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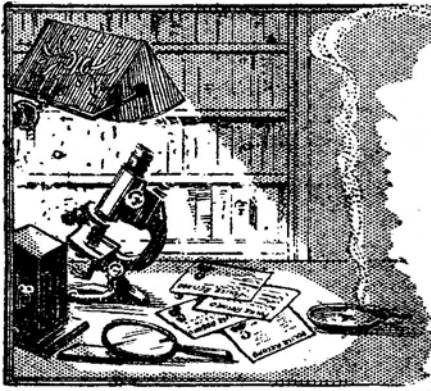
Nov. 26, 1921.



THE SOLE SURVIVOR!

An Incident From Our Long Complete Naval Story Inside.

COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.



A LIFE FOR A FORTUNE!

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.

A Strange Case.

IT'S a case of murder, Mr. Locke—wilful murder! But—the secretary of the Wide World Insurance Company leaned towards the Baker Street detective, and added—"but the crime has not been committed yet!"

Ferrers Locke raised his eyebrows a little. "A case of murder—which has not been committed?" he repeated. "That is a very strange statement to make, Mr. Fleet."

"I know it. But the matter is as I have said." "You had better be a little more explicit," said Ferrers Locke, rather drily. "I am listening."

Jack Drake, the famous detective's assistant, was listening, too. His eyes were upon a ledger as he sat at his desk, but all his attention was given to the interview between Ferrers Locke and the insurance company's secretary.

Mr. Fleet, a rather fat and puffy gentleman, cleared his throat with a little cough.

"Of course, every word spoken here is spoken in the strictest confidence," he hinted.

"Naturally." Mr. Fleet glanced towards Drake for a moment. "My assistant is absolutely in my confidence," said Ferrers Locke. "You may proceed."

"Very good. What I am about to say, Mr. Locke, is—ahem!—actionable, if it should be said in public. The Wide World Insurance Company is not looking for trouble under the law of libel."

"Quite so." "You know that we do a big insurance business in nearly every quarter of the world," said Mr. Fleet. "Some of the biggest life insurances have been taken out with the Wide World Company. One of the clients on our books at present is a certain baronet, Sir Randal Shandon. He is a young man of—hem!"—Mr. Fleet coughed again—"of rather unsavory reputation—dissipated, reckless, in short, a pretty bad egg. It is possible that you may have heard of him."

"More than possible," said Ferrers Locke. "I have had an eye on that young man. He came of age last year, and proceeded to make ducks and drakes of a fine fortune, which is probably more than half scattered by this time."

"Exactly. He is insured in our company for twenty thousand pounds."

"That is a large sum." "A very large sum," said Mr. Fleet, with a grimace. "In case of his death, the money goes to his inseparable friend, Captain St. Leger, who holds the policy. St. Leger has been the companion of his orgies, and has helped him dissipate his fortune, probably feathering his own nest pretty comfortably in the process. St. Leger is a man about town, living on his wits. He had a good record in the war, and there is no question but that he displayed reckless bravery, but any other good qualities in Captain St. Leger would require looking for with a powerful microscope. Undoubtedly he has helped young Shandon to make a fool of himself, leading him on from one folly to another, till he had landed him in difficulties. Shandon is now deep in debt, and can raise little or nothing more from the moneylenders, as what remains to him of his estate is entailed. In fact, he is, from the captain's point of view, a squeezed lemon, and of no further value."

Locke nodded. "In these circumstances, the captain might be expected to pass him by, and turn his attention to other gulls," said the secretary. "But, as a matter of fact, he is sticking to Sir Randal Shandon closer than a brother. He is lending him money to keep going for the present."

"Which you do not attribute to friendship?" "Hardly. Sir Randal is not the man to inspire friendship in anybody—a drunkard, gambler, and loafer," said Mr. Fleet. "And the captain has not exactly been a good friend to him hitherto. He has his own axe to grind."

"The insurance policy?" "Exactly. In case of Sir Randal's death, Captain St. Leger will be the richer by twenty thousand pounds, and the Wide World Insurance Company will be the poorer by that amount."

"And you suspect—" "More than that. In the circumstances, it has been considered judicious to keep an eye on both men. When they joined a shooting-party in Scotland, there was an accident with a gun—a ball very nearly cost our company twenty thousand pounds."

