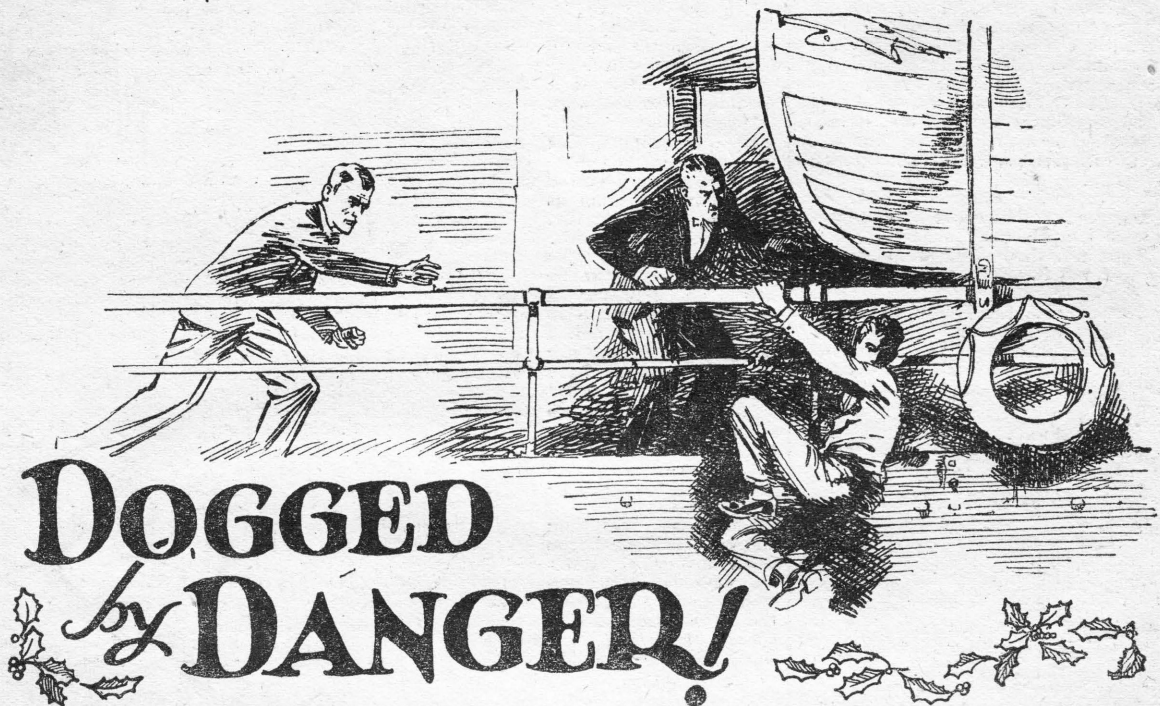


FERRERS LOCKE ABROAD! Across two mighty oceans and a continent journeys Ferrers Locke in a hazardous search for a missing heir to a great fortune. And at every step grave perils beset his path!



DOGGED by DANGER!

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE STORY OF FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE, AND HIS ASSISTANT, JACK DRAKE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Strange Interview!

"MR. VERNON PULTENEY!"
Jack Drake's voice was quiet, as usual, but there was just a trace of excitement in his face as he showed the visitor into Ferrers Locke's consulting-room in Baker Street.

Ferrers Locke was seated in his arm-chair, and his keen, clear eyes were fixed on Vernon Pulteney as he entered the room.

But the famous detective did not rise.

Generally the most courteous of men, Ferrers Locke evidently had no politeness to waste upon Mr. Vernon Pulteney.

The young man came across the room towards him, his dark eyes meeting those of the detective.

He seemed about to extend a hand to Ferrers Locke, but it was so clear that the Baker Street detective did not intend to shake hands with him that Pulteney let the half-raised hand fall to his side again. A faint flush glimmered in his rather sallow cheeks for a moment.

He stood slightly at a loss, and Locke's eyes remained on him, cool and penetrating.

Pulteney was a young man, not over thirty-five, with rather handsome features, though his nose was too aquiline, his brows too dark and heavy, and his sharp eyes too close together. He was elegantly dressed, his clothes of the most fashionable cut, his linen of the finest. He was in black, but there was a glitter of diamond studs and cuff-links scarcely in keeping with mourning garb. In spite of his expensive clothes and his careful bearing, there was about him an air of suppressed black-guardism, the air of a man whose life was reckless, and evil, and self-in-

dulgent, though at present he was constrained to a manner of serious gravity.

Ferrers Locke waved his hand to a chair.

"Will you sit down, Mr. Pulteney?" he asked.

Vernon Pulteney sat down.

"Possibly you know why I have called to see you, Mr. Locke," he said.

The detective nodded.

"I am quite aware of it," he answered. "Your cousin, Sir Henry Pulteney, is dead, and you have unexpectedly found that you are not the heir to Friardale Court and the Pulteney thirty thousand a year. A very disconcerting discovery indeed, considering the measures you have taken, Mr. Pulteney."

The young man's eyes gleamed.

"I fail to follow you, Mr. Locke. What measures do you allude to?"

"You would like me to explain?"

"I insist upon your explaining!" exclaimed Vernon Pulteney angrily.

