed that he had obtained drugs from the old woman.

# UNDER THE LAMP

CONDUCTED BY HENRY A. KELLER

**T**ON gnol oga emos eno detseggus taht I nur na eritne elcitra ni rehpic; taht si, tel eno s'keew Rednu eht Pmal elcitra raepa, ni hcihw enon fo eht sdrow era nettirw ni thgiarts Hsilgne, tub rehtar ni citpyrc mrof. Siht keew I dediced ot yrrac tuo eht aedi. Eton: Kool tuo, rof uoy lliw dnif rehtona metsys fo noitazirehpic ni eht txen hpargarap.

Enq rnlld shld H gzud vzmsdc sn rzx z edv vnqcr zants rszqshmf xntq rnktsnmr. Lzmx odqnrnr vhn rds nts sn rnkud z ohdbd ne bhoidq vqshmf, vhrq sn rdd sgd zmrvdq zkk hm z atmbg, rn sn rzx; sgdz zqd qzqdkx bnmsdms sn zmkxyd, rstcx, zmv vnqj nudq z rnktsnm. Amc vgzs aqqdkr zmc aqqdkr ne etm sgdz lhrr!

Way surest and best the—is solution a start to—possible, if first, determine to—with working are you whether—a with or substitution a—not should This cipher. transposition—as difficulty, great you give—the between differences broad the—ciphers of classes great two—if But distinguishable. easily are—cipher, your classify cannot you—thirty forty the apply then—That text. cent per four—classification cipher's a spot will about More Note: fail. without any to mail, by this,—interested. are who

Nex tge twaha tic allth ec I p, her s his; tor yinoth erw. Or dsma kear, ecor dofal. Lt, hel ette rfig, ur, esors y M. bolsy ourcip. He rcont ain sin. T hec ase O fsub stit ut ionci pherstth. Is wille 'n' Ab ley outo ap; plyyo urfreq uen cytab lesopl E t, tersp air, sthre elet terg ro upsan dso-ont, he Rebyma King T her oadt oanac cu rates Olu, T ionm oste asybey. Ondth isp ointwit hsub stituti onc Iphersan dwi thtr ans. posi tioncip Her sgen Er allyt heon, lyadvi ceth atca 'n' beg I veny ouis tow orkonth edisti ncti Vefea tu resofy cip; herun tilt Hep oin tsab out ittha tma; Keitd if fere n-t—fr omal loth ersin itscl assbe, come ap pare nttoy-ou.

Next week's issue will contain the explanations of this secret writing.

The answer to last week's cipher is: "Here is one that I think you cannot do." To solve it, find the vowels in the first word in each sentence. The words in the cipher are hidden in every sentence, according to the positions of the vowels in the first word.



## "SO LONG PETE," SNEAK THIEF

**S**O LONG PETE," an elusive sneak thief, who has been operating in Newark, New Jersey, recently, boldly leaves a clew to his identity in the houses that he enters. The clew is in the form of a note signed "Pete."

His first appearance was reported to the police by Mrs. Sidney Wood. When she returned from a shopping tour she found her home in a topsy-turvy condition. On a table was the following note: "So long. Pete."

Within twenty-four hours the thief entered the home of Alfred J. Habig, of No. 286 Seymour Avenue. A child's bank was broken open, yielding five dollars and forty-three cents. Jewelry valued at three hundred and sixty-three dollars also was taken. On a dresser Mr. Habig found a note which read: "Job No. 2. So long. Pete."

# MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that those persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." If you would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

When you hear from the person you are seeking, tell us, so that we may take your notice out.

New readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

**WARNING.**—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," or of others, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

**HAMILTON, CHARLES A.**, formerly of Griswold and Elliott, Iowa. Please write to your elder daughter, in care of this magazine. If any one knows his address and will send it, the favor will be greatly appreciated.

**NELSON, J. L.**—He was last seen in Waco, Texas, December 6, 1920. Daddy, your little girl is very ill and wants to see you. Write to me at Waco.—G. S. N.

**ANDERSON, MARY**, who used to live in Saugatuck, Connecticut, and went from there to Middletown, and from there to New York City. If she sees this she is asked to write to her friend, Mrs. Gladys Gallagher Ermark, Main Street, Westport, Connecticut.

**CHASE, ERWIN C.**—He was last heard from in Buffalo, New York. He served with the Twenty-fourth Brigade of Marines at Santiago, Cuba, and was also a member of Company 547, Battalion A. He is asked to write to his old pal, Art, in care of this magazine.

**FLOYD.**—If you see this, please write. There is something of importance that you should know. Have tried to get in touch with you but without success. If I do not read you through this magazine I shall surely give up in despair. Your wife, Lenore.

**ELLENBERGER, MARY, FLORA, and HARVEY**, who were born in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. When last heard of they were in Dayton, that State. Any information about them will be gratefully appreciated by their mother's friends. W. E. M., care of this magazine.

**KING, RALPH.**—He is either in the West or in South America for some oil company. He is asked to write to his brother, Harold King, 625 Charlotte Street, Detroit, Michigan.

**GRAHAM, JOHN D.**—His daughter has not been seen since 1908. When last heard of he was in Omaha, Nebraska. An information about him will be gratefully received by his only child, Gladys Alberta Beckwith, Issaquah, Washington.

**COPE, FLOYD.**—He was last heard of at McRoberts, Kentucky, three years ago. He is about forty years of age, about five feet eight inches tall, and of rather dark complexion. Three years ago he was working as a miner in the Letcher County coal fields and keeping house with his three children. Any information of his whereabouts will be fully appreciated by his father-in-law, John L. Thomas, Dingess, West Virginia.

**RUFF, JOHN A., and LOUISE**, of Richmond, Virginia. Their first cousin has tried for years to get in touch with them, but without success, and hopes that they, or some one who knows them, will see this and will write to him, Walter V. Devit, 129 South Davidson Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

**MORAN, JOHN J.**—He is about five feet seven inches tall, with gray eyes, brown hair, white, even teeth, and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. Is a pretty good wrestler and boxer. Any information would relieve his wife from worry. He is about twenty years old. Mrs. J. Moran, 133 West Street, Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

**JOHN R.**—Come home as soon as you see this. Everything is all right and better than you think. Let me know your address as soon as possible.—Sophie.

**HODGE, DELCIA C.**, the wife of William J. Hodge, and the mother of five sons. Le Roy, the youngest, was six years old when his mother went away, and they were all placed in the orphan's home in Coldwater, Michigan. Any one who can give information regarding her will earn the deepest gratitude of her son, Le Roy Donald Hodge, 198 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

**ENSTROM, HARMON S. N.**—He was last heard from on September 12, 1895, at Phoenix, Arizona. There was a circus in town that day, and it was thought that he had probably gone East with it. In 1899 a letter, signed with his name, but not signed by him, was sent to his mother from Chadron, Nebraska. Money was sent to him at that place, with a request that he come home, but the letter came back unclaimed, and no news has been received of him since. He is now fifty-four years old and about six feet tall. His mother would be very happy if she could find him. She is able financially to take care of him, and will be most grateful to readers of this magazine who may be kind enough to help her in her search for her long-lost son. Mrs. Caroline Hayes, care of this magazine.