"The captain's gun?" Mr. Fleet shrugged his shoulders.

"No—a keeper's. But the captain was there. I venture to trace

a connection between the captain's presence and the accident to the keeper's gun."

"But, since?" "They are now in London, still inseparable. But they do not remain long. Sir Randal's affairs being so involved, he has decided to take a trip abroad for a year or so, to give himself time to pull round and cut down expenses. I think I am right in attributing the suggestion to the gallant captain. The baronet has an idea—not a bad one in itself—of roughing it for a time, and thus getting over the effects of his dissipated life in town. The friends are going out to Africa together—West Africa."

"A dangerous country." "Very dangerous for a man in the hands of a rascally adventurer who holds a big insurance policy on his life. And they are not going by one of the steamers. With the idea of saving money, and roughing it a little, they are going on a tramp steamer down the coast to the Congo. It will be a long passage—perhaps a rough passage—and Sir Randal will probably be under the influence of liquor half the time, and you can guess what is likely to happen to him!"

Ferrers Locke nodded again. "But what do you want me to do?" he said. "You have told me that it is a case of wilful murder, but, even if that is the captain's intention, you have not an atom of proof to bring against him."

"Not an atom," agreed Mr. Fleet ruefully. "But you are sure—"

"Quite sure." "That Sir Randal's life is in danger?" "There is no doubt whatever on that subject from the information we possess."

"Such a life is not a particularly valuable one," the Baker Street detective remarked drily.

"It is a very valuable one to our company."

"True." "My concern is not for the young man himself, naturally. It is for my company. We do not want to pay Captain St. Leger twenty thousand pounds for knocking his friend overboard on a dark night in the Gulf of Guinea."

Locke smiled slightly. "I imagine not," he assented. "Have you tried to warn the young man of his probable danger?"

"That is futile. He would not listen to a word against St. Leger. Moreover, there is nothing but bare suspicion to offer in the way of proof. That would do no good. After a consultation, Mr. Locke, the directors have asked me to see you about the matter. Your fee will be a generous one if you save us from the threatened loss—above all, if you bring the scoundrel to book and prevent further attempts."

"I understand." Ferrers Locke was silent for a few moments, thinking. The secretary watched him anxiously.

"When do they leave London?" Locke asked, at last. "On Monday."

"By what vessel?" "The tramp steamer, Pelican."

"As passengers?" "Yes."

"What sort of a vessel is the Pelican?" "A common ocean tramp, with a mixed cargo. Crew of ten, negro cook, Scotch engineer, skipper, and mate." Evidently Mr. Fleet had been making inquiries. "As she has no licence to carry passengers, St. Leger and Shandon will sign on as second or third mates. You know the game?"

"I know. And you want me to do—what?" Mr. Fleet made a gesture.

"We leave everything to you," he said. "We want Sir Randal Shandon to reach Lagos alive. We cannot prevent him from making the voyage; he is a free agent. We want him to survive it. And we want Captain St. Leger put where he cannot plan any more murders which will entail loss upon the Wide World Insurance Company. If you can catch him in the act, so much the better. But we are prepared to leave everything in your hands if you will undertake the case, Mr. Locke."

"Who are the owners of the Pelican?" "Jones, Wiggins, and Jones, Gravesend."

Locke drummed for a moment on the table thoughtfully, while the insurance company's secretary eyed him.

"I will take the case," said the Baker Street detective, at last. "If the man's life can be saved, I will save it. If the crook can be brought to justice, I will bring him to the dock. I cannot promise success—it is not an ordinary case. If a man disappears

overboard in a gale of wind, it may be very difficult to prove that anyone had a hand in the business, even anyone who benefited by his death to the tune of twenty thousand pounds. On those terms, Mr. Fleet, I will take the case."

"Agreed!" said the secretary at once. "And, in the hope that you would consent, Mr. Locke, I have brought with me a cheque for two hundred and fifty pounds, for your preliminary expenses. If necessary, you will draw upon us for any reasonable amount. If you fail, I know that the fault will not be yours. The case could not be in better hands."

And, after a few more words, the secretary took his leave, and Ferrers Locke remained alone with his boy assistant.

The Night Club.

