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# THE THRILLER

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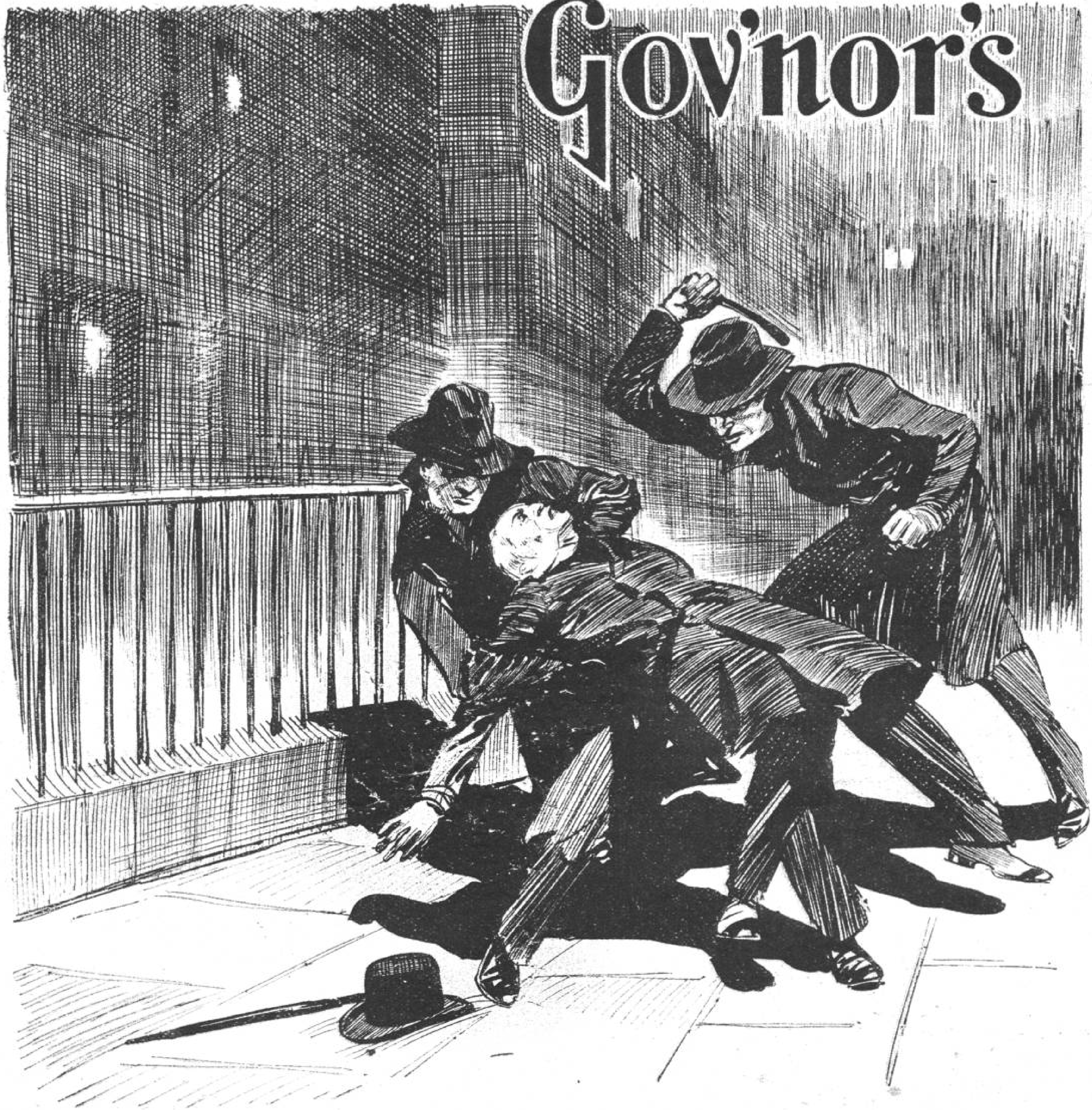
## GOV'NOR'S ORDERS!

By

# EDGAR WALLACE

*Gripping  
NEW  
SOVEREIGN  
length  
Novel*

# Gov'nor's



## A NEW BOOK-LENGTH DETECTIVE THRILLER featuring J. G. REEDER

### Chapter 1. HATRED.

THE affair of Mary Keen was never forgotten by Robert Karl Kressholm. He was a good hater, as Mr. J. G. Reeder was to say of him one day.