**GRAFF.**—Catherine and Clarence Graff were put in orphan homes, Catherine in the Catholic Home on Race Street and Clarence in St. Vincent's on Woodland Avenue, Philadelphia, in 1902. They have never known anything of their parents, and would be grateful to any one who can give them some information that will help them to find them. C. C. H., care of this magazine.

**BOOTH, JESSE.**—He was in Battery N, Sixth U. S. Artillery, stationed at Manila, P. I., in 1900. His old friend Bill, of the Second Reserve, would like to hear from him. Bill, care of this magazine.

**DILTZ, WILLIAM A.**—He was born in Ogalala, Nebraska, in 1883, and was adopted by a family named Parker in 1888, and was known by that name. He lived in California from about 1898 to 1900, and went from Pueblo to Nevada and worked as fireman on the Southern Pacific Railroad from about 1905 to 1909. He was last heard of in Oregon about 1910. Any information about him will be gratefully appreciated by his brother. Please write to Charles W. Barrett, P. O. Box 217, McClusky, North Dakota.

**BAUMGARTNER, MRS. JESSIE COCHRAN.**—She was last heard of in Minot, North Dakota, in 1917. Her husband had two girls, Eva and Ethel, by a former marriage. An old friend is anxious to find her, and hopes if she sees this that she will write to her. She will be glad to hear from any one who can tell her what has become of her friend and help her to renew the old friendship. T. B., care of this magazine.

**MARONEY, THOMAS FRANCIS.**—He disappeared from his home on the 10th of January last, and has not been heard of since. He is thirty-nine years old, is a molder by trade, and is a member of the molders' union. His wife fears that she will have to part with her three little children if she does not get assistance from him soon. Any kind readers who can help in her search will be gratefully remembered. Mrs. T. F. Maroney, 12 Union Square, Saratoga Springs, New York.

**BALL, EVA.**—When last heard of she was living at Long Beach, California, and spoke of going to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Any information as to her present whereabouts will be gladly received by an old friend, L. B. Terhune, care of this magazine.

**SHIPLEY, URSEL.**—She is supposed to be living in Los Angeles, California, and is married, but her present name is not known. Her brother is very anxious to find her and hopes, if she sees this, that she will write to him. L. S., care of this magazine.

**CUMMINGS, ELMER.**—He has been away from home for over four years, and his mother wants badly to hear from him. He is asked to return, or at least to write and let his people know where he is. Any news of him will be gratefully received by his mother, Mrs. Jennie Cummings, 2656 Moss Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

**WOODWORTH, EDWIN.**—He left his home in Brooklyn, New York, in 1914. He is twenty-three years old, five feet four inches tall, with brown hair and hazel eyes. It is thought that he may have enlisted. Any information that will help to find him will give great happiness to his oldest brother, Joseph V. Woodworth, care of this magazine.

**MAJOR, PATRICK WEBB.**—He disappeared on the evening of December 15, 1926, at Kings Mountain, North Carolina. He was complaining of feeling ill that morning, and it is thought that he may have suffered a lapse of memory, and may be in confinement somewhere, or may be known by another name. There was no reason for his leaving home. He is thirty-five years old, five feet ten inches tall, weighs one hundred and eighty pounds, has gray eyes, fair complexion, dark hair, and a small powder-burn mark at the bridge of his nose. At the time of his disappearance he wore a Clemson class ring and a watch with initials J. W. M. engraved inside. He is a Mason, Elk, and Odd Fellow. Please address any information to S. H. White, Palmetto Detective Bureau, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

**RAY, NIOMA MATILDA.**—She was last heard of at Liberal, Kansas, between seven and eight years ago. She is twenty-five years old. Her brother, who is now alone, would like very much to hear from her, and will greatly appreciate any information that will help him to communicate with her. V. B. Ray, care of this magazine.

**BEERENS, LOUIS.**—He is about forty years old, five feet six inches tall, with fair mustache and brown eyes. He is Belgian and was discharged from the Fifty-fifth Battalion, Canadian Infantry. Any news of him will be greatly appreciated. B. N. S., care of this magazine.

**WADELY, EMILY.**—She moved from Franklin County, Georgia, to somewhere in North Carolina, about 1913-14. Any information about her will be gratefully received by A. L. A., care of this magazine.

**T. K.**—I would like to hear from you. U. S. S. "Breese," San Diego, California.

**BATTLE, FLORENCE.**—Formerly of Toronto, Canada, where she was last heard of at the National Exhibition. Any one knowing her present address will do a favor by sending it to T. J. K., care of this magazine.

**VINSON, EDWARD.**—He is about forty years old and is blind in one eye. He was last heard from at Los Angeles, in 1906. He has two half sisters and one brother, William. His mother and sister Rosa are now living in El Segundo. Any information about him will be gratefully appreciated by Mrs. N. C. Abram, El Segundo, California.

**HART, JOSEPH.**—When last heard of he was living in Malden, Massachusetts. His wife's name was Jennie, and their little girl was called Grace Darling. Also his brother, **GEORGE HART**, who was last heard of in Lorain, Ohio. His wife's name was Bessie, and their child's name was Loretta. Their sisters, Amelia and Clara, would be very happy to find them, and will be deeply grateful for any information that will help them to hear from their brothers. Please write to Mrs. John Dennis, B. F. D. 1, Alderwood Manor, Edmonds, Washington.

**ROBINSON, MABEL**, who formerly lived in Manchester, New Hampshire, and is thought to have gone to New York State. An old friend is anxious to hear from her, and will be greatly obliged to any one who can send her address. P. I. K., care of this magazine.

**CLIFTON, SUSIE.**—She was last heard from in 1906, when she was living in Mobile, Alabama, but letters sent there were not answered, and it was heard later that she had gone to New York. Also he son, **SAM CLIFTON**, who was in Chicago working as a shipbuilder. His brother, who has not seen him or his mother since he was five years old, would be very happy to get news of them. H. G. Bynum, care of this magazine.

**FOLEY, PETER J.**—He was last heard of in San Francisco in March, 1913. He is asked to write to Thomas Wolf, care of this magazine.

**SIMS, IRWIN.**—He was last heard from in France about three years ago. His home was in Fort Wayne, Indiana. A friend would be very glad to hear from him, or to get news of him. M. Preble, P. O. Box 6, Brunswick, Maine.

**ESH, ALFRED.**—Your pal is worried about you. Please write immediately. G. E., care of this magazine.

**FOREMAN, TOM.**—He left his home in Ohio County, Kentucky, twenty-seven years ago, and went to Humble, Texas. He left there and has not been heard of since. He had a little son who would now be grown up. Any information about him will be gratefully appreciated by W. H. Foreman, Fordsville, Kentucky.

**RIBER, MRS. DORA**, and her children, Frances, a girl about nine years old, with red hair, is the eldest of four. She also had two stowchildren, Edward and Dallas. Any news of these people will be gratefully appreciated by Mrs. Ribers's sister, G. R. H., care of this magazine.