JACK DRAKE looked rather eagerly at the Baker Street detective.

He was wondering whether his chief would require his services in the new case he had taken up, which obviously necessitated a voyage to the West Coast of Africa.

If Locke decided to leave him in charge of the office in Baker Street, Drake was prepared to do his duty loyally; but his heart beat with excitement at the possible prospect of a voyage in strange seas, and of adventures in a strange clime.

Ferrers Locke glanced at him, and smiled slightly. He could read easily enough the thoughts in the boy's mind.

"You are already thinking of sunny skies and blue waters, waving palm-trees, and crocodiles, Drake," he remarked.

"You will be going out to West Africa on this case, sir?"

"That will be necessary."

"And—"

Drake paused. "And I shall want you, if you care to come," smiled Ferrers Locke.

"Oh, good!"

"Wait a moment, Drake, before you decide," admonished the detective. "You shall come or not, as you please. But, if you come, it will be a very rough experience for you."

"I don't mind that, sir."

"Are you prepared to take a job as a ship's boy before the mast?"

"Quite."

"It is a hard life, Drake."

Drake laughed.

"It may be hard, sir," he answered. "But I'm not exactly soft. And I've been to sea before, you know."

"Very good, then," said Ferrers Locke. "You will begin making your preparations at once, Drake. I will give you a list of things that we shall require, and you will take the car and make a round of shopping. Meanwhile, I have a call to make in Gravesend."

"In Gravesend?" Drake understood. "The owners of the Pelican?"

"Precisely."

"Then you will go as a passenger, sir?"

Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"The Pelican does not take passengers," he answered. "And I fancy that a passenger on board a rusty ocean tramp would attract a good deal of attention from Captain St. Leger, whose attention I certainly do not want to attract."

"But, counting St. Leger and Shandon, there will be three mates already, nominally—"

"But a new chief mate, perhaps?" said Locke.

"Oh!" ejaculated Drake.

"You know that I hold a captain's ticket, Drake," said the Baker Street detective. "I have acted both as mate and skipper before, and can do so again on occasion. I shall see that the chief mate of the Pelican does not lose by losing his berth. I can easily make that worth his while. And I fancy I can arrange the matter satisfactorily with the owners, who know me pretty well."

"And when we are on board, sir—"

"You will not know me, of course. You will keep your eyes open at one end of the ship, while I keep mine open at the other," said Locke. "That is the best plan I can arrange at the moment, but we shall, of course, be guided largely by circumstances during the voyage. Your name on the ship will be Jackson, and mine will be Ferrers. It is highly improbable that Captain St. Leger will guess that he is travelling in such distinguished company."

The Baker Street detective reflected for a few moments.

"I shall be back to dinner at seven, Drake," he said. "You will have finished your shopping by then. This evening I shall want you. We shall take our last look at the seamy side of London life, and at the two men we have to deal with on board the Pelican."

He smiled at Drake.

"In spite of Mr. Fleet's assurance that he has made no mistake, I prefer to use my own eyes," he explained. "If it is necessary, I shall make the voyage to Lagos; but I have no intention of embarking upon a wild-goose chase. Mind, I believe that the secretary's information is correct. But, to put the matter to the proof, I shall keep Captain St. Leger and Sir Randal Shandon under observation this evening. I know something of their habits. They have a wide reputation among the blackguardly set in the West End, and it will be easy to get in touch with them. But that is for this evening. I am going to Gravesend now."

And Ferrers Locke took his departure.

Jack Drake was busy that afternoon, and had little time to wonder how his chief was engaged.

From the arrangements that were being made, it was clear that Ferrers Locke intended to sail in the Pelican, if the gull and the rook sailed in her; but it was a wise precaution to make closer acquaintance with the two men before stepping on board the tramp steamer.

At a quarter to seven, Ferrers Locke arrived in the rooms at Baker Street, and found Drake awaiting him.

He nodded to the boy with a smile.

"You have finished your shopping, Drake?"

"To the last item, sir."

"Good."

"And you, Mr. Locke?"

"I have arranged matters with the owners of the Pelican. But never mind that now. Dinner!" said Locke.

The Baker Street detective was rather silent over dinner. Once or twice he glanced at Drake, as if undecided. It was not till after Sing-Sing had cleared the table, and Locke had lighted his pipe, that he came to the subject that was in his mind.

