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THE MIDDIES' GREAT JAPE!
(See Splendid, Long Complete Naval Story Inside.)

COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.



FERRERS LOCKE'S GREAT TRIUMPH!

A Grand, Long Complete Detective Story introducing Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

Ferrers Locke, the Up-to-Date Detective with New Methods.

Ferrers Locke's Plan.

LEAVING London?"

Inspector Riley stared blankly at Ferrers Locke. Jack Drake glanced round from his desk, as surprised as the Scotland Yard man.

Ferrers Locke nodded quietly.

"Exactly!" he replied.

"But—Dash it all, Locke!" Inspector Riley half rose, in his dismay and astonishment. He sat down again heavily. "Hang it all, man, you're not going to leave us in the lurch like this?"

"Certainly I am not going to leave you in the lurch, Riley," said the Baker Street detective, in a rather dry tone. "But I am leaving London, by the night train, for Paris, and my assistant, Drake, will go with me."

"And the case you're engaged on with me—"

"I shall not lose sight of it."

"The Black Triangle—"

"You may depend upon it, Riley, that I shall not forget the Black Triangle," said Ferrers Locke. "It is a duel to the death now between Count Sazineff and myself."

"Yet you are going?"

"I am going."

Inspector Riley shrugged his broad shoulders.

"I couldn't suspect you, Locke, of getting the wind up," he said. "But, really, in the case of any other man—"

"You think it looks like that?"

"Hang it all, it does!"

"All the better," said Locke.

"I don't see it. That scoundrel Sazineff, who works under the sign of the Black Triangle, will think that I have frightened you out of London!" said the inspector hotly. "And, dash it all—"

He broke off.

"I have been through some rather trying experiences lately," said Locke tranquilly. "There have been four attempts on my life since I took up the case of the Black Triangle. I have been fired on here, through the window of my consulting-room. I have been shot at in my car. An explosive has been sent to me through the post, and I discovered its nature barely in time. And I have been very nearly run down by a motor-car. Surely, my dear Riley, an experience like that, crammed into the short space of a week, is enough to shake any man's nerve!"

"But not yours, Locke!" exclaimed the inspector incredulously.

"Why not?"

"I don't believe it! But Sazineff will have the laugh of you!" exclaimed the inspector.

"Let him!"

Inspector Riley gave another shrug. He could not understand Ferrers Locke at all this morning.

"So you're deserting us," he said, rather bitterly. "The Black Triangle is still at work. We have had two more cases of threatening letters received from him, and two titled men in the West End are now under close police supervision in consequence. And I tell you plainly, Locke, that I don't feel confident of saving their lives. If his price is not paid, he will strike at them. And in all previous cases he has succeeded—police or no police!"

"I know it."

"There will be a regular reign of terror at this rate!" Mr. Riley exclaimed. "You have discovered who the man is—but not where he hides himself, or what name he passes under. He strikes in the dark. How many men have been scared by his threats into handing over large sums of money we cannot even guess. But, since three murders have been traced to him, it is fairly certain that most of his victims prefer to pay."

Locke nodded.

"It reflects on the efficiency of the Yard," said Mr. Riley gloomily. "I came to you for help, Locke, and you're backing out."

"Not exactly backing out."

"It comes to that. You're going away to Paris—for how long?"

"That depends."

"And, meanwhile, the Black Triangle will continue terrorising society," said the inspector. "Dash it all, Locke—"

"My dear fellow," said Ferrers Locke quietly, "my journey to Paris will not interfere with my work."

"The Black Triangle is in London, not in Paris," grunted the inspector.

"True!" Locke smiled. "My dear Riley, you do not quite catch on. What is the Black Triangle's method? He sends a letter to some selected rich individual, demanding the payment of some thousands of pounds, under threat of death. Three, at least,

have defied him, and have been murdered. The others have preferred to pay. Well, even in a rich city like London, the persons who can afford to ransom their lives at five thousand pounds are limited in number. No doubt, the Black Triangle will keep his eyes open for new arrivals—"

"That's the case. One of the men who came to us lately was a rich American, and he received the letter signed by the Black Triangle before he had been in London twenty-four hours."

"Precisely. And in the case of another American millionaire arriving, no doubt he would receive a similar threat."