**EVANS, BEN, JAMES, and EMMA.**—Their brother John has not seen them, or heard anything of them, since they were placed in homes and separated in 1907. Their father worked at Sterne's Camp, near Luddington, at that time. Any help in finding his brothers and sister will be very gratefully received and deeply appreciated. John Evans, R. F. D. 4, White Cloud, Michigan, care of E. L. Howe.

**COSTELLO, THOMAS**, formerly of Morrison, Illinois, and last heard of in Chicago, in 1903. He is about forty-nine years old, with dark hair and blue eyes. Any information about him will be gratefully appreciated by Tim Costello, Route B, Box 206, Sioux City, Iowa.

**INFORMATION WANTED.**—In the year 1897 or 1898 I was left at the Children's Home Society, Fort Worth, Texas. My age was given as eight months when I was adopted, and the nurse gave my foster parents the information that I came from Texarkana, Texas, or Arkansas. I do not know my mother's name. It would make me very happy to find her, and if she would like to see her baby girl again, I hope she will write to me. Ellen, care of this magazine.

**KARDON, JACK, or KARDOUSKI.**—He went away in December, 1920. Any one knowing his whereabouts will do a favor by writing to 254 N Street, Albans, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**WHITECOTTON, EMORY**, who owned a sand pit in Indiana. His present address is wanted by a friend, who has news for him. I. S. Smith, Route 2, Elmira, New York.

**FRANK B.**—Please write to your sister, Mrs. Rose Jareck, 161 Grand Street, Jersey City, New Jersey.

**WILSON, WILLIAM H. C.**, who was born at Decatur, Illinois, on March 10, 1872, enlisted in the U. S. army at Dallas, Texas, in 1895, and was honorably discharged in the Philippine Islands. He was employed as an examiner of customs in Manila in 1902, and died at the San Lazaro Hospital on August 19, 1904. Any information that will help to find the relatives of this man will be gratefully appreciated by G. R. Wilson, 91 P. Zamora, Cavite, Philippine Islands.

**ALLEN, MELVIN.**—He left the home of his wife soon after she died, in 1903, in Commerce, Texas. He left his two sons with his sister, who took them to California. She died in 1914, leaving the boys alone. Any one who knows this man's whereabouts, or who can give any news of him, will do a great favor by writing to B. F. A., care of this magazine.

**DEVEREAUX, THOMAS**, who lived in Seattle about eighteen years ago. He was born in Rochester, New York, about 1830, and has lived in many places in different States. He is a tinsmith by trade. Any one who can give information as to whether he is dead or alive will do a great favor by writing to his brother, who will appreciate any kindness in the matter, William Deveraux, 101 Frink Boulevard, Seattle, Washington.

**BILLS, LAURA, or GRACE BROOKS**, formerly of Glendive, Montana. There is good news for you. Write to your old pal, Hazel Wood, care of this magazine.

**BURNS, LAWRENCE.**—He is about nineteen years old, of medium height, well built, and has dark hair and eyes. He was last heard of in Detroit, Michigan, in 1918. Any one who knows where he is will do a favor by communicating with L. F. Beckham, Box 446, Grandfield, Oklahoma.

**ANNA MAY.**—Please write to me at once. All mail sent to Box 3045, Fairhill, will be forwarded to me.—Mamie.

**THRALL, MARY and MINNIE**, who were living in Lewiston, Idaho, in 1913. Any information about them will be thankfully received by Elton E. Thrall, care of this magazine.

**WRIGHT, LAWRENCE H.**—He left Poplar Bluff, Missouri, in May, 1914. He is twenty-six years old, with dark hair and blue eyes, and has a slight limp, caused by a broken foot. When last heard from he was living in St. Petersburg, Florida, with his people. A friend would be glad to hear from him or from any one who knows his whereabouts. W. B. E., care of this magazine.

**CRABTREE, FLORENCE.**—Some three or four years ago she was living on Cedar Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio. She is asked to write to her old friend at Amherst, Ohio. Any one knowing her present address will do a favor by writing to F. D. P., care of this magazine.

**HARRINGTON, FRED.**—He used to live in Chicago with his aunt, Mrs. Payne, and was last heard from in San Francisco. His brother would be glad to get some news of him. Jerome C. Harrington, care of this magazine.

**WOOD, HARRIET BENNETT.**—She was last heard of in Edinburgh, Scotland, and is believed to have left there in 1910, after her mother's death. It is thought that she went to San Francisco with her husband, Joe Bennett. Her mother's name was Maryann McGill. Any news of her will be highly appreciated by her aunt, Alice Robertson, 1877 Seventeenth Avenue, Edmonds, British Columbia, Canada.

**LANE, MOLLIE.**—She was last heard from four years ago at Klamath Falls, Oregon, and is believed to have married again. Her eldest son, Paul, is now about fifteen years old. She is asked to write to her sister Lydia. Also **WILLIAM BRAY** and his wife, **MAMIE**, whose children, Bessie, now twelve years old, and Gracie, about nine, were taken to Abilene, Texas, by a man named Nichols, to be adopted. He promised to send a picture of the children every six months, but their mother has never heard from them since. It is now four years since they were taken away. Their mother is in deep grief about them, and will be most grateful to any one who can give her news of her children. Please write to Lydia, care of this magazine.

**WEIN, SIMON**, who was last heard from in Dover, Maine, in 1915, and **ABRAM FISHER**, who lived in Bangor, Maine, and went to New York City about 1904-05. An old friend would like to hear from them. Mrs. C., care of this magazine.

**BROOKES, MRS. CLARK R.**—In 1903 I was taken from my parents in Seattle by my grandmother, Mrs. Anna Blank. I was then three years old, and was taken to Halifax, Nova Scotia. I heard from my mother about five years ago. She was then married to a man named Clark E. Brookes and lived in Lanana, Alaska. Later they went to Dawson City, from where they sent me some gold-nugget pins. Any one knowing the whereabouts of my father, William MacKeane, or my mother and stepfather will do a very great favor by writing to me. I am an only child, and am now married. Mrs. Fred Exner, care of this magazine.

**JACKSON, GEORGE WASHINGTON.** whose wife's maiden name was Eulah Witter. She was in Denver, Colorado, in 1908. Also their two sons, **GEORGE ROY** and **WILLIE E.**, who were with their father when last heard of in 1914, in Seymour, Texas. Their brother would be glad to hear from them or to get news of his parents. Huelan A. Jackson, care of this magazine.

**ELLIS, CHARLIE.**—He left Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in the summer of 1920 for South Dakota. An old friend would like to hear from him. E. S. care of this magazine.

**SMITH, FRED.**—He is forty-two years old and was last heard from in Los Angeles six years ago. If he sees this he is asked to write to his brother Arthur, who will be glad to get any news of him. A. L. Smith, 43 Walnut Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

**MALONEY, JOSEPH J.**—He is about five feet eight inches tall, and has light-brown hair. He was last seen in Chicago, but was thinking of entering the merchant marine. Any news of him will be gratefully received by his brother, William J. Maloney, care of this magazine.