"I have obtained some information with regard to St. Leger and his victim, Drake," he said. "I have had them watched this afternoon by a man whom I can trust. What I have learned certainly bears out Mr. Fleet's description of the two men—one, an idle, dissolute drunkard, the other a hard-faced and reckless adventurer. I know where they are spending this evening, and it is my intention to observe them personally there. I am doubtful about taking you with me—"

"Should I be in the way, sir?" asked Drake, rather crestfallen.

"Not at all. It would be, in a way, a valuable experience for you, my boy. But the Iris Night Club is not exactly the place—"

He paused, and then nodded. "But, after all, Drake, you are a lad whom I can trust not to take harm from what he may see, and you shall come."

"The Iris Night Club?" repeated Drake.

"It is the shadiest of all the shady resorts of the kind in the West End of London," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "It is a gambling-club, and high stakes are played for there. Needless to say, they are somewhat careful whom they admit. The place has already been raided by the police more than once, and the fines are heavy, though not in proportion to the profits that are made."

"But will it not be difficult, sir, to obtain admittance, if—"

Locke smiled.

"We shall not go in our own characters," he said. "Neither of us will be recognisable. With a moustache and a little make-up, Drake, you will look twenty-five years old—"

"My hat!"

"And I shall look like a stockbroker of the Jewish persuasion. I know the rules of the club, and we shall enter easily enough. Anyone with money to burn is welcome there, and we shall look as if we have money to burn. To keep up appearances, I may throw a few pieces on the table. But you will not do so, Drake. Even in the way of business, I should not care to see you assume the customs of a gambler."

"I'll do exactly as you say, of course, sir."

An hour later, a taxi called at the house in Baker Street, and two men stepped into it.

In the fat and florid stockbroker, with a countenance of a strongly Semitic cast, and in the young man with the black moustache, certainly no one would have dreamed of recognising Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant.

The taxi glided through the dusky streets, over which hung a dim November mist.

As it turned into a narrow street in the neighbourhood of Soho, Ferrers Locke glanced from the window.

A man who was lounging on the pavement glanced at the cab, and took a handkerchief from his pocket, dropped it, and picked it up again. Then he lounged away.

Drake's eyes followed him for a moment, and then he glanced at his chief. Locke nodded to him.

"A signal," he said quietly. "The men we are after have gone in, and that is the arranged signal with my man who has been watching. We shall find Sir Randal Shandon and the captain at the Iris."

The taxi glided on, and stopped at the address Locke had given to the driver. The latter looked into the cab.

"This 'ere's the place, sir," he said. "Number's all right. But it looks to me shut up for the night."

"That is all right," replied the detective.

He alighted with Drake, and paid the driver, and the taxi buzzed away. Drake found himself looking at the window of a dingy fruiterer's shop. There were other dingy shops along the street, all of them closed. Certainly it did not look like the spot where



Ferrers Locke threw aside a curtain, and he and Drake stepped into a brightly lighted room. There were six of seven men there, and a buzz of voices was in their ears. From an adjoining apartment came the sound of a droning voice.

one would have expected to find a night club frequented by such men as Captain St. Leger and his friend the baronet.

Locke moved along the dim, ill-lit street, and stopped at a narrow entry between two shops. He stepped into the entry, and touched a bell. Drake noticed that he pressed the electric-bell three times in quick succession. The door opened without a sound.

Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant passed into a dark passage. The door closed again, and an electric bulb above their heads suddenly glowed. No one was visible, but Drake knew that they were under inspection as they walked quietly along the passage. Locke threw aside a curtain, and they stepped into a brightly lighted room. Drake blinked for a moment in the strong light, and then, as he glanced about him, he found that there were six or seven men in the room, and a buzz of voices was in his ears. Through an open doorway, from an adjoining apartment, came the sound of a droning voice, which reminded the boy detective of a visit he had paid to a Continental casino with Ferrers Locke. The words were in English instead of French, but the drone of the croupier was unmistakable:

"Make your game, gentlemen! Make your game!"

The Rogue and the Fool.

"MAKE your game!"

Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant strolled into the gaming-room. There was a long, green table down the centre, with the roulette machine in the middle of it. A saw-toothed man in evening clothes was turning the wheel, two or three other croupiers were seated at intervals along the table, with the long-handled rakes in their fingers. Twenty or thirty men, mostly in evening clothes, sat, or stood, at the table, and counters were being tossed upon the numbered squares in showers.

Drake had seen many strange sights in London since he had become the assistant of the famous Baker Street detective, but this was new to him.

Outside, probably, a policeman was passing, on his beat, and here, within closed doors, the laws of the country were being broken, recklessly and impudently, by the hard-faced men who "ran" the gaming-club, and the reckless punters who came there to lose their money.

Drake noticed especially a young man, with a fair, weak face and watery, pale-blue eyes, who stood by the table, watching the revolutions of the wheel with a fixed, concentrated gaze, as if his whole existence depended upon the number that was turned up.

He was not a bad-looking man, but the signs of evil living were very strong in his weak face, and marred his good looks. And his aspect was that of a gambler to whom the fever of gaming was a necessity of life.

He played with every spin of the wheel, and with nearly every spin he lost. And at last his pile of counters had disappeared.

Then he turned to a tall, somewhat swarthy-complexioned man who stood at his side, who was watching the game and not playing. Drake was near enough to hear what was said.

"Lend me something, St. Leger."

"You've played enough, Randal."

"Lend me something, I tell you!"

The tall man shrugged his shoulders, with a half-scornful curl of his well-tup lip, and passed a banknote to his companion.

It must have been a note of large denomination, for the young man received a big stack of counters for it from the changer. And every one of the counters, as Drake noted, was marked "£1."

Drake breathed rather quickly, as from that brief interchange of words, he learned that these were the two men whom Ferrers Locke was there to observe.

He glanced round for the detective. Locke was on the other side of the table, already provided with counters, and playing with apparent earnestness; but Drake was aware that his play was a blind, and that in reality his eyes never lost sight of Sir Randal Shandon and Captain St. Leger.

St. Leger stood silent, almost gloomy, by the side of his companion, the wretched plunger whom he had helped to ruin.

He looked, almost, a skeleton at the feast, as it were, as if he found no pleasure or satisfaction in the reckless scene. Certainly he was not playing roulette.

His business seemed to be to stand beside his friend and supply him with money, all of which was devoured by the insatiable machine.

Drake was puzzled. If the captain was the rook and the baronet the gull, their characters seemed to be reversed for that evening.

Evidently it was St. Leger's money that was being lost, and the baronet who was having the pleasure—or otherwise—of losing it.

Mindful of Ferrers Locke's injunction, Drake did not join in the play; but that fact attracted no especial notice, as there were a good many men about the table who were looking on without punting.

Drake found sufficient interest in watching Shandon.

In a very short time the stack of counters had vanished, and at least fifty pounds had been lost by the obtuse youth.

He turned to his companion again.

"St. Leger—"

"That's enough!" interrupted the captain curtly. "Come and have a drink!"

"I believe the luck's on the turn."

"Come and have a drink!"

The young man looked angry for a moment, but he nodded, and followed the captain. They passed into an adjoining room, from which Drake heard occasionally the clinking of glasses and the popping of corks.

After a few moments, Drake caught the eye of Ferrers Locke across the table, and understood a slight sign made by the detective.

He followed the baronet and the captain into the next apartment, at one end of which was a bar, where a dozen men stood smoking and drinking and discussing the game.

He did not see St. Leger or Shandon at first. He strolled along the room, and sat down as he spotted the two partly screened by tubs of palms. The palms were between him and the two men

as he sat down, and he was sure that they had not observed him. They were sitting in an alcove, with a little table before them, on which stood bottle and glasses. Evidently the baronet had only abandoned the green table, in order to give himself up to his next dearest vice.

"You've taken more than enough, Randal." It was the voice of the captain, low, but hard and very distinct. "Don't make a fool of yourself!"

"Satan rebukin' sin!" chuckled Shandon. "This is a new stunt of yours, George, lookin' after me in this way."

"It's good advice, anyway."

"Jever know me to profit by good advice, old bean?"