"I will do so," said Ferrers Locke grimly. "Four holders of the Pulteney title and estates met with violent deaths in the course of the last three years, and Mr. Henry Pulteney, an elderly gentleman who had never expected to succeed, inherited the baronetcy, and the fortune that went with it. Sir Henry was found dead at the foot of a cliff in his own woods at Friardale, a couple of weeks ago. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of accidental death. As I was visiting Friardale at the time, on business of Sir Henry's, I joined in the search for the unfortunate gentleman, and, in fact, found the body. I attended the inquest. I stated my suspicions of foul play at the inquest."

"A very extraordinary suspicion," said Vernon Pulteney. "I was abroad at the time, but I have read the report

of the inquest. Your statement was, so far as I can see, utterly groundless, though it is true my unfortunate cousin was on bad terms with a gang of poachers in the neighbourhood—"

"My suspicions did not fall upon the poachers," said Ferrers Locke. "The coroner and the jury took the view that Sir Henry had fallen over the cliff while walking there in the evening; the local police, who looked into the matter, took the same view. I had no choice but to admit that there was no evidence to the contrary; but it was my duty to state the suspicion I felt, and I did so. However, a verdict of accidental death was returned."

"The only verdict that could possibly be returned, in the circumstances, I imagine," said Vernon Pulteney.

"I do not dispute it."

"Upon what, then, was your suspicion founded, might I ask?"

"I will tell you, sir," said Ferrers Locke. "Sir Henry was the fifth holder of the Pulteney title and estates to die a violent death, which was attributed to accident. So remarkable a series of accidents, Mr. Pulteney, is too much out of the common to satisfy me. Five mysterious deaths brought you, sir, next to the inheritance."

Vernon Pulteney drew a deep breath.

"You do not mean to insinuate—you do not dare—" he exclaimed.

"I insinuate nothing," said Ferrers Locke coldly. "Sir Henry Pulteney was my client; I knew that he was in danger of assassination, and did my best to save him, but he would not be warned. He is dead, and I intend to bring his murderer to justice."

"You persist, then, that he was murdered, in spite of the verdict of the coroner's jury?"

"Undoubtedly!"

"Am I to understand, Mr. Locke, that

THE POPULAR.—No. 465.

you are so absurd as to allow your suspicions to fall upon me?"

The Baker Street detective shrugged his shoulders.

"You may understand anything you please, Mr. Pulteney," he answered.

"You may be aware, sir, that I was abroad at the time of the late baronet's unfortunate death. I was apprised of the news while I was staying at Monte Carlo. A hundred witnesses could prove that I was dining at the Hotel Riviera, at Monte Carlo, in the very hour when Sir Henry met his death in his park at Friardale."

"I am quite aware of that, Mr. Pulteney. No alibi could be more complete and satisfactory."

"Does not this, then, disabuse your mind of the fearful suspicion you have alluded to?"

"Not at all. Sir Henry was hurled from the cliff by a murderous hand," said Ferrers Locke. "Of that I am assured. The wretch who did the deed was employed by another, who had already failed to effect his purpose by his own hand."

"You talk in riddles, Mr. Locke."

Locke made a gesture towards Jack Drake.

"Have you seen this boy before, Mr. Pulteney?"

Pulteney glanced at the famous detective's assistant.

He started a little as his eyes rested on Drake's handsome, boyish face. But he shook his head.

"I do not remember to have seen the lad," he answered. "Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because, a few weeks before Sir Henry's death, this lad was on a holiday at Friardale," said Locke. "He saved Sir Henry's life on that occasion by intervening when a man was taking aim at him in the woods. The man he saw with a gun was a man of your age, Mr. Pulteney, with thick, dark brows and an aquiline nose."

"What nonsense!" said Vernon Pulteney. "Does the boy claim to recognize me?"

"Speak up, Drake," said Ferrers Locke quietly.

Jack Drake fixed his eyes on the young man.

"Yes," he said; "I believe you are the same man, Mr. Pulteney. I should not care to swear to it in a court of law, because I saw you only for a moment or two. But I am practically certain on the point. You are the man who was firing at Sir Henry Pulteney in the Friardale Woods when I threw my stick and stopped you."

"And you believe this balderdash, Mr. Locke?" asked Vernon Pulteney, turning contemptuously from Drake, though there was a pallor in his face now.

"I believe it," said Locke.

Pulteney smiled ironically.

"Then why do you not make a charge against me?" he asked.

"Because there is no proof to offer," said Ferrers Locke. "Sir Henry himself refused to believe in his danger; he was positive that the man who sought to shoot him was a poacher. He refused to take the precautions I urged upon him, and he suffered for it. He believed it impossible that a man of the Pulteney blood could be guilty of a series of fearful crimes for the sake of gain. My assistant saw you in the woods, but his evidence would not be enough to convict you, Mr. Pulteney, even of the attempted murder, while the actual crime a few weeks later was committed after you had carefully established a very complete alibi."

Vernon Pulteney set his teeth.

"You accuse me——" he began.

THE POPULAR.—No. 465.

"I do not accuse you," said Ferrers Locke. "You ask me to explain, and I have explained. That is all."