**SALSGIVER, MYRTLE.**—When she was about three years old she was put in the Greensburg Home, and is now about seventeen. They will give no information about her at the home, and it is not known whether she was adopted or what has become of her. Her father's only sister is very anxious to find her, and will be most grateful to any one who can help her to communicate with her niece. Mrs. William Shederick, 1121-2 West Washington Street, New Castle, Pennsylvania.

**COOPER, GWENDOLYN.**—When last heard from she was in Albany, New York, and spoke of going to her home in Boston. She was known among her friends as "Bunny." Also **SYLVESTER B. RAYNOR**, who left Camp Upton, Long Island, about a year ago, for Los Angeles. An old friend would be glad to get any news of these two persons, and will greatly appreciate any assistance in finding them. T. I. D., care of this magazine.

**BABE.**—I hope you are well and prospering. Please send me your address, as I want to write to you. Mrs. J. E. Knotts, New Brookland, South Carolina.

**MORGAN.**—I am anxious to find some of my mother's relatives. Her name before she married was Frances Morgan, and she married Tom Columbus Waits, my father, in Sulphur Springs, Texas. She died when I was a baby, and I would be glad to hear from some of her family. She had three brothers, Mack, Jim, and John, and another one whose name I don't know, also three sisters, Nancyann, Pollie, and Jennie. I shall be happy to hear from any one of them or from any one who knows them. Mrs. Lee Anna Cobb, Goss, Louisiana.

**HOLMAN, AFS.**—He is twenty-two years old, five feet ten inches tall, weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds, and has black hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. His right hand is crippled and the little finger is missing. He left home on April 11, 1918, and was last heard of in March, 1919, at Bangor, Texas. His mother will be most grateful to any one who can give her news of him. Mrs. M. S. Holman, 1005 Frisco Avenue, Monett, Missouri.

**HACKEMEYER, PHILIP.**—When last heard from he was in San Francisco. He is asked to write to J. McGovern, care of this magazine.

**DOUGLAS, H. A.**—He lived for a while on Portland Avenue, El Paso, Texas, and was connected with El Paso Blue Print Company. When last heard from he was employed at Tucumcari, New Mexico. Also **O. H. OLSEN**, last heard of in Deland, Florida. An old friend would be glad to hear from these two men. C. A. McKie, Canton, Mississippi.

**MARSH, E. E.**—Write me concerning that parcel I have of yours. Ray Weddle, 717 South Main Street, Dayton, Ohio.

**MCGRAIL, J. A.**—If you see this, write and let me know where you are and how you are. Bucco. Write H. V. S., care of this magazine.

**KUHN, GEORGE.**—He was last heard from in Malcolm, Nebraska, in 1919. His mother is not well and is very anxious to hear from him. If he sees this he is asked to write to her as soon as possible. Mrs. Charles Kuhn, Geyser, Montana.

**GAILEY, D. WEYMAN.**—He left home November 13, 1920, and was last heard from in Athens, Georgia. He is five feet seven inches tall, with dark-brown hair, two upper front teeth missing, and the thumb of his left hand is off. He is asked to come home, as Edith calls for her daddy every day. Any one who can give information about him, please write to Mrs. D. W. Gailey, care of this magazine.

**BEARSE, HENRY.**—He is a paperhanger and was last heard from in Boston. He is asked to write to his old friend Robert N. Babcock, R. F. D. 8, Bangor, Maine, who would also be glad to hear from **DAVID JACKSON**, who was last heard from in Boston ten years ago.

**THORP, H. L.**—Who lived at 144 Prairie Avenue, Houston, Texas, is asked to communicate with Herman L. Rose, who did not get the letters sent to this magazine. Theodore Rose is asked to return those letters. His mother is very ill and is anxious to find her son Charles. She hoped to find him through those letters, and is greatly disappointed. Herman L. Rose, 3353 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

**BANDY, WILLIAM.** who lived in Nashville, Tennessee, three years ago and was last heard of in St. Louis, Missouri. Any information about him will be most gratefully received and deeply appreciated. Sterling B. Webb, Junior, Box 1025, Marquette, Michigan.

**COOK, A. E.**—Please write to your friend of Waycross, Georgia. L. Holt, care of this magazine.

**SHAFFER, WILLIAM A.**—He was a soldier and was last heard from in Chicago, Illinois. He has brown hair, blue eyes, a fair complexion, and is five feet three inches in height. His mother would be grateful for any information that will help her to find her boy. Mrs. Addie Shafer, Box 157, Parker City, Indiana.

**BAKER, ROSS W.**—He is twenty years old, five feet ten inches tall, with fair complexion and blue eyes. He was in the zero squadron at Kelly Field and at other fields during the war. After his discharge he went to Texarkana, Texas, where he was doing automobile repairing and other work. The last letter received from him was dated January 4, 1920, since which time he has not been heard from. His family is very anxious to know what has happened to him, and will be very grateful for any information. Please write to his father, S. W. Baker, 42 Garibaldi Street, Atlanta, Georgia.

**TRIVICK, MR. and MRS.**, who went to California about forty-five years ago. They had one daughter, Mary. Mrs. Trivick's maiden name was Mary Gourley, and she had a brother, Alexander, who lived in Rye, New York. Her niece would be very glad to hear from her cousin Mary, and hopes, if she sees this, that she will write to her. She is the daughter of Mrs. Trivick's brother. Mrs. Jennie Glenden, 447 Orchard Street, Port Chester, New York.

**ELLINGTON, THOMAS BENTLEY**, formerly of Howard, Georgia, and last heard of in Atlanta, one year ago, when he was leaving there to engage in oil-well drilling in Texas. He is thirty-five years old. Also **LOUISE CLIFTON**, a blonde about thirty-one years old, a native of Virginia, and last heard of in New York two years ago. Any information regarding these two persons will be gratefully received by a friend and relative. G. A. E., care of this magazine.

**WOOD, HERBERT and HARRY.**—Their mother heard from them last ten years ago, when they were working on John Street, New York City. Harry, who is now thirty-seven years old, is a pressman, and Herbert, thirty-five, is a press feeder. Any information that will help to find her sons will be most gratefully appreciated by Mrs. Ida Wood, 664 West Fayette Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

**BARVELL, LENORA.**—She was a Red Cross nurse during the war and served overseas. She went to Cleveland, Ohio, in December, 1919, and when last heard from was in some city in Maryland. If she sees this she is asked to write to an old friend and give her present address. N. C. B. R., care of this magazine.

**PARKER, ALICE A.**, the daughter of T. H. and Sarah Marsland, of Burlington, Wisconsin, and last heard from in 1908 from Sacramento, California. Also **MRS. SADIE A. PHILLIPS and MRS. MATE A. COY**, sisters, last seen at Idylhurst Lodge, near Hayward, Wisconsin. The present address of these persons is wanted by an old friend. H. E. W., care of this magazine.

**STEELE, ALONZO L.**, who was last heard of in Minneapolis early in 1901. He was a member of the Woodmen of the World. His wife, Blanche, would very much like to hear from him. in care of this magazine.

**CARPENTER, WILLIAM T. S.**—He is about fifty-four years old, five feet ten inches tall, with black hair and blue eyes, and is crippled in his right hand. He is a trainman. His daughter would be very glad to hear from him or to get news of him. Wilda May Carpenter, Box 261, Bay City, Texas.