Yet it was an odd circumstance that Mary, dead and buried in Westbury Churchyard, should remain as a raw place in the mind of a man who was, to all appearance, and certainly by protestation, madly in love with a child—she was little more—who was twenty years his junior. But Bob Kressholm was like that. He was vain, had complete and absolute confidence in his own

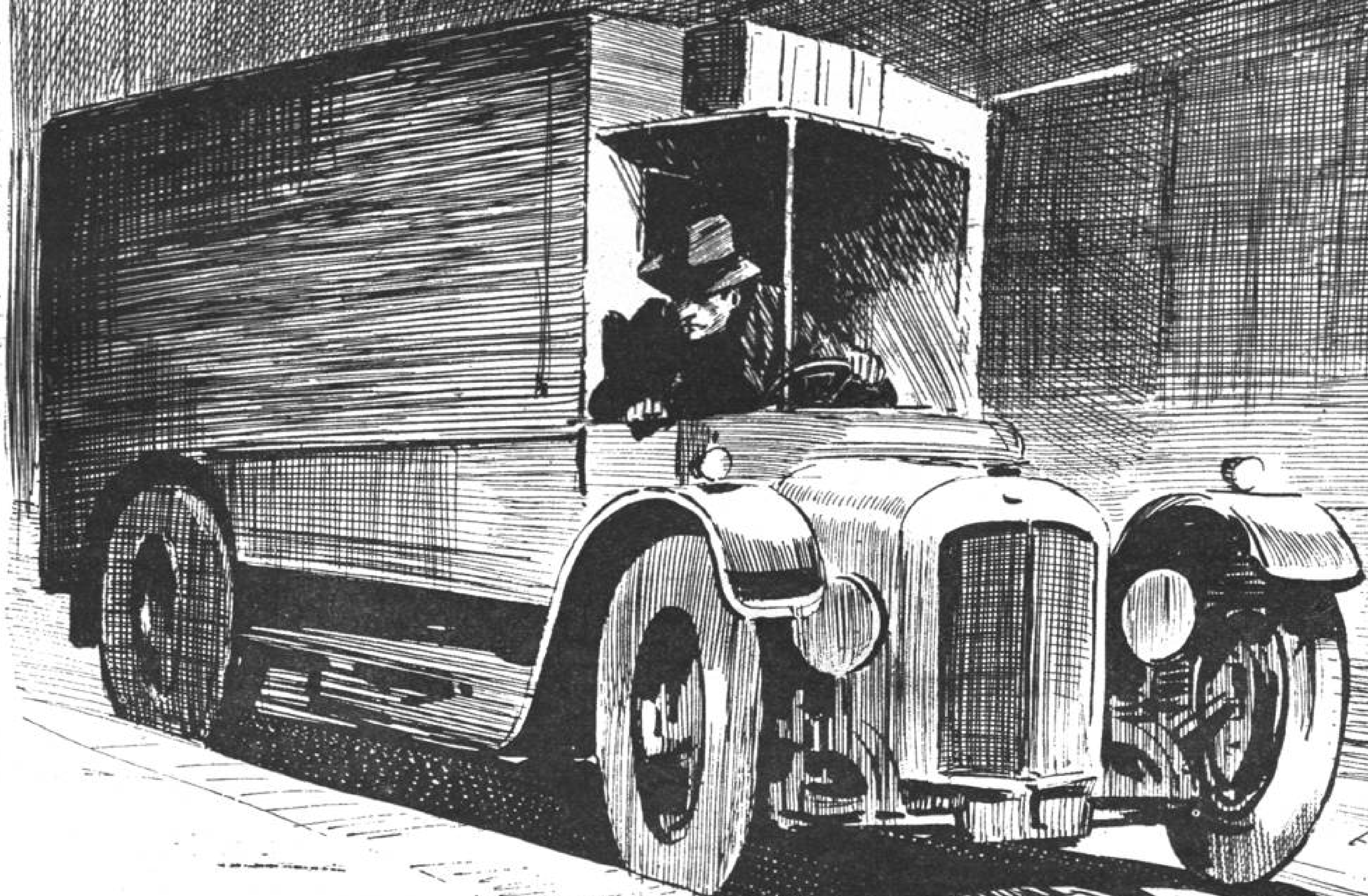
excellences. He might congratulate himself that he was young at thirty-seven, and looked younger; that he was good-looking in an instantly impressing way, and looked little older than at eighteen, when Mary had chosen Red Joe Brady in preference to himself.

Mary was dead of a broken heart—she passed three days after Joe had been released from a short-term sentence in Dartmoor. If Bob could have found her he would have offered consolation of sorts, but Joe had very carefully hidden her and his boy.