"If you care to repeat what you have said, Mr. Locke, in public, and in the presence of witnesses, I should know what action to take."

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"I am as well posted in the law of libel as you are yourself, Mr. Pulteney," he answered.

"A spade must not be called a spade unless proof can be given. I am not in a position at present to give proof. I shall, therefore, say nothing—until I have the proofs."

"Which you hope to obtain?" sneered Pulteney.

"Which I hope to obtain," assented Ferrers Locke calmly.

There was a long silence. Ferrers Locke filled his pipe, slowly and methodically, and lighted it, waiting quietly for his visitor to speak.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

War to the Knife!

VERNON PULTENEY sat silent for some minutes. He was evidently at a loss, and greatly taken back by his strange reception in the Baker Street consulting-room.

He broke the silence at last.

"You have surprised me very much, Mr. Locke," he said.

"No doubt."

"It seems that you warned my late relative against me?"

"That was my duty, and I did it."

Vernon Pulteney gave a shrug.

"I suppose it is useless for me to assure you——" he began.

"Quite useless."

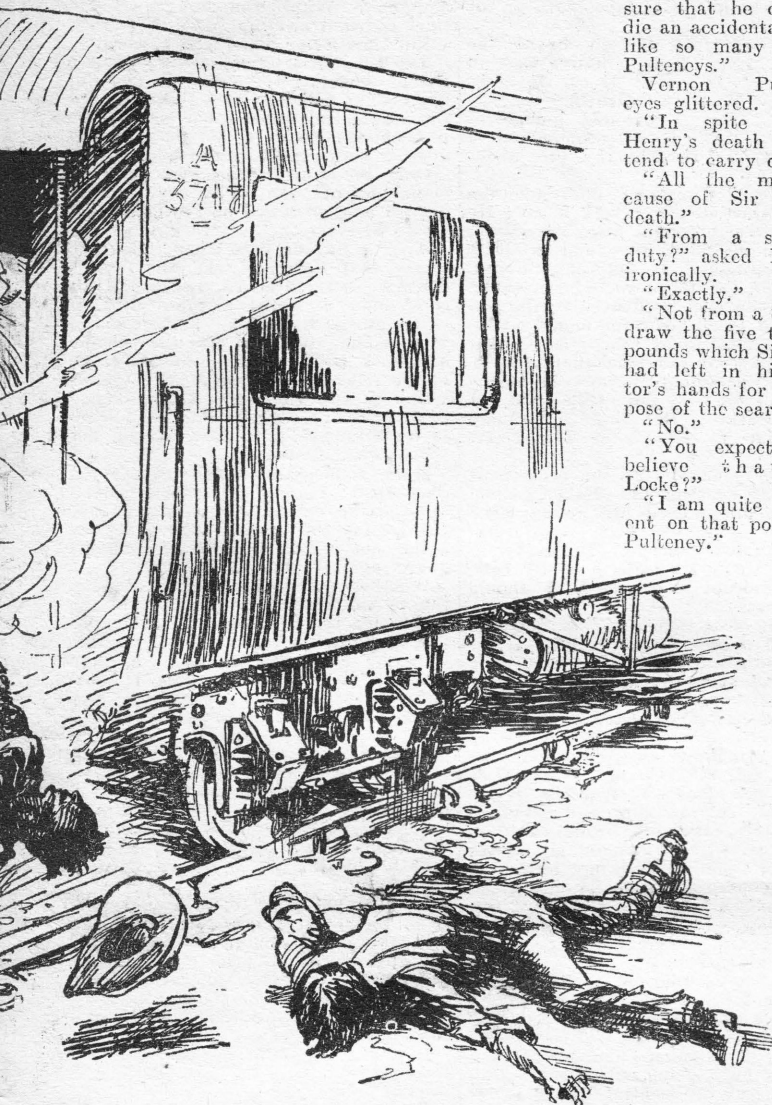
"I will not attempt an impossible task, then, Mr. Locke," said the young man coolly. "You are making me out to be a sort of Borgia and Machiavelli rolled into one—quite a unique specimen in the records of crime. You are welcome to your opinion, so long as you keep it to yourself. If you venture to utter it in public I shall take the necessary legal measures to make you pay dearly for it."

"Have you anything else to say to me?" asked Ferrers Locke calmly.

"I have. I came here with a special object, and we have been wasting time," said Vernon Pulteney. "In spite of your very extraordinary opinion of me, Mr. Locke, it is necessary for me to speak of the business which brought me here. As you are well aware, I was supposed to be the heir of the Pulteney estates and title. According to all expectation I should now be Sir Vernon Pulteney, master of Friardale Court. But the late baronet's will revealed a very unexpected state of affairs. It appears that his son, who was supposed to be dead many years

ago, may still be living, and in that case he is the heir."
"Exactly."
"As the fellow has not been heard of for so long it is a moot point whether he may not be presumed to be dead," continued Pulteney. "But I am advised by the family solicitors that there may be difficulties in the way. From Sir Henry's papers, which I have examined, I learn that his son was known to be alive, ten years ago, in a Pacific island near Honolulu, called Lai-Lai. He was a beachcomber, and known as Toffy Jack. Sir Henry, shortly before his death, retained your services to search for this wastrel and find him."
"That is correct."
"He has left instructions that you are to be supplied with money for the search, from the estate, up to the sum of five thousand pounds," said Vernon Pulteney, his eyes glittering. "You are, of course, aware of this, Mr. Locke?"
"Sir Henry was very explicit," assented the Baker Street detective.
"This is naturally a great surprise to me," went on Vernon Pulteney. "It seems that I have a cousin, or second cousin, who is now Sir Walter Pulteney, if he is living, and that you are engaged to search for him, and inform him of his good fortune, and that my





money is to pay the expenses of the search?"