"I don't see how that will help us."

Locke smiled again.

"After I have gone to Paris, my dear Riley, an American millionaire will arrive at the Hotel Magnifique, in London—"

"But—"

"And no doubt Mr. Potts of New York will receive a communication in due course from the Black Triangle—"

"Most likely."

"And then he will act!" said Ferrers Locke.

The inspector started.

"You mean that Mr. Potts of New York will be—"

"You have guessed it."

Inspector Riley drew a deep breath.

"By gad! It may work!" he said. "And if it works, you will get into touch with the scoundrel."

"Which is what we both want," smiled Ferrers Locke. "I need not impress on you, Riley, the necessity for keeping what I have told you locked in your own breast. Drake!" Ferrers Locke turned to his boy assistant. "You will see to the packing of the bags."

"Yes, sir."

Drake quitted the consulting-room promptly.

A few minutes later Inspector Riley took his leave.

Ferrers Locke stood by the window of his consulting-room, looking out into the busy traffic of Baker Street, with a thoughtful shade on his brow. His lips were set in a tight line.

"Between you and me, Count Sazineff!" he muttered aloud. "It is the last round of the contest—the last throw of the dice. And there is death for the one that fails! So be it!"

Mr. Potts of New York.

AN expensive suite of rooms at the Hotel Magnifique, Piccadilly, had been engaged for Mr. Potts, of New York. The price Mr. Potts paid for his accommodation in that palatial caravan-serai indicated that Mr. Potts was a gentleman of extensive wealth. And when he arrived he looked the part. He was attended by only one servant, of rather youthful appearance, but there was no mistake about the wealth of Mr. Potts.

The American gentleman was just from Paris, and he brought his own car across the Channel with him, and in that tremendous car he travelled up from Dover to London.

The staff of the Hotel Magnifique treated the New York millionaire with more than the respect due to princes. In person he was a rather tall and well-built man, with a short, greyish beard and gold-rimmed pince-nez perched on a very firm nose.

It appeared that he was in London for only a week. His suite of apartments had been engaged for that period. On his second day at the Hotel Magnifique his servant, who was also his secretary, had a considerable pile of correspondence to deal with.

Charitable societies and begging-letter writers had already found out the new arrival, and a single day brought requests for financial assistance on a scale calculated to dispose of the wealth of a Rockefeller at one fell swoop.

While Mr. Potts was driving in his magnificent car his youthful secretary was opening letter after letter at a bureau under a window that gave a view of Piccadilly, and to which the roar of the traffic came in a subdued hum.

The secretary, whose name appeared to be Silas Heepe, worked quietly and methodically.

The pile of opened letters grew and bulged.

But when he reached the end of the bulky correspondence, the young secretary shook his head, as if he had not found there what he had hoped or expected to find.

Mr. Potts, of New York, lunched in his own private dining-room, with his secretary, and entertained that young gentleman with conversation in a slight nasal twang—slight, but unmistakable as having been acquired on the other side of the herring-pond.

It seemed that it was Mr. Potts' first visit to London, and that he was hugely pleased with all he saw.

After lunch, when he was lighting a big, black cheroot, Mr. Potts made a careless reference to the correspondence of the morning.

"You've been through the letters, Heepe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Anything for me to see?"

"I've marked seven, sir, to which you may think fit to send a cheque."

"Very good. Any letter from my old friend?"

"No, sir."

"I guess it may come along to-morrow."

"I hope so, sir."

That was all. And certainly the servants who heard those casual words could have attached no deep import to them.

On the morrow morning, while Mr. Potts was out, as usual, the secretary's task was the same.

But this time his face flushed a little, and a sparkle came into his eyes, as he glanced at one of the letters he had opened.

Instead of placing it with the others, he deposited it carefully in his pocket-book.

Then he went on with the remainder of the correspondence, in a rather desultory way.

Having finished his task, he waited rather eagerly for his master's return, looking from the window for the big car.

At lunch Mr. Potts asked the question again, as to whether there was a letter from his old friend. This time the secretary's reply was in the affirmative.

It was not till after the servants were gone that the secretary handed the letter to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. Potts glanced at it, and his lips set hard. A glitter came into the keen, dark eyes over the gold-rimmed pince-nez.