Kressholm never went to prison. He was

too clever for that. Banks and jewellers' stores might become impoverished in a night, but "the Gov'nor" could not be associated with the happening. He was, he believed with reason, the greatest organiser in what was picturesquely described as "the underworld." Nobody had ever brought a mind like his to the business of burglary. He had his own office and plant in Antwerp for the reconstruction of stolen goods. In Vienna a respectable broker handled such bonds and negotiable stock as came his way. He could boast to such intimates as Red Joe that he was "squawk-proof," and was justified in the claim. He

# Orders!



Mr. Reeder realised his danger too late. As the van drew alongside he was suddenly seized from behind in a grip of steel. The next moment a crashing blow over the head drove all consciousness from him.

## By EDGAR WALLACE

came down to Exeter, where Haddin's Amusement Park was operating, partly to see and partly to dazzle Joe out of his dull, but respectable mode of living. A big Rolls limousine was an advertisement of his own prosperity.

He did not see the balloon ascent, but the parachute dropped square in the road before his car, and the chauffeur had just time to pull up on the very edge of a tangled mass of cord, silk envelope, and laughing girlhood.

"Where the devil did you come from?"

"Out of the everywhere," she mocked him.

She wore a boy's trousers, a blue silk shirt and a beret—an unusual head-dress in

those days—and she was lovely, golden-haired, fair-skinned, and supple.

This was Wenna, daughter of Lew Haddin.

He drove her to the fair and delivered her to her father. Having come for the day, he stayed for the week; Red Joe had a bed put for him in his own caravan. Joe had a second van—a motor caravan—but this was not in the fair ground. It was garaged in the town. His guest heard about this and drew his own conclusions—at the moment he was not interested in Red Joe's dangerous hobby.

And every day he grew more and more fascinated by the girl. He brought flowers to her, which she accepted, a jewelled

bracelet, which she refused. Fat Lew Haddin offered lame apologies, for he was a good-natured man who gave things away rather readily, and would have married off his daughter to almost anybody rather than worry.

Red Joe added to his unpopularity and stirred up all the smouldering embers of hatred by speaking very plainly to his guest.

"She's only a kid, Bob, and what have you and I to give any woman? The certainty of getting her a pass on visiting day and the privilege of writing her a letter once a month."

Kressholm answered coldly:

"Personally, I've never been in stir, and

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I don't know what the regulations are about wives visiting their husbands, and that sort of thing. Are you after her?"

"She's about the same age as my boy," said Joe wrathfully.

"Oh, you want her for the family, eh? You think you got a call on all the women in the world. You're getting *bourgeois*, Red, since you've become a monkey dealer!"

Red Joe wasn't quite sure what "bourgeois" meant, but he guessed it was applied offensively. Bob lived mostly in Paris, and spoke two or three languages rather well. He was rather more than a little proud of his education, which was the basis of his superiority complex. Wenna, who had been a woman at twelve, had no doubts about Mr. Kressholm.

"What am I to do with this feller, Joe? The old man is no protection for an innocent maiden; he wanted me to go riding with his lordship yesterday, and saw nothing wrong in the idea that I should go up to London for a week and stay with Kressholm's friends. Fathers are not what they used to be."

Joe did not want to quarrel with his former associate—there were very special reasons why he should not. But before he could discuss the matter with Bob Kressholm, the girl had settled the affair.

There were two slaves of hers in the circus—Swedish gymnasts, who would have strangled Bob Kressholm and sat up all night to bury him, but she did not ask for outside help.

It happened in a little wood near the grounds on the last evening of the fair. She gave nobody the details of the encounter, not even Red Joe. All he knew

was that Kressholm had left Exeter very hurriedly just as soon as the knife wound on his shoulder was dressed and cauterized by a local surgeon.

Wenna had learned quite a lot about knife play from one of her Swedish gymnasts, who had left his country as a result of his dexterity in this direction.

Thereafter Bob Kressholm had another grievance to nourish. A few months after he returned to Paris he learned that Mr. J. G. Reeder was interesting himself in a new issue of "slush," which, in the argot of the initiated, means forged money. And then he remembered the locked motor caravan, which was Joe Brady's, but which he never slept in, or even brought to the fair ground. He returned to London on the very day Mr. Reeder had reached a certain conclusion.

**MR. REEDER.**

"BRADY'S work," said J. G. Reeder.

He had fixed the banknote against a lighted glass screen, and was examining it through a magnifying-glass.



It was the fourteenth five-pound note he had inspected that week. Mr. Reeder knew all that there was to be known about forged banknotes; he was the greatest authority in the world on the subject of forgery, and could, as a rule, detect a "wrong 'un" by feeling a corner of it. But these notes, which had been put into circulation in the year 1921, were not ordinary notes. They were so extraordinary that it required a microscopic examination to discover their spurious nature. He looked gloomily at the chief inspector (it was Ben Peary in those days) and sighed.