"His own money," corrected the detective.

"It is not his own money if it turns out that he is dead."

"The late Sir Henry's money in that case. The baronet had a right to leave his own money for any purpose he pleased."

Pulteney bit his lip.

"The money, at least, that I expected to be mine," he said. "Having learned all this from Sir Henry's memoranda, Mr. Locke, I decided that I had better see you at once, and so made my appointment with you this morning. I certainly did not expect to be greeted here with hostility."

"You have come across more than one unexpected incident of late, Mr. Pulteney," said the Baker Street detective. "It proves the truth of the saying that the best laid schemes of mice and men oft gang a-gley, does it not?"

"I'm not here to bandy proverbs with you, Mr. Locke. I want to come to some arrangement. I have to ask you your intentions."

"I have no desire to conceal them," answered Ferrers Locke. "I am intending to carry out my duty towards my client, now dead. I am going to find Sir Walter Pulteney, if he is still alive, and I am going to make quite

sure that he does not die an accidental death, like so many of the Pulteneys."

Vernon Pulteney's eyes glittered.

"In spite of Sir Henry's death you intend to carry on?"

"All the more because of Sir Henry's death."

"From a sense of duty?" asked Pulteney ironically.

"Exactly."

"Not from a desire to draw the five thousand pounds which Sir Henry had left in his solicitor's hands for the purpose of the search?"

"No."

"You expect me to believe that, Mr. Locke?"

"I am quite indifferent on that point, Mr. Pulteney."

and brought home to England to dispute my inheritance. Five thousand pounds is a large sum, Mr. Locke—but ten thousand pounds is larger. Do you catch my meaning?"

"Perfectly!" said Ferrers Locke. "If I undertake the search and make it a point to fail, you will pay me ten thousand pounds for acting like a scoundrel."

"That is not how I should have put it."

"That is your meaning, I take it?"

"Let us be plain," said Pulteney impatiently. "If the drunken rotter still lives he knows nothing of his inheritance—he does not even know that his father ever became a baronet. He is probably satisfied with his life as a loafer on the beach at Lai-Lai. Leave him alone, and leave me alone, and it is worth ten thousand pounds to you. I think that that is a generous offer."

Ferrers Locke rose to his feet. He touched a bell, Pulteney watching him with angry impatience.

Sing-Sing, the Chinese servant, entered.

"Missa Locke ling?" he asked.

"Yes, Sing-Sing. Show this gentleman out at once."

"Yes, Missa Locke."

Vernon Pulteney ground his teeth.

"Then it's war between us, Ferrers Locke?"

"It is war!" said the Baker Street detective quietly. "Good-morning, Mr. Vernon Pulteney!"

Vernon Pulteney took up his hat and stick. His grip closed on the latter as if it were in his mind to slash the Baker Street detective across the face with it.

Ferrers Locke smiled slightly.

"It is war, Mr. Pulteney," he said. "But go in peace! I recommend you to keep your temper until you are outside this house."

"You hound!" said Vernon Pulteney thickly. "You paid spy and rascal, you dare to—"

"You had better go!" said Ferrers Locke quietly.

"Take that—before I go!"

Vernon Pulteney's rage overcame him, and he swept the stick and made a savage slash at the cool, contemptuous face before him.

But the blow never reached its mark. Ferrers Locke was on his guard.

Before Vernon Pulteney knew what was happening, his uplifted arm was gripped and forced back with a power that wrung a cry of pain from his lips. A moment more and he was swept from his feet in the grasp of the detective.

"You will open the door, Sing-Sing," said Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, Missa Locke," grinned the Chinaman.

"Release me!" roared Vernon Pulteney, struggling in vain in the grip of the Baker Street detective. "By heavens—"

Locke made no answer.

He strode through the hall, with the rascal struggling savagely, furiously in his grasp; and in a moment more Vernon Pulteney was rolling down the steps into Baker Street.

His hat and stick were tossed after him by the grinning Sing-Sing.

Vernon Pulteney struggled dazedly to his feet.

He shook a furious fist at Ferrers Locke—calm, unmoved, framed in the doorway. Then, jamming his hat on his head, he strode savagely away.

Ferrers Locke returned to the consulting-room. He smiled slightly as he met Jack Drake's glance.

"It is war now, Drake," he said. "You will finish your packing to-day; we start to-morrow!"

"For Honolulu?" said Drake.

THE POPULAR.—No. 465.

There was a pause.

"We must come to an understanding, Mr. Locke," said the young man at last. "May I ask you to dismiss your boy while we talk the matter over?"

"My assistant is fully in my confidence, and I prefer him to remain."