"No, I never did," muttered the captain. "But there's a limit to everything, Randal. The game is up with us for the present. We're pretty nearly broke to the wide, and now you're throwing away what's left—"

"Must have a last little plunge before clearin'," said Sir Randal. "Dash it all, George, we go on board that dusty old hooker on Monday! What sort of a time are we goin' to have?"

"Pretty rough, I expect."

"If it kills me, George, you won't be a loser."

Drake's eyes were on the two men, through an interstice in the thick palms. He saw the captain close his lips hard as Shandon spoke. For a moment the steely eyes glittered at Shandon, but the latter was pouring himself out a drink, and did not notice it.

"That's a rotten sort of joke to make, old fellow!" said St. Leger at last, in a low voice.

"It's a fact, old man. You stand to bag twenty thousand of the best if I don't come back from Lagos."

"Don't speak of it, Randal. I've told you before that the policy's yours if you want it."

"I don't want it; I want you to have it. I'm your pal, ain't I?" said Sir Randal thickly. "You've been a good pal to me, George—real good! We've had some times together, haven't we? And you're goin' to let me have a last bust-up before we cut it for good—or a year, at least. You've got some more money."

"Only what we actually need, Randal."

"If I win—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed the captain impatiently.

"Did you ever leave the green table with anything in your pockets?"

"Luck must change—law of chances, you know! How much have you got left?"

"Another fifty."

"Lend it to me, and see—"

"Nothing doing!"

The baronet refilled his glass, and drank again. Then he looked at the tall, gloomy captain unsteadily, for he was half-intoxicated, but with a very unpleasant gleam in his watery eyes.

"You won't lend me anythin'?" he asked.

"No; I can't!"

"You hound!"

"What?"

"You're settin' up to preach to me, and keep me straight!" exclaimed the other. "Who are you to do it? Suppose I want to throw the last quids on the green cloth—who was it taught me to throw them there? Look here! I tell you plainly, George, I don't like this new racket of yours. You've spent your own money and mine fast enough, s'long as it lasted. You've had a good many thousands out of me, and you know it. Now you refuse me a few pounds for a last flutter. Call that pally? You and I are goin' to part this evenin', George St. Leger, and I'm not goin' on board the ship on Monday. I'm fed up with you, George!"

"Hush!"

The drunken man had raised his voice, heedless of hearers, and the captain glanced round anxiously. But the palms hid the boy detective, and Drake made no sound or movement.

Sir Randal did not heed the injunction. His voice was still raised as he went on.

"Go to Lagos by yourself, if you want to go! It was your idea—I fell in with it to please you. I never liked it. Let me have a last flutter this evenin', or I'm done with you for good!"

St. Leger set his teeth.

Drake understood how matters were standing now. The gull had become the rook, in a sense. Now that his own resources were dried up, the baronet was sponging upon the man who had rooked him, and St. Leger could not refuse him money, without danger of a quarrel which would ruin all his plans. And it was pretty clear that the captain's financial resources were limited. Probably it was "easy come and easy go" with him, and he had little left of the thousands he had made out of his victim.

The baronet's glass clinked again, as he set it down on the table with an unsteady hand. He stared at the captain.

"Fifty of the best!" he muttered thickly. "That—or you go your way and I'll go mine, George St. Leger!"

There was a pause before the captain replied. Drake, through the slit in the palm-leaves, saw his face, and was startled by the change that came over it. It was a sullen, dogged, desperate look; but it passed in a flash, and the adventurer turned a smiling countenance to his "pal."

"Of course, I'll do anythin' you like, Randal," he said softly. "Money's nothing between pals like you and me. But I haven't got the tin about me. There's a man I can get it from in the next room. Wait here, and have a drink while I'm gone."

"That's old George again!" said Shandon affectionately. "I knew you wouldn't desert a pal down on his luck."

"Have a cigar, Randal? I'll be back by the time you've finished it."

"Right-ho!"

The baronet, with a shaking hand, proceeded to light the cigar. Captain St. Leger rose, and his hand hovered over the baronet's glass for a moment. In that moment a tiny white pellet dropped into the glass and dissolved in the lees of the spirit remaining there. Jack Drake could hardly believe his eyes for a moment.

"Back in a few minutes!" said the captain lightly.

He walked away, without coming round the palms, stopped at the bar for a drink, and then passed into the gaming-room and disappeared. Jack Drake sat motionless.