"Mr. Joseph Brady," he repeated, "but Mr. Joseph Brady is now an honest man. He is following a—um—peaceable and—er—picturesque profession."

"What profession?" asked Peary.

"Circus," replied Reeder soberly. "He was born in a circus; he has returned to his—um—interesting and precarious element."

When Red Joe Brady had finished a comparatively light sentence for forgery, he had announced his intention of going straight. It is a laudable, but not unusual decision that has been made by many men on their release from prison. He told the governor of the gaol and the chief warden, and, of course, the chaplain (who hoped much, but was confident of little) that he had had enough of the crooked game, and that henceforth—

He told Mr. Reeder this, taking a special journey to Brockley for the purpose.

Mr. Reeder expressed his praise at such an admirable resolution, but did not believe him.

It was pretty well known that Joe had money—stacks of it, said his envious competitors—for he was a careful man. He was not the kind that squandered his illicit gains, and he had made big money. For example, what happened to the hundred thousand pounds bank robbery, which was never satisfactorily explained? Kressholm had his cut, of course, but it was only a quarter. Bob used to brood on this; it was his illusion that there wasn't a cleverer man at the game than he. Anyway, the red-haired athlete, who had once been billed as Rufus Baldini, the Master of the High Trapeze, and was known in the police circles as Red Joe, had a very considerable nest-egg, maintained his boy at a first-class

boarding-school, and, generally speaking, was rich.

He came out of prison to take farewell of a dying wife at a moment of crisis for Lew Haddin, of Haddin's Grand Travelling Amusement Park. That fat and illiterate man had employed a secretary to manage his private and business affairs, and the secretary had vanished with eighteen thousand pounds which he had drawn from Lew's London bank. And at the time Lew was wading through a deep and sticky patch of bad trading.

Joe was an excellent business man, and, outside of his anti-social activities, an honest man. The death of his wife, and the consciousness of new responsibilities, had sobered him. He arrived at the psychological moment, had in an accountant to expose the tangle at its worst, and bought a half-interest in the amusement park, which for two years enjoyed exceptional prosperity.

The underworld also had its artists who work for the joy of working. There was no reason why Joe should fall again into temptation, but his draughtsmanship was little short of perfection, and he found himself drawing again. He might have confined himself to sketches of currency for his own amusement, if there had not fallen into his hands the "right paper."

Now, the "right paper" is very hard to come by. As a rule, it does not require such an expert as Mr. Reeder to detect the difference between the paper on which English banknotes are printed and the paper which is made for the special use of forgers. You can buy in Germany passable imitations which have the texture and the weight, and, to the inexpert finger,

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the feel of a banknote. It is very seldom that paper is produced which defies detection.

Eight thousand sheets came to Joe from some well-intentioned confederate of other days, and his first inclination was to make a bonfire of them; but then the possibilities began to open up before his reluctant eyes. There was sufficient electric power at his disposal from the many dynamos they had in their outfit, and there were privacy and freedom from observation.

Mr. Reeder located Joe and put him under observation. A surreptitious search of his caravan revealed nothing. One morning Mr. Reeder packed his bag and went north.

There was a great crowd of people in the Sanbay Fair Ground when Mr. Reeder descended from the station fly which brought him to the outskirts of the town; he had not come direct from the station. He and his companion had made a very careful search of a caravan in a lock-up garage at the Red Lion.

Haddin's Imperial Circus and Tropical Menagerie occupied the centre of the ground. The tower of Haddin's Royal Razy Glide showed above the enormous tent, and Haddin's various side-shows filled all the vacant sites. The municipality did not wholly approve of Haddin's, his band, wagons, his lions and tigers, his fat ladies and giants, but the municipality made a small charge for admission to the ground "for the relief of rates."

Mr. Reeder paid a humble coin, stoutly ignored the blandishments of dark-eyed ladies who offered him opportunities for shooting at the celluloid balls which dipped and jumped on the top of a water jet, was oblivious to the attractions of ring boards and other ingenious methods.

He had come too late for the free attractions—the balloon ascent and the parachute jump by "The Queen of the Air." She was at the moment of Mr. Reeder's arrival resting in the big and comfortable caravan which was Mr. Haddin's home and centre.

But it was to see the "Queen of the Air" that Mr. Reeder had taken this long and troublesome journey. He sought out and found Red Joe Brady, whose caravan was a picture of all that was neat and cosy. Brady opened the door, saw Reeder at the foot of the steps, and for a moment said nothing. Then:

"Come up, will you?"