**COONLEY, MARY.**—She had a son named Harry, who went to the West many years ago. His daughter would like to communicate with her or with any of her relatives. When last heard from she was in Chicago. She must be now around seventy years old. Any information will be greatly appreciated by her grandchild, Mrs. C. H. Murphy, Sunny Side, Utah.

**HEATH, FRANCIS JOSEPH.**—He was dismissed from the U. S. S. "Sims," on account of being under age. His mother is ill because of his absence, and he is urged to write at once to his brother at Clearfield, Pennsylvania. His mother is on the verge of losing her reason. There is nothing to fear. If there is any trouble that his people do not know of, his brother will fix it up, no matter what it may be. If he will only write, and say where he is, in order to save his mother from a complete collapse. His brother Edward.

**CLARK, LOUIS B.**—He is about thirty-seven years old, and was last heard from about nine years ago. He was in the army and served in the Philippines. After his return he spent some time in the Western States, looking for gold, and may be in some mining town. His sister would be very grateful for any news of him. Miss Josie Clark, 1306 Seventh Avenue, Belle Plaines, Iowa.

**SPEARSE, RALPH.**—In 1908 he was left in the care of a woman in Grand Marais, Michigan, named Mrs. Richards, when his father and his two brothers, Floyd and Clifford, left there for Spokane, Washington. His grandmother's name is Roundtree. If he sees this he is asked to write to his brother, who will be grateful to any one who will be good enough to give him news of him. Floyd L. Spars, 409 West Granite Street, Butte, Montana.

**KNIGHT, WILLIAM JACKSON.** formerly of Arkansas, and last seen in New Orleans. Any one knowing his address will do a favor by sending it to D. S., care of this magazine.

**MARRIN, ANDREW.** who, in 1869, lived in Albany, New York, and left his home when he was about sixteen years old. He was sent on an errand to the corner grocery, and never returned. He left his mother, six brothers, and one sister. He would be now about sixty-eight years old. Any information that would help to find out what became of him would be greatly appreciated by his brother, W. P. Marrin, care of this magazine.

**MCCALLAN, MARY and LILY.** who left Belfast, Ireland, nearly thirty years ago, Mary going to New York and Lily to Brooklyn. Their brother would like to hear from them. Charlie McCallan, 212 Lyon Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

**MCGEE, FRANK.**—He was last heard of in 1918, when he was living at Lafontain, Kansas. Information as to his whereabouts will be highly appreciated by his mother, Mrs. T. B. Aikison, 419 Second Avenue, Benton, Arkansas.

**SINGER, JACOB.** formerly of Moscow, Russia, and last heard of in the "Boston Store" in Oklahoma, in 1900. His present address is wanted by Robert Ellis, care of this magazine.

**SWAN, ROBERT W.**—In 1908 he went to Toronto, Canada, with his son from Falkirk, Scotland. In 1912 it was heard that he was working on the railroad in Moose Jaw, Canada. His son would be glad to hear from him, or from any one who can give him his address. John Swan, 2712 Fourth Avenue West, Seattle, Washington.

**OWEN, OLIVER NATHANIEL.**—He left his daughter's home three years ago, saying that he was going to his brother Charlie's, but he never reached there. He was traced to Akron, Ohio, where all trace of him was lost. He little grandson wants him, and so do all his relatives. Any information that will help to restore him to his family will be most thankfully received and greatly appreciated by his daughter, Mrs. Elgy C. Bonnell, 405 Hillsdale Drive, Warren, Ohio.

**MURPHY, JOSEPH LESTER.**—He left home in Tacoma, Washington, in 1917, and was last heard of in Omaha, Nebraska, where he intended to join the navy. It is not known whether he did so or not. He is tall and slender, with dark hair and brown eyes. He is about thirty-two years old, and his hair is thin on top. His sister is very anxious to hear from him, and will be grateful for any news that will help her to find him. Mrs. Alice Walsh, 203 1-2 First Street, Portland, Oregon.

**GRACE.**—Please write to me. I want to hear from you.—A. J. L.

**WATKINS, VERA.**—She was last heard from at Savannah, Georgia, in October, 1920. Her present address is wanted by K. N. Heath, P. O. Box 824, Mobile, Alabama.

**HALSELL, PRESS.** formerly a Lieutenant in the Thirty-fourth Infantry, Seventh Division, who left the regiment in 1918, at Fort Bliss. It is thought that he is now in the navy. There is news awaiting him that will interest him, and information that will help to find his present address will be appreciated by E. S. O., care of this magazine.

**BRYSON, HARRY.**—He was last heard of in Chicago. His mother is very anxious to hear from him, and will appreciate any information that will help her to know if he is living or dead. Please write to Mrs. James Moore, care of this magazine.

**DURANT, FRED, A. R. D. 329.** Camp Travis, Texas. Other members of the military police who were at that depot with me when I was corporal, and members of the veterinary corps at A. R. D. 329, same camp. Please write to Gustave L. LeRoy, Box 13, National Military Home, Kansas.

**O'LEAR, MARTIN.**—He was last heard of in Butler, Pennsylvania, in 1918, and all efforts to find him since that time have failed. He is twenty-four years old, about six feet tall, of heavy build, and has brown hair. He was in the State police. Any information about him that will help to find him will be most thankfully appreciated by his brother, Frank O'Leary, Haute, Pennsylvania.

**DUFFY, PATRICK E.**—Please come at once. I need you badly and cannot understand why you went away.—J. A. S.

**PICKERT, JACK A.,** formerly of Quantico, Virginia, and **NETTIE BENTBONE,** are asked to write to an old friend, B. R. S., care of this magazine.

**ROWBOTHAM, CHARLES.**—He served with the Canadian forces during the war, and later worked up North in a lumber camp. Also punched cattle in Wyoming. It is thought that he may be connected with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He is asked to write to his old pal Jack, care of this magazine.

**MILLER, GEORGE M.,** of Machine Gun Company, 11th Infantry, last seen at Camp Dix, New Jersey, in May, 1919. Information about him is wanted by his friends. Please write to Frank, care of this magazine.

**WALSH-MADRAN.**—John Walsh, who was adopted by Godfrey Madran on January 31, 1900, at St. Theodore, Montcalm County, Canada. Any one who can give information about him will do a great kindness by writing to J. J. Walsh, 109 East One Hundred and Twenty-seventh Street, New York City.

**HARRIGAN, JAMES and MARY,** the children of, are sought by a friend. There were four girls and one boy. Margaret married a man named Gould, and lived in Pearl Street, New York, about 1898. There is interesting news for them if they will write to Mrs. B. Robinson, 286 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

**HULL, HARRY H.**—He is about forty years old and was last heard from in British Columbia. He is about five feet nine inches tall, and has blue eyes. Any information about him will be gratefully received by A. N. Hull, Salmon, Idaho.

**WALKER, EDWIN.**—He served six years in the navy, and when last heard from was in Decatur, Illinois. He is about thirty-nine years old. His parents are very anxious to get news of him and will be grateful for any information that will help them to find him. Mrs. A. Walker, Route 6, Box 30-A, Albany, Oregon.