"The matter is delicate, sir."

"You can have nothing to say to me that my assistant may not hear," answered Ferrers Locke, unmoved.

Pulteney was silent again.

"Let us understand one another, Mr. Locke," he exclaimed at length. "If Walter Pulteney still lives he is undoubtedly a degraded wretch, probably in the last stages of drunkenness."

"It is possible."

"Such a character is not fit to assume a title and become a master of a great estate and one of the largest fortunes in England."

"That is not my business or yours," said Ferrers Locke. "I may say that drunken wastrel as Walter Pulteney may be, he is better than a man whose hands are stained with crime."

"That again!" exclaimed Pulteney angrily. "I repeat, let us understand one another. You stand to handle five thousand pounds in this matter, and I fully expect that you will run up the expenses to precisely that figure. But it does not suit me that a wastrel should be discovered in the ends of the earth

"For Honolulu," assented Locke. "And before we reach the isles of the Pacific I fancy we shall see our friend Vernon Pulteney again. It is war now—war to the knife!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Across the Atlantic!

AMONG the numerous passengers on the Ruritania, Liverpool to New York, were Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

Ferrers Locke glanced back with a curious expression when the great liner quitted the Mersey.

"Well, we are off, my boy!" he remarked.

"And we're off first, I should think, sir," said Drake. "If Vernon Pulteney is going to Honolulu—"

"There is not much doubt on that point, Drake. He knows that I am going to search for Sir Walter Pulteney; and he is pretty certain to work against me. Neither of us know, so far, whether the new baronet is living or dead. If he is dead, Vernon Pulteney wants to know the facts at the earliest possible moment. If he is living—"

Ferrers Locke paused, with a grim expression on his clear-cut face.

Drake shivered a little.

"After what the man has done already he will not hesitate at another crime, sir," the boy detective remarked.

"Not likely! If he can get ahead of us in the search he will take care, if he can, that I do not find Walter Pulteney living," said Locke.

"But we are ahead, sir."

"I am not so sure."

"We had all arrangements made for starting," said Drake. "And Vernon Pulteney never even knew of Walter Pulteney's existence until he read the papers left by Sir Henry."

"But he will not lose a moment, Drake, I am sure that he laid his plans to visit the islands and search for the missing beachcomber within an hour after leaving Baker Street." Locke smiled. "We are taking the most direct route, and he will do the same. I should not be surprised if he were on board the same vessel."

Jack Drake started.

"On board the Ruritania!" he exclaimed.

"It is quite probable," said Locke. "I shall consult the passenger-list and make sure."

"Might he not travel under an assumed name?"

"That would be difficult, as he would need a passport in an assumed name for the purpose, and that is not easy to obtain at a moment's notice. I think he will travel at least as far as New York in his own name," said Ferrers Locke.

"He has nothing to lose by doing so."

"If he admits that he is going in search of a relative—"

"Why should he not admit it? If he were an honourable man he might search for Walter Pulteney with the best motives—to acquaint him with his good fortune."

Ferrers Locke went below, and in a short time he was scanning the list of passengers.

Among the names of the first-class list were:

Mr. Vernon Pulteney.

Monsieur Henri Pourpoint.

The two shared a state-room with two berths, and were evidently travelling companions.

Drake and Locke saw them at dinner.

Across the brightly-lit table Vernon Pulteney glanced at Ferrers Locke and

his companion, but gave no sign of recognition.

They were foes, but on board the Atlantic liner their enmity was in abeyance. It was a truce, at least, until New York was reached.

Locke, after a careless glance at Pulteney, studied his companion—a dark-skinned Frenchman of about thirty.

M. Henri Pourpoint interested the Baker Street detective very much. He was a powerfully-built man, very dark, with shining black eyes, and a little black moustache. In spite of an expensive outfit, he looked what he certainly was—a man who lived by his wits, and had lived by his wits for many years.

Drake, looking at him, guessed that he was one of the blackguardly associates with whom Vernon Pulteney had spent his wild and reckless days at Monte Carlo. But there was more than that in the mind of Ferrers Locke.

As they sauntered on the promenade deck that evening the Baker Street detective enlightened his young comrade.

"You noted Pourpoint, Drake?"

"Yes, sir. He looks a pretty complete kind of blackguard, I should say," answered Drake.

"He is more than that," said Locke.

"I have seen the man before. He is well known to the Paris police as a racecourse swindler, and a dangerous character generally. He was more than suspected of having had a hand in the hold-up on the Paris-Mediterranean express. In Paris, among his comrades the apaches, he is known as Henri le Noir—Black Henri. And he is on terms of comradeship with Vernon Pulteney." Locke's brows knitted. "He was with Pulteney at Monte Carlo for some days as my informant there reported. Was it by his hand, then, that Sir Henry Pulteney was struck down—hurled to his death over the cliff?"

Drake started.

"Whoever carried out that dastardly deed for Vernon Pulteney was a man of such a character, and deep in his confidence," said Locke. "Black Henri is likely as another—likelier, in fact. And now he is going with Vernon Pulteney to seek the rightful heir of Friardale Court. There is little doubt as to their intentions, if they find him before we do."