He had seen behind Mr. Reeder three men whose carriage and dress said "detectives" loudly.

"What's the idea, Mr. Reeder?"

Mr. Reeder shook his head sadly.

"All this is very unpleasant, Joe—and very unnecessary. I have searched that caravan of yours at the garage. Need I say any more?"

Joe reached his hat and overcoat from the peg.

"I'm ready when you are," he said.

Joe was like that. He never made trouble where trouble was futile, nor excuses where they were vain.

Wenna heard the news after he had been taken away, and wept, not so much for Joe as for Danny, the boy who had spent his holidays with the circus and who had found his way into her susceptible heart.

Mr. Reeder was in the vestibule of the Old Bailey one day, and was conscious that somebody was looking at him, and turned to meet the glare of two eyes of burning blue fixed on him with an expression of malignity which momentarily startled him. She was very lovely and very young, and he was wondering in what circumstances he had deprived her of her father's care, when she came across to him.



Kressholm held out the automatic to the young man. "This is the first time I've trusted you with a gun. Take it, and don't be afraid to use it, but—don't get caught."

"You're Reeder?" Her voice was quivering with fury.

"That's my name," he said in his mild way. "To whom have I the honour—"

"You don't know me, but you will! I've heard about you. You're the man who took Joe—took away Danny's father! You wicked old devil! You—you—"

Mr. Reeder was more embarrassed to see her weep than to hear her recriminations. He did not see her again for a very long time, and then in circumstances which were even less pleasant.

Generally speaking, Red Joe Brady was lucky to get away with ten years. Men had had lifers dished out to them for half that Joe had done.

#### A CROOK'S REQUEST.

AFTER his sentence, Joe asked if he could see Mr. J. G. Reeder, and Mr. Reeder, who had no qualms whatever about meeting men for whose arrest and conviction he was responsible, went down to the cells under the court and found Red Joe handcuffed in readiness for his departure by taxicab to Wormwood Scrubs.

Such occasions as these can be very painful, and it was not unusual for a prisoner to express his frankest opinions about the man who had brought him to ruin. But Joe was neither offensive nor reproachful. He was a spare man of medium height, and was in the late thirties or the early forties. His neatly brushed hair was flaming red—hence his nickname.

He met the detective with a little smile and asked him to sit down.

"I've no complaints, Mr. Reeder. You gave me a square deal, and told no lies about me, and now I want to ask you a favour. I've got a boy at a good school; he doesn't know anything about me, and I don't want him to know. I had the sense to put a bit of money aside and tie up the

interest so that the bank will pay his fees and give him all the pocket-money he wants while I'm away. And a good friend of mine is going to keep an eye on him. The police don't know anything about the boy or his school. They're fair, I admit it, but they might go nosing around and find out that he's my son. They're fair, but they're clumsy, and it might happen that they'd give away the fact that his father was in stir."

"It's very unlikely, Joe," said Reeder, and the prisoner nodded.

"It's unlikely, but it happens," he said. "If it does I want you to step in and look after the boy's interests. You can stop them going too far."

"Who is your 'good friend'?" asked Reeder, and the man hesitated.

"I can't tell you who he is—for reasons," he said.

There was something of uneasiness in his tone; only for the briefest moment did he reveal his doubt.

"I've known him years; in fact, he and I courted the same lady—my poor little wife, who's dead and gone. But he's a good scout, and he's got over all that."

"Is he straight?" asked Mr. Reeder.

Joe was silent, pondering this question. "With me, yes. Bob Kressholm—well, you know him, but he's never been 'inside.'"

Mr. Reeder said nothing.