"I thought so!" he said quietly.

The letter ran:

"Stuyvesant S. Potts, Esquire.

"Although you are a stranger to London, you have no doubt already heard of the Black Triangle. If not, you are free to make inquiries. To-morrow you will receive a fresh communication, which you will be well advised not to disregard."

There was no signature to the letter. In the place of a signature was inscribed a small black triangle.

The eyes of the American millionaire and his secretary met.

"It's come, sir," said the latter.

"As I expected," returned Mr. Potts quietly. "We shall wait for the further communication to-morrow, my boy, and then—we shall act."

He reflected for some moments.

For a minute he had been Ferrers Locke of Baker Street again; now he was once more Mr. Stuyvesant S. Potts, of New York.

"I guess that's a queer letter, sonny," he drawled. "Who the thunder is this Black Triangle? I calculate I shall see the manager about this queer letter, and ask him some questions."

And Mr. Potts strolled out of his rooms, and walked to the lift.

The secretary smiled.

It was necessary for Mr. Potts to keep up his character as an American in London, and it was more than possible that the Black Triangle had a watchful eye on the Hotel Magnifique.

In the manager's room, Mr. Potts showed the mysterious letter, and the portly gentleman who ran the Hotel Magnifique started as he saw it. He, certainly, had heard of the Black Triangle.

He strongly advised Mr. Potts to take the letter to Scotland Yard at once.

"But what is the game?" the American gentleman inquired, somewhat testily. "Is it some guy working off a practical joke on a stranger?"

The manager shook his head.

"I'm afraid it's blackmail," he answered, "and the next letter will contain a demand for money."

"Gee!"

"The Criminal Investigation Department has the matter in hand at the present moment, sir. It is advisable to take that letter at once."

"I guess I'll take your advice."

And Mr. Potts ordered his car, and rolled away to New Scotland Yard, where for some time he was in consultation with Detective-inspector Riley, of the C.I.D.

He was observed to be wearing a rather grave expression when he returned to the Hotel Magnifique.

Apparently he had learned now who and what the Black Triangle was, and was duly impressed with the seriousness of the affair.

Laying the Snare.

MR. POTTS, of New York, went through his correspondence himself the following morning.

There was only one letter that claimed his attention, and when he came to it all the others were left disregarded.

That especial letter was read through keenly by the American millionaire and his secretary. It ran:

"Mr. Stuyvesant S. Potts.

"Sir,—You have doubtless by this time acquainted yourself with the reputation of the Black Triangle. Now to come to business. To-morrow, at 11 a.m., you will walk down Regent Street, and you will carry a wallet containing Bank of England notes to the value of five thousand pounds, in notes of five and ten. You will hand the wallet, without question, to a man who will pass you in the street and whisper the word 'Triangle.'"

"If you fail to carry out these instructions, your death will inevitably follow within twenty-four hours!"

"Be warned! The Black Triangle does not strike twice!"

The black triangle followed, as a signature.

Mr. Potts met his secretary's eyes, and smiled. Silas Heepe drew a quick, sharp breath.

"At last, sir!" he muttered.

"At last!" repeated Mr. Potts.

"But—but what next, sir?"

Mr. Potts smiled grimly.

"Having heard of the doings of the Black Triangle, and of the three murders already traced to him, what should I naturally do? Police protection did not save the others. Naturally, I shall drive to the bank, and obtain five thousand pounds in notes of

five and ten, ready to be handed to the blackmailer, according to instructions."

"You think he will be watching?"

"I am sure of it."

"And to-morrow—"

"To-morrow I shall walk down Regent Street, as instructed."

"Alone, sir?"

"Alone," said Mr. Potts.

"You will let me—"

Mr. Potts shook his head.

"Nothing must be done that could possibly excite suspicion, my boy. We are dealing with a wary bird in dealing with Count Sazineff. I must go alone. But you may take the car out at the same time, if you like. You have some shopping to do in Regent Street to-morrow. But you will keep a good distance."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Potts was his usual calm self that day, but Jack Drake was a prey to a suppressed excitement. On the morrow it was to be the last throw of the dice, and Drake's heart beat as he thought of it. If the blackmailer had any suspicion—the remotest suspicion—

But he could have none. The letters written to Mr. Potts were on a par with the known methods of the Black Triangle. Count Sazineff, keen and wary as he was, could not dream of the truth. There was no doubt that he believed that his attempts upon Ferrers Locke's life had driven the famous Baker Street detective out of London. For a week or more the house in Baker Street had been closed and callers informed that the detective had not yet returned from Paris.