"It will be a race for life or death," said Drake.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"And more than that, Drake. We shall need to be on our guard even on board this liner. Black Henri, at least, is a man who will stick at nothing. Evidently he stands to share the plunder if Vernon Pulteney succeeds to the baronetcy. We are dangerous to them, Drake, and if we are caught napping we shall not return to Baker Street alive. You have your revolver?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will not hesitate to use it, my boy, if occasion should arise. We are dealing with desperate men," said Ferrers Locke.

"I understand, sir," said Drake quietly.

Locke glanced down at Drake's face. He read nothing there but quiet resolution. There was no fear in the boy detective's heart, though he realised clearly enough that danger dogged every step now till the long and adventurous journey half-way round the world, was over.

Every day, as the Ruritania steamed westward over the ocean, Ferrers Locke came in contact with Pulteney and his

companion. Within the confines of the liner constant meetings were inevitable. But they never exchanged a word.

The familiarity that grew up among the passengers after a day or two did not extend to Locke and Pulteney. In the saloon or smoke-room or on the promenade deck they passed one another with expressionless faces.

Only occasionally the eyes of the claimant of the Pulteney estates burned as they rested on the man from Baker Street.

After a day or two, when it became known that Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, was on board, Locke and his companion attracted a great deal of notice on the Ruritania. Ferrers Locke was, in fact, the "lion" of the voyage, and Jack Drake came in for his share of the reflected limelight.

One or two curious passengers tried to draw the detective out on the subject of his business in the New World, but without much success.

It was a pleasant enough voyage, and Jack Drake enjoyed it immensely, and enjoyed the varied entertainments that wiled away the time, though never for a moment did he fail to keep on his guard against possible danger.

Whether Vernon Pulteney was scheming to rid himself of his rival in the search for the beachcomber baronet or not, he did not seem to think it possible to make any attempt while on the crowded liner. It was not till the Ruritania was only two days from New York that Drake had positive proof that the danger he was guarding against was very real. He was leaning on the rail in the moonlight, looking over the silver sea in the shadow of a boat swung inboard, when he felt a sudden jostle behind him. Instinctively his hands closed on the rail, and he held on for his life as he was pitched bodily over.

He had not quite been caught napping, though very nearly, for his hold was strong and secure, and he did not fall overboard. As he clung to the rail there was a quick step on the deck, and the sound of a blow and a fall.

Then Ferrers Locke's face looked over the rail.

In a moment he had grasped his boy assistant and dragged him back into safety.

Drake reeled against the rail, breathless, with an ache in his arms, rather dizzy from his narrow escape. A few yards away a man was rising to a sitting posture, his hand to his nose, which was streaming with blood. It was Pourpoint, alias Black Henri.

"You—you saw him, sir?" panted Drake.

Ferrers Locke nodded quietly.

"I saw him, Drake. For a moment I thought you were gone." He turned to Black Henri with a blaze in his eyes. "You dog! If you had succeeded you would have hanged for it. As it is, go!"

The Frenchman staggered to his feet. He had been dazed by the blow Ferrers Locke had dealt him, and he stood unsteadily.

"It was an accident," he muttered thickly. "A roll of the ship flung me against the boy—"

"You lie!" said Ferrers Locke coolly. "It was no accident—any more than the fall of Sir Henry Pulteney from the cliff in Friardale Woods was an accident."

Black Henri started violently. "Sir Henry Pulteney! What do I know of him?" he panted.

"More than you would care to tell the police, I think."

The Frenchman stared at Ferrers Locke with startled eyes, in which there

was a gleam of terror. He turned and slunk away without another word.

"You have had a narrow escape, Drake," said the Baker Street detective gravely. "If I had not been near at hand—though that scoundrel did not know it—you would not have been alive at the present moment. You must be more on your guard, my boy."

Drake hung his head a little.

"I will be more careful, sir."

"You are not hurt?"

"No, sir; only a little strain on my arm. But are you going to say nothing of this to the captain—"

"No," said Locke. "Nothing has come of it, and Pourpoint would declare that an accident threw him against you. Our time will come, Drake."

In the saloon the next day Drake smiled a little as he caught sight of Pourpoint. The Frenchman's nose was red and swollen, and he gave Drake a black and savage scowl. But he had had his lesson, and there was no further incident before the passengers of the Ruritania sighted the statue of Liberty at New York.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A "Hold-up" on the Railroad!

"WESTWARD, ho!" Ferrers Locke said, with a smile.

The famous detective and his boy assistant were on the Overland express, speeding westward for Chicago.

To Drake it was a novel experience, and, in spite of the serious nature of the business in hand, he enjoyed the change and excitement greatly. He was never tired of strolling along the great train that ran, without ceasing, to the west day after day, crossing the great continent.

In New York Ferrers Locke had lost sight of Vernon Pulteney and his comrade.

That they were speeding westward was certain, but they were not on the same train as the Baker Street detective.

"We've left them behind, sir," said Drake, when they were out of Chicago and the express was rolling on through the middle west.

"It is possible," said Ferrers Locke. "They will lose no time; but certainly we took the first available train, and they were not on board. But I do not expect to reach San Francisco without trouble, Drake."