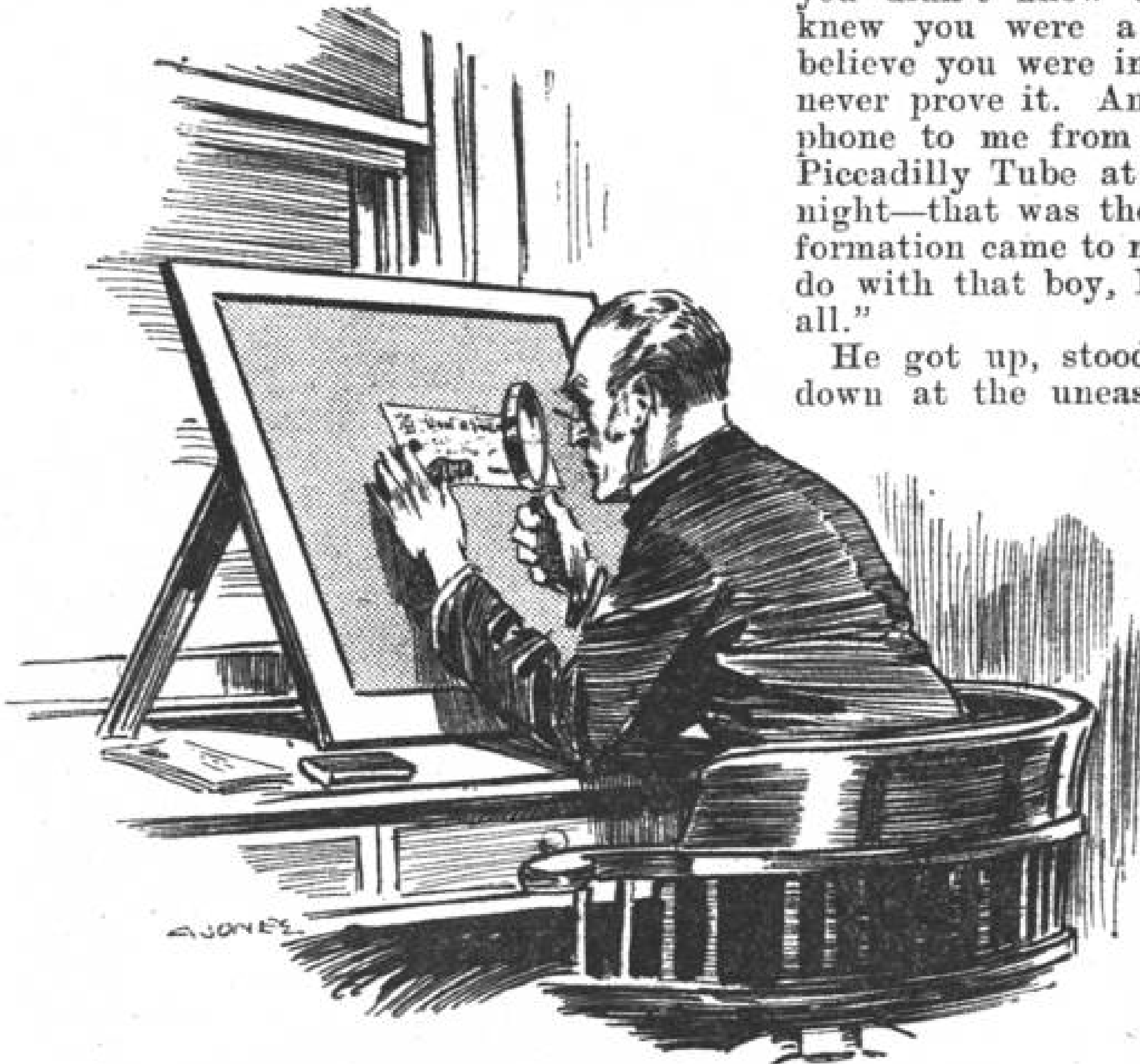
"He's clever, too. One of the wisest men in this country."

Reeder turned his grave eyes upon the man.

"I'd like to help you, Joe—but you'd be wise to give me the name of the school. I might do a little bit of overlooking myself."

Joe shook his head.

"I can't do that—I've asked Bob, and it would look as if I didn't trust him. All I



Mr. Reeder carefully examined the forged banknote through a magnifying-glass. "H'm! Brady's work!" he muttered slowly.

want to ask you to do is to cover up the kid if anything comes out. I want that boy never to know what a crooked thing is."

The detective nodded, and they rose together. The taxicab was waiting, and two warders stood by the open door. Joe changed the subject and considered his own and immediate misfortune.

"I don't understand how you got me," he said "I thought I was well away with that second caravan. I hand it to you, you're smart."

Mr. Reeder offered him no enlightenment, nor did he ask the name of the boy. He knew that, to the wild-eyed girl, Red Joe was just "Danny's father." The next day he went in search of Bob Kressholm.

He found Bob sipping an absinthe frappé in a café near Piccadilly Circus. He was a lithe, dark man, who, in his confidence, surveyed the approach of the detective without apprehension; but when Mr. Reeder sat down by his side with a weary little sigh, Kressholm edged away from him.

"I saw a friend of yours yesterday, Mr.—um—Kressholm."

"Red Joe—yuh! I saw he'd gone down." "Looking after his son, eh? Guardian of innocent childhood, hum?"

Kressholm moved uneasily. "Why not? Joe's a pal of mine. Grand feller, Joe. We only quarrelled twice—about women both times."

"You're a good hater," said Mr. Reeder gently.