Only Ferrers Locke and his assistant and Detective-inspector Riley, of Scotland Yard, knew that the Baker Street detective had returned to London as Mr. Potts, of New York, in a disguise that his closest acquaintance could not have penetrated.

Jack Drake, alias Silas Heepe, was feeling confident, and yet he could not dismiss a keen anxiety. He was only too well aware of the desperate character of the master-criminal with whom the Baker Street detective had to deal.

When Mr. Potts' car bore him away to the bank that afternoon, he was keeping a keen look-out.

He was fairly certain that his movements were being watched, either by the master-criminal himself or by some confederate. But if the shadowing was being done, it was done so skillfully that even Ferrers Locke was baffled.

There was no sign of a shadower to be observed. The car stopped at the bank, and the disguised detective was detained for some time in that building. More than once he glanced from a window, but again he failed to detect any suspicious loiterer in the street outside.

He returned to the car at last, and drove back to the Hotel Magnifique. When he alighted from the car he carried a little wallet, securely locked, which he declined to entrust to the hands of the hotel commissionaire, and which he carried to his rooms himself.

That wallet, however, was in full view of a dozen passers on the Piccadilly pavement for some moments, and if the Black Triangle was on the watch, he could have had no doubt as to what it contained.

In Mr. Potts' rooms, with locked doors, the American gentleman opened the wallet, and Jack Drake opened his eyes at the sight of wads of Bank of England notes.

"The actual notes, sir?" he exclaimed.

Mr. Potts nodded.

"But—but you will not take them with you to-morrow morning—"

"No. I shall take the wallet, stuffed with old newspaper and locked," said Mr. Potts quietly.

"Then why—"

"My dear boy, we have to guard every move. Although I could



The disguised Ferrers Locke stopped at a jeweller's window. The bearded man leaned slightly towards the American gentleman and whispered a single word in his ear. "Triangle!" It was the signal word.

not detect a shadow, I am sure that I was watched going to the bank to-day. It is more than possible that I was watched inside the bank—even in the manager's room, I should not care to run the risk of betraying myself to a spy. I have the notes, and the Black Triangle certainly knows by this time that I have them, and he will be satisfied. If I had not obtained the banknotes necessary for meeting his demand, he might very easily have taken the alarm, and instead of accosting me in Regent Street to-morrow, he would probably have avoided the meeting, and made an attempt upon my life instead—the life of Mr. Potts, of New York!" added the Baker Street detective, with a whimsical smile.

"I—I suppose so, sir," said Drake, in a low voice.

"Up to the very last moment I intend to play out my part," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "It is only when the scoundrel actually meets me face to face with his demand, to-morrow, that he will discover that it is not a scared millionaire that he has to deal with."

"And then?"

Ferrers Locke's face set grimly.

"Then there will be a sudden surprise for Count Sazineff, alias the Black Triangle!" he said.

Ferrers Locke slept tranquilly that night, but Drake awakened more than once from an uneasy slumber. The thought of the encounter of the morrow was on his mind, and would not be banished. Great as was his confidence in his chief, the lingering anxiety in his breast would not leave him. He was glad when the dawn came at last, and the dim November sun glimmered down over the great city, and the roar of Piccadilly came up subdued through the air.

Face to Face.

MR. POTTS, of New York, did not order his car the following morning. He seemed to have a fancy for a walk in the West End streets instead.

It was about half-past ten that he walked away from the magnificent entrance of the hotel, and strolled down Piccadilly. He wore a soft hat and an overcoat, the weather being chilly, and in the pocket of the overcoat reposed the locked wallet which he had brought from the bank the previous day. The wallet was almost bulging with its contents, and certainly gave no indication of the fact that the wads of five and ten pound notes had been exchanged for a couple of old copies of the "Daily Mail."