**HERZEKOW, H.**—He left Newport News, Virginia, on March 11, 1920, for Baltimore, Maryland, to purchase some goods for his grocery store. He is forty-five years old, five feet nine inches tall, with brown hair and mustache, and gray eyes. He wears glasses and has bad front teeth. He may be known by the name of Harris. He was seen in Baltimore the day after he left home, and said he was going to New York. Any information that will help to find him will be very gratefully appreciated by his son, Harry Herzekow, care of this magazine.

**DUFFY, ED.**—He is about thirty-six years of age, and was last heard of at Miles City, Montana, in 1906, when he was working there for a cattle man. His mother is very anxious to find him, and will be glad to hear from any one who can give her news of her son. Please write to J. E. Green, 323 Fifteenth Avenue East, Vancouver, British Columbia.

**MARTIN, VERIL ASHLEY,** who left Salanas in October, 1919. Please let your family know where you are. Your father has met with an accident, and your mother is very much worried. Write to her or to your aunt Laura. They will not try to make you come home; they only want to know where you are and if you are well.

**ARCHAMBAULT, JOHN.**—He is a locomotive engineer and enlisted in the engineers for overseas service, but he was discharged, and left his address as General Delivery, Duluth. He is about six feet tall, with gray eyes and brown hair and mustache turning gray. He was last heard of at Brockville under the name of John Murphy. His own name is tattooed on his arm. He is now about forty-nine years old. His family will be most grateful for any information that will help them in their search. A. L. A., care of this magazine.

**O'NEILL, HARVEY H.**—He was last heard from at Kansas City, Missouri, in July, 1920. A friend would like to hear from him, or from any one who knows his address. Please write to Donald Gaughenbaugh, O'Neill, Nebraska.

**VOJ SPIEGEL, JAMES BOSLEY.**—He was last seen in his home town in 1920. He is also known as "Doc" and "Von." He is thirty-eight years old, of medium height, with blue-gray eyes, graying hair, and sometimes wears glasses. Is well educated and a good conversationalist. His sons and daughter would like to have news of him, and hope that he will write. All family disturbances are forgotten. S. V. S., care of this magazine.

**SURGELY, IRMA GATY.**—When last heard of she was in Belt, Montana, with her mother. She is twenty-two years old. Her father wishes to know her whereabouts, and would be glad to hear from her. A. Gaty, care of this magazine.

**POST, BERTHA.**—She used to live in West Hoboken, New Jersey, and is supposed to have moved out West. She is asked to write to V. T., care of this magazine.



**SHERMAN, ISAAC**, of Revere, Massachusetts. He left his home on the morning of December 9, 1920, for his place of business, a toy and novelty store in Boston, and has not been seen since. As he had no reason to leave his home, it is feared that something out of the ordinary must have happened to him, and his family will greatly appreciate any information that will help them to know what has become of him. He is five feet five inches tall, of dark complexion, with brown eyes. His business affairs have all been settled satisfactorily since he left. Any assistance from our readers in helping to find this man will be thankfully received by his wife and children. Please write to Mrs. I. Sherman, care of this magazine.

**BRUCE, HARRY ALLEN**.—He is about twenty-six years old, and was last heard from in January, 1918, in Philadelphia. He was a sailor, second rate E. M., on the U. S. S. "Oklahoma." His time expired in December, 1920. He is about five feet ten inches tall, with blue eyes and sandy hair. An old friend, who worked with him on the A. L. & O. R. R. would like to hear from him, or from any one who can give him his address. Bill Hudson, 426 Ouachita Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

**WILLS, SAMUEL**, and **EDWARD JACKSON**, of Philadelphia. If they should see this they are asked to write and send their address to an old friend, who will be glad to hear from any one who knows where they are now. Private Nelson, care of this magazine.

**RUBY, JOHNNIE**.—He is twenty-two years old, five feet six inches tall, and has a small scar over both his eyes. When last heard from he was at Grand Island, New York. His wife and child are very much worried about him and want him to come home to take care of the ranch. Mrs. Johnnie Ruby, Bar X Ranch, Lone Point, California.

**MORST, SAMUEL WEAVER**, of Lemoyne, Pennsylvania, and **WALTER MERTZ**, of Lebanon, same State. Any information relative to these two men will be greatly appreciated. A. G. M., care of this magazine.

**MANBECK, J. R.**—Your father is dead and you are asked to write home or to the undersigned at once. William N. Manbeck, P. O. Box 908, Dayton, Ohio.

**GORDEN, B. F.**, known as Frank Gorden in Bakersfield, California. He left that State in 1913-14, and went to his home town, Wademan, Michigan. Charlie Hodge would like to hear from him. Any information that will help to find him will be gratefully received. B. F. C., care of this magazine.

**OGG, FRED**.—Please write to your old friend, M. I., care of this magazine.

**ROGERS, MRS. J. H.**—Her last known address was Erie Street, Cleveland, Ohio, about nineteen years ago. Her maiden name was Sarah Ann Dawson. Her only sister has been trying to find her for years, and will be truly grateful to any one who can give her any information about her. She is now about forty-three years old. If she should see this her sister Lizzie hopes she will write. She has tried every other means without success, and feels sure that she will find her through the kind readers of this magazine. Mrs. E. Roberts, 347 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**NOTICE**.—MISS MARY LITTLE would like to hear from her cousin, whose address was R. R. 4, Box 164, Breckenridge, Michigan. Miss Little's name now is Mrs. A. J. Weyandt, Box 162, Saltsburg, Pennsylvania.

**STREAK O' SILVER**.—He was in the Mexican rebel army in 1914-15, and was known by this name. He is asked to write to his old friend at once. It is believed that his name was Cannon or Cameron. There is important news for him. L. C. M., care of this magazine.

**JORDAN, JACK**.—He was last heard from in Waterloo, Iowa. There is some news for him and he is asked to write at once to Plumber, care of this magazine.

**NICKOLS, MRS. BENJAMIN**.—When last heard of she was in Seattle, but later moved to California. A friend would be grateful to any one who can give information that will help to know her present address. Lucy Burklitt, care of this magazine.

**FULLERTON, FRANK**.—Please write to me.—Your wife, Nellie, Detroit, Michigan.

**KINGSTON, RALPH E.**—He left home in February of this year, and his wife is ill worrying about him. He is thirty-two years old, about five feet ten inches tall, and has a peculiar walk. There is a prominent scar above his nose. If he should see this he is begged to come back to his wife and baby, who will be deeply grateful for any information that will help to find him. Margaret Kingston, care of this magazine.

**AMLIN, EARL and JOHN**.—They were born at Portenouth, Ohio, and are the sons of Will and Emma Amlin. Their mother is seriously ill and longs to see them. Any one who knows where they are will do a great favor by writing to their cousin, Bob Beekman, 213 West Eighth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**GABRIEL**.—My mother died when I was four years old, and for a time after that my sister and I lived with my grandfather, John Boxe, somewhere in Illinois. My sister married Lonzel Ingle, of Indiana. My father remarried in Indiana and put us in a home at Wabash, that State. I was taken out nine years ago, and have not seen my brother or any of my people since. I would like very much to hear from some of them, and especially from my father, and will be most grateful to any one who can help me to find them. My father's name is John, and my brother's is Clifford. I am now serving in the Marine Corps in Santo Domingo. Please write to Lars V. Gabriel, care of this magazine.