He knew nothing then about Wenna Haddin and her ready knife. Nor what she had said to him about Danny.

He saw the man's face twitch. "I've forgotten all about it—women do not interest me, really."

Mr. Reeder sat, his umbrella between his knees, his bony hands gripping the crooked handle.

"Hum," he said, "a good hater. Joe wanted to know how he was caught. I didn't tell him that somebody called me up on the 'phone and told me all about the second caravan."

Kressholm turned his scowling face to the other.

"Who called you up?" he demanded truculently.

"You did," said Mr. Reeder softly. "You were under observation at the time—

you didn't know that, but you were. I knew you were a friend of Brady's. I believe you were in the graft, but I could never prove it. And you were seen to telephone to me from a public booth in the Piccadilly Tube at eleven-twenty-seven one night—that was the hour at which the information came to me. Be careful what you do with that boy, Mr. Kressholm. That is all."

He got up, stood for a moment staring down at the uneasy man, and made his way leisurely from the restaurant.

Kressholm left London a week later, and very rarely returned. In the years that followed he proved himself an excellent organiser.

Danny Brady went out to him in less than a year.

In some mysterious way the story of his father's antecedents had reached the headmaster of his select school, and his guardian was asked to remove him. The

boy came to see Wenna Haddin when the fair was at Nottingham. She was less depressed by his expulsion (for it was no less) than exhilarated by the prospect of his going to Paris.

A tall stripling, with dark, auburn hair, he had grown since the girl had seen him last. She listened gravely to the recital of his plans, and her heart ached a little. If she did not like Mr. Reeder, she hated Bob Kressholm.

"He's a queer man, Danny. I hope you'll be all right."

"Stuff! Of course, I'll be all right," he scoffed. "Bob's a grand man—he wants me to call him Bob. Besides, he's a great friend of my father's."

She did not reply to this. Wenna was older than her years, knew men instinctively, and bitterly regretted all she had said about Danny that day in the wood, when she put into words the fantastical marriage plan of Danny's father.

So Danny went out. He came back a year later, a man—a careless, worldly young man, who had plenty of money to spend and had odd ideas about men and women and the rights of property.

She used to correspond with him. Sometimes he answered her letters, sometimes months went past before he wrote to her.

Years went on, and Wenna seemed not a day older to him when he came back under a strange name. The old truth was re-  
plighted. He had had some experience in love-making. She felt curiously a stranger.

Two days after he left she heard of a big jewel robbery in Hatton Garden, and, for no reason at all, knew that he was the "tall, slight man" who had been seen to leave the office of a diamond merchant before his unconscious figure was found huddled up behind his desk. For by now Danny was an able lieutenant of the Gov'nor.

#### THE GOV'NOR.

ALMOST everybody associating with the criminal world had heard of "the governor." Scotland Yard referred to him jestingly. Inspector Gaylor did not believe in governors, except the "gov'nors" who ran the whizzing gangs, and he was acquainted with them because he had met and testified against these minor bosses, and

had had the satisfaction which only a policeman feels in seeing them removed in the black van which runs regularly between the Old Bailey and Pentonville Prison.

But the real governor, the big man, was a myth—a mariner's tale. Even when the jewel robberies began to assume serious proportions, nobody dared suggest that this visionary character had any connection with the crimes.

But to hundreds of lawless men who spent the greater part of their lives in the cells of convict prisons, the governor was a holy reality. He was immensely wealthy, he paid large sums to poor guys for their work, and spent fortunes to keep them out of prison. At the very suggestion that a newcomer to Dartmoor was a highly-paid lieutenant to the governor, he was treated with respect which amounted to reverence.

This shining and radiant figure was, alas, unreachable. Nobody knew his identity. There was no channel by which a poor and bungling burglar might approach his divinity. They told stories about him—half true, half imaginary. He was a titled gentleman, who lived in a great house in the country and had his own motor-cars and horses. He was a publican who kept a saloon in Islington. He was a trusted member of the C.I.D. who misused his position to his great advantage.

Certainly he chose discreet men to serve him, for never had any crime been brought home to him through the failure or loquacity of an assistant.

"The governor!" said Inspector Gaylor scornfully, when there was first suggested to him the authorship of the Hatton Garden robbery. "You've been reading detective stories. That's Harry Dyall's work."

But when they pulled in Harry Dyall, his alibi was police-proof, and the more closely the crime was examined the more satisfied were the police that the robbery had been carried out by a master—which Harry was not.

"That's no corporal's job—it's a general's. If Bob Kressholm was in England I should say it was his," said Gaylor, who was called in by the City police.