It was not a great prize for the desperate blackmailer, even if it fell into the hands of Count Sazineff. Ferrers Locke anticipated success, but he had not neglected to guard against failure.

He turned into the Quadrant, and sauntered along, in a leisurely way, among the bustling crowds. The day was damp and chilly, the pavements wet, and a slight drizzle of rain drove many of the pedestrians under shelter.

Mr. Potts, of New York, strolled on in the direction of Oxford Street, one hand resting on the wallet in his overcoat pocket. It rested, also, on a loaded revolver, ready for instant use.

Certainly no one who passed the American-looking gentleman suspected that he was on the watch for a desperate encounter that might take place at any moment.

Mr. Potts had traversed half the length of Regent Street, when he paused to glance casually into the plate-glass window of a jeweller's establishment.

In that window he saw a full-length reflection of himself, and for some minutes he seemed interested in a study of gold cigar-cases. He was still more interested in the reflections of the passers-by who passed near him.

One of the passers-by paused, and glanced at the American gentleman.

With a careless air, the man approached the jeweller's window, as if interested in the same display of goods as Mr. Potts.

His reflection was fairly under the eyes of Mr. Potts, who saw a man of rather tall figure, with a thickly-bearded face, and steel-rimmed spectacles, drawing closer to his elbow.

The man stopped at the window beside Mr. Potts.

There was no one else close at hand as the bearded man leaned slightly towards the American gentleman and whispered a single word in his ear:

"Triangle!"

It was the signal word.

Without even turning his head, Mr. Potts, of New York, drew the locked wallet from his pocket and passed it to the bearded man.

The stranger's hand closed on it instantly, transferring it to the pocket of his own overcoat.

The transaction did not occupy more than a few seconds.

The bearded man did not speak. He turned swiftly away, and walked towards Oxford Street at a good pace.

Mr. Potts turned round from the jeweller's window.

His leisurely manner dropped from him like a cloak. He made one long stride and a spring like a tiger, and his grasp closed on the coat collar of the bearded man.

Crash!

The sudden grasp dragged the blackmailer backwards, and he went down on the sloppy pavement with a heavy concussion.

There was a sharp, tense cry as he struck the pavement.

His hat fell off, and with it came a thick, dark wig, and the next second the heavy, dark beard was torn from his face, and the steel-rimmed spectacles fell aside.

The face that was revealed was clean-cut, clean-shaven—a handsome face, though marred by lines of evil.

It was the face of Count Boris Sazineff, once a noble of the old Russian Empire, now the most dangerous criminal in Europe.

"At last, Count Sazineff!"

Locke uttered the words between his teeth, as he closed with the count.

A big car that had been crawling along Regent Street put on a sudden burst of speed, and came racing up, the face of Mr. Potts' secretary looking eagerly from the window.

It was only for a second that Count Sazineff was taken by surprise, the next he was struggling savagely in the grasp of Ferrers Locke.

In the fierce struggle, the American gentleman's goatee beard and gold-rimmed pince-nez were torn away, and, in spite of the make-up that remained, the Baker Street detective was recognizable by a keen eye.

A hoarse cry broke from the struggling count as he saw the face of his adversary thus revealed.

"Ferrers Locke!"

The detective did not reply; he was exerting his strength to the utmost.

Already the struggle had attracted widespread attention. A dozen passers-by had gathered round, with excited exclamations, and two constables were hurrying up from different directions.

Count Sazineff fought furiously.

But he could not break the iron grasp of the Baker Street detective. Once he almost tore himself loose, but that iron grip closed on him again. And Jack Drake, leaping from the car, rushed on the scene.

The count succeeded in getting his hand into his breast-pocket at last, and it came out, with a revolver glimmering in it, just as Jack Drake dashed on the scene.

The boy detective hurled himself on the count, grasping his arm, and forcing his wrist upward.

Crack!

The report of the revolver was followed by a terrific crash of plate-glass. The bullet had struck fairly in the nearest shop-window, shivering the great pane to fragments.

Count Sazineff had no time for another shot.

Drake twisted his wrist savagely, and forced the revolver from his hand, while Ferrers Locke pinned him down to the pavement, on his back, with a gripping knee on his chest.

Two policemen were on the scene by that time.