"But if we are ahead—"

"The telegraph travels faster than the train," said Ferrers Locke. "Black Henri has friends in the States, and we know already what our rivals in this quest are capable of."

"But on the train, what can happen?" asked Drake. "You have crossed the American continent before, sir—"

"More than once, my boy. And a good many things may happen on American railways that are not likely to happen at home," said Ferrers Locke. "I have been through a hold-up on the Trans-continental express on one occasion. Train-robbers are very far from unknown in the Western States, Drake, and when we are farther west we shall require to keep our eyes very wide open."

"Train-robbers?" repeated Drake, his eyes glistening.

Locke smiled at his expression.

"You are thinking of the adventure, Drake; but it may be a very perilous adventure for us. As soon as we are in Nevada, I shall scarcely close my eyes at night."

"You think the train may be held up on our account, sir?"

"It is very probable. After the crimes Vernon Pulteney has already committed or instigated to succeed to the Pulteney estates, he is not likely to hesitate at one more to secure himself. He knows, too, that if I reach Sir Walter before he does, he will have no chance at him—while I live. If he can rid himself of us on the journey to Honolulu, he is quite certain to do so, and Black Henri will be able to render him invaluable aid with his connection among the criminals of the United States. Vernon Pulteney will not hesitate to spend money like water, and there are plenty of desperate characters in the Western States to be hired for his work."

"But he cannot touch the Pulteney money, sir, till it is proved whether Sir Henry's son is living or dead."

"True; but he can certainly raise money on his expectations, as there is so great a probability of his succeeding. And that he undoubtedly has done. He will not be hindered by want of money."

"Then we're to look for trouble as soon as we enter Nevada?"

"I think so."

Jack Drake had plenty to think about as the express tore on its way to the West; and he felt a thrill at his heart when the sierras of Nevada, the great mountain barrier of California, appeared against the sky.

Strange and novel and interesting as his surroundings were, Drake was growing tired of nights and days on the rushing train, and he would have been glad to arrive at San Francisco, where the steamer was to be taken across the sunny Pacific for Honolulu. But much was to happen before the train descended the sunny slopes into the golden land of California.

It was late one afternoon, as the train was climbing a steep gradient, that the cars clattered and clanged to an unexpected stop. The conductor came hurrying along the cars, and a passenger called an inquiry to him.

"Line blocked with trees," the conductor called back.

"Jerusalem! What does that mean?"

The conductor gave a sour grin.

"I guess it means that some guy wants to stop the train," he answered. "And you can take your choice whether you hand out your shootin'-irons or your greenbacks."

And he hurried on.

Ferrers Locke gave Drake a quiet look, and drew the revolver from his inner pocket. Drake followed his example, with a thrill at his heart. The hour had come!

The passenger who had questioned the conductor leaned forward in his seat, and called to Locke:

"Say, stranger, I guess you'd better hide that shooting-iron. It won't cut any ice with the guys who are going to hold up this train, I reckon. You're from England, eh?"

"Quite so," answered Locke.

"Then you don't know the game, stranger. You put up your hands when you're told, and let them go through your duds, and you'll be all O.K. But if you start any fool shootin', you'll be shot up, and p'raps a dozen more passengers with you. Savvy?"

"Quite!" said Locke quietly. "But I have no intention of being robbed, sir, even if only robbery is intended, and if I am held up, I shall shoot!"

The American shrugged his shoulders. "I guess you're a greenhorn from Greenville," he expostulated. "Take a tip from Hiram Shucks, that knows

the ropes—that's me. Put your popgun away before it does you any harm."

Locke did not heed.

He was looking from the train with watchful eyes.

The stoppage had taken place in a lonely spot, fifty miles from the last depot, and there was no help at hand if the passengers could not help themselves.

Five men, with black cloth masks over their faces, had emerged from a screen of rocks near the line. Two of them were covering the engineer and his stoker with rifles, and the two men on the engine were holding up their hands with cheerful submission. Their view was that they were employed to run the train, not to fight train-robbers, and no doubt they were right from their own point of view. The other three "rustlers," with revolvers in their hands, were moving along the train, and from one of the cars a red-bearded man called to them—evidently a confederate of the rustlers, who had travelled by the train.

"This way, boys—next car!"

"Right!"

Ferrers Locke stepped on to the platform at the end of the car. He had three armed men to deal with, as well as the red-bearded ruffian in his calm face. The three men, as they came along the train, held their revolvers ready, and the leader shouted:

"Hands up all or board! We're not looking for your dollars. We only want to see a man! We want a galoot named Locke, and then the train can go on."

If the passengers had been thinking of resistance that shout decided them. In every car hands were held above heads.

Locke smiled grimly.

The trio of rustlers were heading for his car, indicated by the red-bearded man along the train; and the Baker Street detective did not stand on ceremony. It was a case of life or death, and quick shooting was all that stood between him and his doom.

As the trio approached the car the detective opened sudden fire.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The three reports rang out in a few seconds, and there were three fearful yells by the railway tracks. The sudden and determined resistance was evidently not what the train robbers were expecting. Two of the rustlers rolled on the track, groaning. The third lay still where he had fallen, never to move again; the bullet was in his heart.