In the Shadow of Death.

It was a full minute before Drake moved. He was overcome with horror at what he had seen. Sir Randal Shandon was leaning back in his seat, smoking. Evidently he had not the remotest suspicion that his glass had been tampered with. But as soon as he refilled it—as he was certain to do before long—he would drink, with the whisky, the potion Captain St. Leger had dropped into the glass. What was it? Poison.

That dreadful word forced itself into Drake's startled mind. If the baronet had made a move to fill the glass, Drake would have interposed; but the hapless young man was satisfied with smoking for the present, and there was no immediate danger. Drake looked around. He wanted to see Ferrers Locke, to tell him, to take counsel with him. As if in answer to his thought, the figure of the Semitic stockbroker strolled in from the gaming-room, and stopped at the bar. Never had the boy detective been so glad to see his chief.

He rose quietly, and caught Locke's eye. The Baker Street detective joined him.

"Captain St. Leger?" breathed Drake.
 "He has just left," said Locke, in low tones. "Apparently he has gone away alone, and left Shandon here."
 "Shandon is over in that corner, behind the palms. But—but, listen—"

In hurried whispers, Drake told what he had seen. Locke's face set grimly as he listened.

"I—I think, I—I hope, he may have—have given him a harmless drug, to keep him out of mischief," muttered Drake. "But—but—"

"It is unlikely enough!" Locke shrugged his shoulders. "Sir Randal has forced his hand. The young fool has the upper hand of him now. It is St. Leger who has to pay for him to go the pace, and he cannot afford it. Yet he dares not refuse and part with him. He has taken a surer method, though a riskier one, than a voyage to Lagos—if we do not interfere."

Drake shuddered.
 "He may drink at any moment, sir!"
 "I shall see that he does not."
 Ferrers Locke approached the palms, and glanced at the young man in the corner seat.
 Sir Randal Shandon was still smoking. His vacant eyes stared dully before him.
 He threw away the half-smoked cigar at last, and stretched out his hand to the bottle.
 "One more drink, and then—" Locke heard him mutter aloud. "Why the dooce doesn't George come back? Hang him! I'm done with him, if he doesn't play the game with me. Hang him!"

The bottle clinked on the glass.
 There was no time to be lost. The thought had been in Ferrers Locke's mind of securing the glass, and analysing the contents. It would have been the proof that was so sorely needed against the hard-faced adventurer who was prepared to incur the guilt of blood for the sake of gain. But that was out of the question now. Sir Randal was raising the glass to his lips, and the Baker Street detective had only time to save him.

He strode towards the table, and struck the glass from the young man's hand.

Crash!
 Sir Randal Shandon started to his feet, with a drunken oath, as the glass smashed on the polished floor.

"C-c-confound you, sir!" he stammered. "What the dooce—confound your dashed impudence!"

He lurched, and caught at the table for support. A waiter came running up.

"Gentlemen!"
 Ferrers Locke turned away without a word, leaving the waiter trying to pacify the excited baronet. Locke had saved the

(Continued on page 22.)

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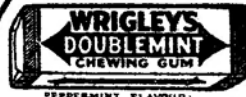
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A LIFE FOR A FORTUNE!

(Continued from page 19.)

wretched young man's life—he knew that—and he did not want to be concerned in a "row" at the night club.

He signed to Drake, and they quitted the room together, Sir Randal's angry voice still audible behind them.

In the gaming-room, Locke glanced round, but Captain St. Leger was not to be seen. The detective's lip curled. The intended assassin had taken care to be well off the scene when the tragedy should come. He had gone, without the slightest doubt in his mind that Sir Randal Shandon would swallow the fatal dose in his absence, and would be found dead in the corner seat, as certainly would have happened but for the intervention of the Baker Street detective.

"We have nothing further to do here," Locke muttered in Drake's ear. "Let us go. I am glad I brought you with me to-night, my boy. Our case would have had a sudden and tragic ending otherwise."

They walked away, in the direction of the lights of Oxford Street, in silence.

It was not till they had picked up a taxi, and were gliding home to Baker Street, that Drake ventured to speak.

"What will you do, sir? That villain has failed to-night. Will he not try again?"