They arrived as Ferrers Locke jerked the handcuffs from his pocket, and, with Drake's help, dragged the count's wrists together.

Click!

Count Sazineff still struggled, but his struggling suddenly ceased as he felt the cold metal on his wrists, and the click told him that the "bracelets" were locked.

He was a helpless prisoner now.

The mad fit of fury that had possessed him during the struggle passed away, leaving him panting, almost breathless, but cool and collected. Only his black eyes glittered at the Baker Street detective with deadly hate.

Ferrers Locke rose to his feet, breathing hard. Fit and athletic as he was, that desperate struggle had told on him.

"You're not hurt, sir?" panted Drake.

"Not in the least."

"What's all this?" broke in one of the constables.

The Baker Street detective interrupted him.

"I am Ferrers Locke," he said quietly. "That man is Count Sazineff—the Black Triangle—wanted for three murders. Take him into custody."

"Good heavens!"

The two constables jerked Count Sazineff to his feet. There was a buzz in the thickening crowd on the Regent Street pavement.

"Count Sazineff!"

"The Black Triangle!"

"The murderer!"

The count smiled sardonically. He was caught—hopelessly cornered, with a capital charge hanging over his head. But his coolness did not forsake him. Once more he was the cool, debonaire count.

"Your turn this time, Ferrers Locke!" he said. "Next time it may be my turn, mon cher!"

Locke looked at him steadily.

"I think there will be no next time for you, Count Sazineff!" he answered drily.

Boris Sazineff shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows?" he answered. "The rope is not yet round my neck, my dear Locke, and perhaps you will never place it there. But may I ask one last favour, my dear man? The loan of your car to the station. You will not expose a gentleman to the rude stares of the canal?"

Locke's lip curled.

"Put him in my car," he said to the constables. "One of you accompany me, in taking charge of him. He is a man that we must run no risks with."

"Certainly, Mr. Locke."

The crowd thronged and buzzed as the count was led into the big car belonging to "Mr. Potts," of New York.

The car was set in motion, with the count sitting in the middle of the back seat, Ferrers Locke on one side of him and the constable on the other, and Jack Drake opposite.

The handcuffs glistened on his wrists, and in Ferrers Locke's hand was a revolver. He was taking no risks with his prisoner.

A sardonic smile played over the count's handsome face.

He was in the toils at last—at last, after a long career of crime, in which he had defied the police of half a dozen countries.

And, in spite of the smile on his lips, there was dark despair in his breast, for he realised that, at last, he was in toils from which there was no escape, and that his career of crime had come to its close.

Count Sazineff's Farewell.

THE heavy door swung back under the warden's hand, and Ferrers Locke stepped into the cell. Through the barred window, the pale light glimmered on bare, washed walls.

The man in the cell stood up as the detective entered.

Confinement in the cell had told a little on Count Sazineff. He was pale, but his manner was cool and self-possessed. He made a mocking bow to the Baker Street detective as he entered.

The warden remained at the door.

"Good-morning, my dear Locke!" drawled the count. "I cannot offer you a seat. But our interview will be brief."

Locke regarded him curiously, not without compassion. The man before him had many gifts, and might have made his mark in the world, but for the kink in his nature that had led him to crime.

And his gifts had made him only a master in crime.

"You asked to see me?" said Ferrers Locke abruptly. "I did not desire this interview, Count Sazineff."

"You did not desire to triumph over a fallen enemy, mon cher?"

"Anything but that. And I do not regard you as an enemy," said the Baker Street detective gravely. "You are an enemy of society, and, as such, I have hunted you down. Four times you

have attempted my life, but I feel no bitterness on that account."

Sazineff nodded.
 "You were a foeman worthy of my steel!" he said lightly.
 "The luck has gone against me, Locke, and I dare say you are surprised that I asked for this last interview. To-morrow my trial begins, and you know as well as I do that I have no defence. I shall be found guilty, after the formality of a trial. I have lived as I chose, a human wolf preying upon society, and society will see that I prey upon it no longer. You, my dear Locke—my only dangerous enemy—you have pledged yourself to see that the rope is placed round my neck."