Ferrers Locke did not even glance at them after pulling the trigger; he knew he could rely on his aim. He turned back quickly into the car. As he did so, a shot rang out, and there was a yell of alarm from the passengers.

The red-bearded man had come tramping into the car, revolver in hand, to aid his comrades in the attack on the detectives; and Jack Drake had met him with a bullet as he entered.

The bullet struck the ruffian in the knee, and he fell heavily, yelling with pain.

"Good for you, Drake!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke.

There was wild uproar all through the train now. Hiram Shucks jerked out an automatic pistol. A dozen other passengers showed weapons. Four of the rustlers were down, dead or disabled, and the two men who were covering the engineer with rifles turned and stared blankly along the train. In all their career as train robbers and

(Continued on page 28.)

"DOGGED BY DANGER!"

(Continued from page 17).

rustlers, they had certainly never known a hold-up dealt with in this sudden and drastic style.

As a rule, the passengers were like sheep under the muzzles of threatening revolvers. But the man from Baker Street was made of sterner stuff.

The two men with rifles came racing along the train, and they were met with a blaze of revolver fire from six or seven cars. Ferrers Locke's example had been enough, and the whole crowd from end to end of the great express were in a fighting mood. It only needed a determined leader—as on all such occasions, but the leader generally is not forthcoming. On this occasion he had been forthcoming promptly, with disastrous results to the rustlers of the sierras.

The two riflemen were fairly riddled with bullets as they ran up, firing at random. They rolled over on the railway track, kicked, and lay still, and did not stir again.

There was a shout of triumph along the line of cars. The train conductor gave Ferrers Locke a thump on the shoulder.

"Bully for you, John Bull!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "I guess this hold-up is a frost. Three dead and three for chokes! Oh, bully for you!"

Ferrers Locke smiled, and carefully reloaded his revolver.

A dozen passengers alighted to help clear the track. The three wounded rustlers were taken on the train to be conveyed to gaol at the next stop, the three dead men remained where they had fallen. When the track was cleared the express rushed on again, clanking and clattering, and with the passengers in a buzz of excited discussion over the hold-up. Ferrers Locke was overwhelmed with congratulations, and a half a hundred admiring passengers agreed that he was "some shooter." As soon as he could get away from the crowd, Locke went along the train to a baggage-car, where the three

wounded rustlers had been placed. They lay groaning on the floor, and muttering oaths and curses.

The Baker Street detective looked at them.

"Who put you up to this?" he asked. Savage oaths answered him.

"You will tell me, please," said the Baker Street detective placidly, and he put his revolver to the head of the red-bearded man, his eyes glittering over the barrel. "Lose no time, my man!" The ruffian weakened at once.

"I guess we got word from a pard east," he muttered. "It came through by code on the wires to Silver City."

"His name?"
"Black Henri!"
"I thought so," said Locke quietly. The ruffian groaned dismally.

IMPORTANT!

Please note Chums, that next week's issue, dated week-ending December 31st, will be on sale **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24th, 1927.**

"We was to have five thousand dollars for laying you out, darn you!" he mumbled. "Looks like it for us, don't it? Three of the gang gone to glory, and it's us for the stone jug!" And he groaned again and cursed.

Ferrers Locke returned to his car, and dropped to his seat beside Jack Drake. Drake was still looking a trifle excited.

"The hold-up has happened after all, my boy," said the detective. "It is fortunate that we were on our guard. You played up splendidly. That red-bearded rascal intended to take me from behind, and would probably have succeeded if you had not chipped in."

Drake flushed with pleasure.
"I—I'm glad he was not killed," he whispered, after a pause.

"I'm glad, for our sake," answered Locke. "But in a fair like this, one's business is to go first, and to shoot straight. There will be rather unpleasant news for Vernon Pultoney and Black Henri when they hear how the hold-up has panned out. I fancy we shall not hear from them again this side of Frisco."

Ferrers Locke was right. There was some delay in the journey, owing to the affair of the hold-up; the "laws delays" took up some time, but Ferrers Locke and Drake were soon descending the slopes of the sierras into the sunny land of California.

And the pleasant journey was made without incident—though the detective did not fail to keep on his guard night and day. Both Locke and his boy assistant were relieved when San Francisco was reached and the Golden Gate burst upon their vision.

There was little delay in San Francisco. Ferrers Locke very quickly engaged a state-room in the steamer that was leaving the next day for Honolulu, and only one night was passed in the city. That evening, Locke, to whom the city of the Pacific was familiar, took his young comrade for a stroll through Frisco, and they returned early to their hotel to bed. But in the crowds that passed and repassed in Kearney Street, Locke caught a glimpse of a face he knew. It was only a momentary glimpse, but he knew the dark skin and black eyes and moustache of Henry Pourpoint. The face vanished in the crowd and was seen no more.

But when, the next morning, Locke and Jack Drake stepped on the steamer, and glided out of the Golden Gates, they knew that their rivals in the strange quest were not far away, and that deadly peril haunted them on the blue expanse of the Pacific.

THE END.

(Ferrers Locke in Southern seas. Next week's grand long story of the celebrated master-detective and his boy assistant is entitled "MAROONED!" See that you read this story. It contains hundreds of thrills.)

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