"We can do nothing, Drake," said Locke tranquilly. "But I think that Shandon is not in danger of another attempt such as took place at the Iris. He is pretty certain to tell St. Leger of the stranger who knocked the glass out of his hand as he was about to drink, and St. Leger, who will be sufficiently surprised to see him alive, will certainly smell danger. He will not abandon his scheme, but I think he will be very careful indeed to avoid anything like the use of poison. He will know that someone knows. He cannot guess whom, but he cannot fail to know that someone knew what was in the glass and struck it from Shandon's hand to save his life. Shandon will not guess, but St. Leger will know. He will not try that game again. It was risky at the best—ten times more risky now."

Drake drew a breath of relief. It seemed to him that the Baker Street detective's reasoning was sound, for it was certain that the captain would be alarmed when he knew that his desperate deed had failed, and when he learned how it had failed.

He would not—and could not—suspect that Ferrers Locke was concerned in the affair. But he would know that someone knew, and the fact that he could make no guess at the identity of that "someone" would alarm him still more, and place him more warily upon his guard.

"What the gallant captain will think is rather an interesting question," Ferrers Locke resumed. "He may suspect the hand of the insurance company in the matter. He probably knows that they have their suspicions."

"You think he knows that, sir?"

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

ANSWERS

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"Our friend Mr. Fleet is a sharp man," he said, "but I do not think that he has made so many inquiries without Captain St. Leger learning that something is in the wind. He knows, or guesses, that he is suspected. Hence the plan of the voyage to Lagos, which will carry him far out of the ken of the London police. But for that, I think there would have been some repetition of the shooting accident in Scotland. This night's attempt was a desperate one, and full of risk. Evidently, the rascal feels himself driven to desperation by his victim, who has turned upon him."

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly.

"It is a new character for the gallant captain to assume—that of a guardian angel, keeping his young friend from reckless and riotous living," he said. "The explanation is, that it is now the captain's money that is being flung to the winds. And when he attempts to control the reckless waster, he risks a break with him—even the loss of the life-insurance policy, and certainly the loss of the opportunity for carrying out his dastardly scheme to its conclusion. Captain St. Leger's life for the next few days will not be a happy one, but I feel certain that he will make no further attempt on Shandon's life until they are out of England. He will know that the risk is too great."

"I think you are right, sir," said Drake slowly. "But what will he do?"

Locke smiled again.

"He will give the young man more rope, I fancy, keeping in with him at any cost. He will pay the piper while Sir Randal paints the West End red—a reversal of rôles, and much less than his deserts. But once on board the Pelican the game will begin again, and certainly he could not have an easier victim. Sir Randal will walk blindly into the death-trap, and only the interest of the Wide World Insurance Company in his continued existence will save him—if it does save him."

And Locke was silent.

Jack Drake felt fairly assured that the Baker Street detective's view was correct, and there was proof of it on Monday morning. In the afternoon the tramp steamer Pelican was to drop down the river with the tide, and in the morning Jack Drake, watching from the dock, saw Captain St. Leger and Sir Randal Shandon go on board together. Their baggage was taken on the steamer.

The baronet looked white and seedy. Evidently his final "plunges" in the night life of London had told upon him. He cursed the man who carried his bags on board, and ragged his companion as they went below. Captain St. Leger answering not a word to his tirade. If ever there was a man whose life was not worth saving, it was Sir Randal Shandon. But it was the duty of Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant to save it, and that duty was to carry them into strange places.

The next act in the strange drama of crime was to be played out on the high seas.

THE END.

The further adventures of Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant will be told in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald."

RESULT OF FOOTBALL COMPETITION No. 6.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures, and the FIRST PRIZE OF £5 has been awarded as follows:

Miss W. Mulcaster,
35, Southram Road, Dunchurch, Warwick.

The THREE PRIZES OF A TUCK HAMPER EACH have been awarded to the following competitors, who each sent in a solution containing one error:

H. McElvennie, 27, Nottingham Street, Canton, Cardiff.
Mrs. E. Jones, 486, Higginshaw Lane, Oldham.
Miss Lily Bachelor, 19, Kettering Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.

Seventeen competitors each sent in a solution containing two errors, and the EIGHT PRIZES OF 5s. EACH have been divided among them:

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