Locke did not answer. He was perplexed to guess why the master-criminal had desired this interview, repugnant enough to him. His work was done, and he would have chosen to leave the count in the hands of the law he had defied, and in the toils of which he was now entangled, a helpless prisoner, with his doom dark upon him. But he would not refuse the last request of the man he had handed over to justice, and so he had come. At the door, the stolid warden looked on in silence.

"You are still puzzled to know why I begged for this last visit?" smiled the count.

"Yes."
 Count Sazineff yawned, and placed his hand over his mouth for a moment.

Then he smiled at the Baker Street detective.
 "Merely in order to tell you, mon cher Locke, that you will never have the satisfaction of knowing that Boris Sazineff has perished by the hangman's hands," he said. "That, and nothing more. The rope is not spun that will hang me, my friend!"

"And is that all?" asked Locke.
 "That is all."

Locke looked at him more keenly. A deeper pallor was already creeping over the count's well-cut face, and the detective's suspicions were vaguely aroused.

"You do not ask me what is my means of escape." The count sat down, rather heavily, upon his bed. It was as if he felt his strength failing him. "My dear Locke, with all your keenness and your wonderful gifts, are you not a little obtuse? Prison walls close me round. My doom is fixed and certain; my death will be hailed with relief by those whom I have plundered and terrorised. But I am still a count and a gentleman, mon cher, and I shall not die like a vulgar criminal. I had taken precautions against that, mon cher. Ah, do you guess now?"

He laughed sardonically, as the Baker Street detective made a quick step forward.

"Too late!" he said. "For once in your very remarkable career, Mr. Locke, you are too late! I have already taken the poison!"

Ferrers Locke turned sharply to the warden.

"The doctor—quick!"

The count laughed again—a low, mocking laugh, broken off suddenly by a catch in his throat.

"The poison works quickly, mon cher," he muttered. "I shall be cut off your power before the doctor reaches me. A tiny dose, my friend—tiny, but effective—and concealed so carefully that the minutest search failed to deprive me of it. And I swallowed it while speaking to you, Ferrers Locke—and already—"

He broke off with a gasp.

Locke sprang forward to catch him as he fell back on the bed. The sardonic smile seemed frozen on the count's lips, as he lay, and there was no breath, no motion, in the form upon the bed when the prison doctor arrived.

Count Sazineff had escaped the gallows.

Jack Drake looked inquiringly at his chief when Ferrers Locke came into the consulting-room at Baker Street. Locke's face was very grave. Drake knew of his mission that morning, and he was curious.

"You have seen him, sir?" Drake asked.

Ferrers Locke nodded.
 "It is over, my boy," he said. "Society is saved from one of its most dangerous pests. Count Sazineff will never trouble the world—or us—again!"

"He is—is—"
 "Dead!" said Ferrers Locke.
 Drake drew a deep breath. It was over at last—the long struggle between the master-criminal and the Baker Street detective—and once more right had triumphed over wrong, and victory remained with Ferrers Locke.

THE END.

Another of these splendid detective stories in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald."

"THE GREAT NAVAL JAPE!"

(Continued from page 8.)

into the water, waded to their waists, and then swam out to the waiting yacht. While the willing hands of the two members of the boat's crew hauled them aboard, they could hear the raucous voice of the outwitted colonel shouting to his officers to repair to the landing-place and man the motor-boats. But in the fresh wind that was blowing off-shore, the Redbreast, with sails set, glided swiftly away to the Isle of Wight, where the jokers had arranged to spend the rest of the week-end at Deerhurst Hall.

As the sounds of their pursuers grew fainter, the four midshipmen seated in the yacht gazed at each other's dusky faces and burst into shrieks of uncontrolled laughter.

When on the following Monday, Reggie, Frank Sturdy, Arthur Vere, and David Linley reported themselves back on H.M.S. Thundercloud, they found a letter in the gunroom rack addressed to the first-named. It was from Second-lieutenant Teddy Heron, R.M.L.I., and it read:

"Reggie, you old rascal, our sides are still aching! All the subs here are wise to your jape now, but you can rely on us not to give the game away. It was a scream the way you got old Stinty to stand you not only a ginger-pop, but a bumper feed! The spread at the merry Mimosa is on me!"

Another of these magnificent, long complete Naval stories in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald."



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