**GORMLEY, LOUIS**, and **FRANCIS E. KIESS**, who were last heard from at Great Lakes Naval Training Station over a year ago. They are asked to write to their old pal Corporal Charles G. Casey, care of this magazine.

**McGRAW, J. K., "AVIATOR JACK"**, who was last heard from when working for the Frisley Aircraft, South City, San Francisco, in May, 1920. Any information about him will be greatly appreciated by his wife, who hopes, if he sees this, that he will write to her. P. T. O., care of this magazine.

**LONG**.—The daughter of George W. is anxious to find some of her father's people. The last time they were heard from was in October, 1876, when they were living at Bachelor's Peak, Texas. There were two boys, William C. and John, and their mother, Lucy Long. Their sister's children were with them, Polly and Jeff Henderson. Any news of these people will be greatly appreciated by Mrs. J. W. Flannigan, 508 East College Street, Carbondale, Illinois.

**AUSTIN, JOHN**.—He was discharged from the navy a short time ago, and stopped off at Utica, New York, looking for a position. There was no vacancy where he applied, but there is one now, and arrangements can be made for his fare. He is about nineteen years old, five feet ten inches tall, has a light complexion and brown hair. When he left Utica he was heading for Minneapolis. Any information as to his present whereabouts should be addressed to F. J. O'Brien, boiler inspector, D. L. & W. R. R., Utica, New York.

**SHEPARD, FLORENCE**.—She disappeared from her home about eight or ten years ago. She is twenty-four years old, about five feet in height, and has light-blue or gray eyes and light-brown hair. She was last heard of in Savannah, Georgia, and again in Washington, D. C., by the name of Florence MacDonald. Any information about her will be very gratefully received by D. D. Shepard, 352 West South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

**HEMSTREET, FRANK J.**—He was put in the Home for the Friendless in St. Joseph, Missouri, and he and his sister Sadie were adopted out West. He was sent back in a crate about 1884. He has blue eyes and light hair, and a scar on his face. His mother would greatly appreciate any information that would help her to find him. Mrs. Mary Hemstreet, 902 North Eighth Street, Leavenworth, Kansas.

**SOLBERG, VICTOR and RANGNAR**.—One of these boys shot his mother accidentally and was sent to an orphan's home after the father died. They had two sisters, Agda and Gerda. The father's name was Erick Solberg. The boys must be over thirty years old now, and their sister Agda is very anxious to find them. She will be grateful to any one who can tell her anything of them. Mrs. Harry Swenson, Box 234, Milford, Iowa.

**BELL, CHARLES RUSSELL**.—He is about forty-eight years old and was last heard from in Texas. He is about five feet six inches tall, and has dark eyes and hair. An old pal would like to have his address. Jack H. Long, 137 North Street, Bennington, Vermont.

**COLWELL, LEON ELMER**.—He was last seen at the exposition in San Francisco in 1915. He went afterward to Seattle, and has not been heard from since. His sister is very anxious to find him and will appreciate any assistance in the matter. Gladys Colwell de Asturias, care of this magazine.

**BOOTHE, HARRY**.—He has been missing for seven years, and his mother has worried very much about him. She is in poor health, and would be happy to hear from her son. He is now about thirty-nine years old, about six feet tall, and of dark complexion. Any news that will lead to communicating with him will be gratefully received by his sister, Mrs. W. G. Bowers, 905 Hamilton Avenue, Duquesne, Pennsylvania.

**McGEAN, HIRAM**.—He was sometimes known as Hiram Mitchell. He is nineteen years old, five feet five inches tall, has light hair and blue eyes, and a fair complexion, pitted with smallpox. When last heard of he was working in a restaurant in Philadelphia. His mother and brothers would be glad to hear from him. Mrs. Mary McGean, 586 Canada Street, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**MORDOFF-SERVOSS, MRS. JENNIE**.—When last heard from she was in Mazatlan, Mexico, in 1912. Her son, William McKay Servoss, was last heard from in Los Angeles. Any information regarding their whereabouts will be thankfully appreciated by an old friend who is very anxious to find them. Mrs. Lena H. Clifford, 2704 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas.

**WEBB, CLARA BELLE.**—She is tall and slender, with dark hair and eyes, and is about fifty-five years old. Her daughter would be very happy to hear from her, as she has been seeking her for years without success. At Christmas, 1909, she received a book from her, sent from somewhere in California. Any news of her would be most gratefully received. L. C. W., care of this magazine.

**HOLTRY, IVAN,** better known as Jack, is asked to send his address to G. H. Hand, at 316 Clay Street, Los Angeles, California.

**CARTWRIGHT, DURIUS.**—He was last seen about twenty-nine years ago, when he left his children, Florence, Mary, and George, with relatives in northern Idaho. Also **GEORGE CARTWRIGHT,** last heard of in Yakima, Washington about twelve years ago. He is of medium height, dark complexion, and walks with a limp. Any information about these two men will be gratefully received by Ruth Benedict, Box 394, Ocean Park, California.

**WILLIAMS, NANCY,** who lived in or near Springfield, Illinois, until about forty years ago. She was then about thirty years old. Her father's name was Jake. He was an officer in the Confederate army. He left Springfield and went to Sage, Arkansas. Any one who can give information that will help to find these relatives will do a great favor by writing to D. W. Murray, Box 3, Cohay, Mississippi.

**TUCKER.**—Wanted to communicate with the relatives of Anna Tucker, who married Lovelady and afterward Acy Webb. Their names were Sam and Jim Tucker, brothers, who lived in Gatesville, Texas, and Elizabeth, sister, who married Dave Cox. A. J. Webb, 807 Third Street, Wichita Falls, Texas.

**PORTER, MRS. CHARLES.**—She is the daughter of William and Annie Murphy, of Grand Menan, New Brunswick, and was last heard of in Providence, Rhode Island. She is supposed to have gone later to Quebec. Her sister would appreciate any news of her, and will be glad to hear from her or from any one who can help her to know where she is. Mrs. Ellen Coward, 7030—105 A Street, Strathcona, Alberta, Canada.

**BAUMEISTER, WILL.**—He has been missing for nineteen years, and his two children, Lucy and Agatha, who have not seen him since they were little children, are very anxious to find him. He is about six feet tall, and is now between seventy and eighty years old. His daughters feel that he may need their care, and it would make them very happy indeed to see him again. Please write to Agatha Baumeister, 411 Fifth Street, S. W., Great Falls, Montana.

**TUCKER, ARTHUR H.**—His home is near Wellston, Ohio. When last heard of, nearly eight years ago, he was at Lake Forest, Illinois. He is about thirty-two years old, and has light-gray eyes and brown hair. His mother will be deeply grateful for any information that will help her to hear from her son. Mrs. Hannah Tucker, Route 4, Box 25, Wellston, Ohio.

**MACNAUGHTON, MARTIN HENRY.**—He sailed from Sheepshead Bay, New York, on April 6, 1920, on the schooner "George E. Hozan," bound for Santo Domingo. No word has been received as to the fate of the men or the boat. Welford George, his brother, and Mortimer William Povie and Donald Teuch made up the crew. Martin was thirty years old, with dark-brown hair and mustache, and Welford was twenty, with dark-brown hair and gray eyes. The mother and wife of these boys will be grateful for any information that will help them to know what has become of them. Ethel A. Macnaughton, 150 Webster Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

**WOLFFMAN, ANNA MARTHA.**—She married the Reverend Cornelius Unruh, a missionary worker in India, in the summer of 1915, and went to India with him. A cousin is anxious to hear from her, and will appreciate any information. B. H. F., care of this magazine.

**GAYNOR, MRS. JOSEPH.**—Her maiden name was Jessie Huskins. Her son would be grateful to any one who can give him her present address. George C. Gaynor, Drumheller, Alberta, Canada.

**PARKS, KASSIE,** and her sister, **ELIZA QUINN.**—They are about twenty-three and twenty-six years old respectively, and when last heard of were in Seattle. Their sister would like to hear from them, and asks them to write to R. P. S., care of this magazine.

**McRAE, JAMES.**—Please let me hear from you at once. Your brother, Saxton McKrae, Glen Alum, P. O. Box 75, West Virginia.

**NOTICE.**—Addresses are wanted of former members of the medical detachment of the Sixth Cavalry who served in the war. Any one who knows the whereabouts of any of these men will do a favor by writing to M. E. Robertson, 1913 Vinton Street, Lafayette, Indiana.

**HOLTON, WILLIAM J.,** who graduated from the Augusta Medical School nine years ago, and when last heard of was a practicing physician at White Springs, Florida. Any one knowing his address please write to P. O. Box 318, Maple Falls, Washington.

**BAKER, ALFRED J.**—He was discharged from the navy nearly two years ago, and was last heard of at Missouri Valley, Iowa. He was on the U. S. S. "North Dakota" in 1919. If he sees this he is asked to write at once, and any one who knows his address will do a favor by sending it to Mrs. Edna Baker, care of this magazine.

**LARURIE, R. C.**—He was last seen in Wilmington around the first of August, 1920. Any one knowing his address please notify his old friend, Howard L. Clark, West Fourth Street, Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania.

**PERRY, MILDRED.**—In April, 1920, she left her home in Buffalo, New York, to go to work, and is supposed to have gone away with a man named James Tully, and to have married him. Her parents and friends have never heard from her since. Her grandfather begs that she will write to him, and will be grateful to any one who can give him news of her. W. H. Sexton, 280 Saxton Street, Rochester, New York.

**HUBERT.**—Your friends are grieved and sad, but all have love and confidence in you and want you to come home.—Ethel.

**TERRILL, HUGH W.,** and **BABY EFFIE.**—They have not been seen or heard from in three years, and were last known to be near Boston, Massachusetts. His two twin daughters are anxious to hear from him and to see their sister, who was four years old in January last, and has blue eyes and probably light-brown hair. He is twenty-seven years old, about five feet seven inches tall, with light-brown hair and blue-gray eyes. He was a shoe salesman. If he sees this perhaps he will be kind enough to write and give some news of the child. Loretta Terrill, care of this magazine.

**BECKER, HENRY, VALENTINE,** and **ANDREW,** from Schwarzenborn am Knoll, Germany, who came to this country about thirty or thirty-five years ago, and went to Pittsburgh or New Kensington, Pennsylvania. Their sister, Marie E., and their brother Burghard have been asking for them, also their cousin, Catherin Rehm, formerly Hewig, who has good news for them. Any one who knows the whereabouts of these men will do a great favor by writing to Catherin Rehm, 31 Sedgwick Avenue, Lincoln Park, Yonkers, New York.

**LEWIS, JACK.**—His old pal would like to hear from him. When last heard of he was in Cleveland, Ohio. Landin Lawson, Box 237, Cattlesburg, Kentucky.

**HEYLEIN, FRED** and **HELEN,** of Minneapolis and Denver. Please communicate at once with Sidney Haire, 970 Marvel Street, St. Paul, Minnesota.

**ZUCK, SOPHIE,** formerly of Bulls Ferry Road, Union Hill, New Jersey. Any one knowing her address will do a favor by writing to J. Williams, 222 South Peoria Street, Chicago, Illinois.

**WILSON, MRS. LILIAN.**—She was last heard of in New York City in 1915. Any news regarding her would be gratefully received and greatly appreciated. Private William Wilson, care of this magazine.

**BUCKNER, WILLIAM HARVEY.**—He is seventy-three years old, with gray hair, blue eyes, and a scar on his left cheek. He is about five feet eight inches tall. He has not been heard from since 1900. He went from Edgar, Illinois, to Escondido, California, and there dropped from sight. Any news about him would be gratefully received by his niece, who does not know whether he is dead or alive. Please write to Mrs. A. E. Parker, R. B. 8, Box 9-D, Omaha, Nebraska.

**GOULD, HAZEL,** who was last heard of in Kansas City; **MERLE BELL,** last heard of in Burkburnett, Texas, and **FRANKIE BROWN** are asked to write to Virginia, care of this magazine.

**TRAYER, MYRON H.**—He was last heard from in September, 1914, when he was employed by a telegraph company in construction work at Waterville, Washington. He is thirty-five years old, five feet eight inches tall, with medium-brown hair, blue-gray eyes, wears glasses, and has a scar at the outer corner of left eye. Any information regarding him will be highly appreciated by his sister, Mrs. C. O. Olson, 100 Twenty-first Street, Battle Creek, Michigan.

**BURGES.**—John Burger ran away from home when he was fourteen years old, and since that time has lost track of his folks. He fell in with some people named Bolt and took their name. Now he would like to find his own family, father, mother, sisters, and brothers. He has one sister named Rose, and a brother named Alex. When he left home his people were living in Duluth, Minnesota, and a year later he heard that they had moved to Canada. He has spent the last nine years in the U. S. army, and served thirteen months in France. He has gray eyes and brown hair, and a scar on his left side where he was shot when he was a small boy. He and his wife would be very happy if they could find some of his family, and hope that through the readers of this magazine they may be successful in their efforts to come together again. Mrs. John Bolt, 317 Lakeview Avenue, San Antonio, Texas.



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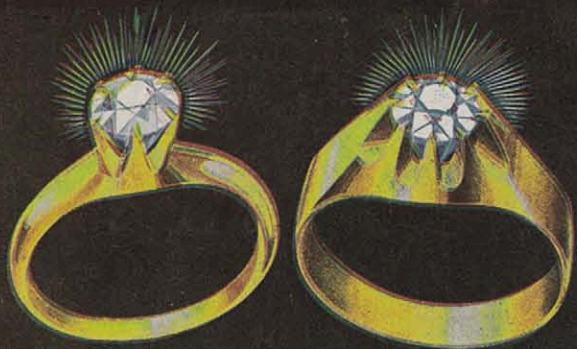
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