It is very difficult for the police to believe in organised systems of crime carried out under the direction of one man.

"They meet in a dark cellar, I suppose," he sneered at the subordinate to whom the governor was becoming a reality. "Wear masks and what-nots. Get that idea out of your mind, Simpson. Those things only happen in books."

The governor and his general staff did not meet in dark cellars, nor did they wear masks. There is a big hotel near the Place de l'Opéra in Paris, which is rather noisy and rather expensive. The noisiest of all the rooms is the big saloon situated in one corner of the block. Here the incessant pip-squeak of taxicabs, the deep boom of motor-horns, the thunder and rumble of cumbersome omnibuses are caught and amplified.

Four men played bridge; a fifth, and the younger, looked on impatiently.

The eldest of the four helped himself to a whisky and soda from a little table at his side, and threw down a card. The others followed suit mechanically. Nobody worried about the game. The cards might be convenient if some unexpected visitor arrived, though it was very unlikely that any such interruption would come.

"They called in Reeder over that Hauptmann job of ours—you know that, Tommy?" The man he addressed nodded.

"Reeder?" asked the young watcher. "Isn't he the fellow who pinched my father?"

Bob Kressholm nodded. "Reeder is hot, but he doesn't as a rule

touch anything but forgery. You needn't worry about him, Danny. Yes, he pinched your father. You owe him one for that."

The young man smiled.

"I remember—Wenna loathes him!" he said. "Funny how women hold on to their prejudices. I was talking to her last week—"

Bob Kressholm's eyelids snapped.

"Talking to her—was she in Paris?"

For a moment Danny was embarrassed.

"Yes; she came over with her father to see a turn at the Hippique."

Kressholm was about to say something, but changed his mind.

"Anyway, Reeder's working with the police—he is in the Public Prosecutor's office now. You're not known in London, are you, Peter?"

Peter Hertz grunted something uncomplimentary about South Africa—a country where he *was* known—and Kressholm chuckled.

"Fine! But they don't send their prints over to Scotland Yard, so you're safe. Now listen, I've got a job for you boys—"

They listened for half an hour, and under his direction drew little plans on the backs of bridge markers. At eleven they separated. Danny Brady would have gone, too, but the other asked him to wait behind.

"Stay on—I want to talk to you, kid."

Kressholm was greyer than he had been when Red Joe went down for his ten.

"Why didn't you tell me Wenna was over?" he asked.

Danny looked uncomfortable.

"I didn't think you'd be interested, Bob," he said.

Kressholm forced a smile.

"Always interested in Wenna—she doesn't like me. I saw her a couple of months ago, and she treated me like a dog! Heaven, she's lovely!"

That came out involuntarily. Danny's discomfort increased.

"She said nothing about me?"

The young man lied with a head shake.

"You and she are good friends, eh?"

"Why, yes. As a matter of fact, I gave her a ring—"

Kressholm nodded slowly; his blazing eyes were fixed on the carpet lest they betrayed him.

"Is that so? Gave her a ring? That's fine. I suppose you'll be thinking of throwing in your hand after this and settling down, eh? There's circus blood in you, too."

Danny's face went red.

"I'm not going back on you," he said loudly. "I owe a lot to you, Bob!"

"I don't know that you do," said the other.

Here he did an injustice to himself as a tutor. For five years he had revealed wrong as an amusing kind of right, and black as an artistic variant of white. Crime had no drab background in the golden floodlight of romance; its shabby rags, in the glamour with which he had invested them, became delightful vestments.

"You're doing the job—you're the Big Shot in the game, Danny. I wouldn't trust anybody but you. And talking of big shots—"

He went into his bed-room and came back with something in his hand that glittered in the lights of the chandelier.

"That's the first time I've trusted you with a gun. Don't be afraid to use it—you're not to get caught. There will be three cars planted for you with the engines running—I'll give you the plan. I'll have an aeroplane just outside of London. If you're pinched, don't worry—the governor will get you out."

The young man examined the revolver, fascinated. His hand trembled; he had a moment of exaltation such as the young knight must have felt when the golden spurs were fastened to his heels.

"You can trust me, governor," he breathed; "and if there's no get-out, send me the Life of Napoleon."

"The Life of Napoleon" had a special interest for the governor's friends.

He stayed on for an hour whilst Bob talked about West End jewellers, their peculiarities and weaknesses.

#### MURDER!

MR. J. G. REEDER began to take a solicitous interest in West End jewellers' shops soon after the Hauptmann affair. For the Hauptmann affair was serious—that a shop manager should be bludgeoned in broad daylight and three emerald necklaces snatched from a showcase was bad enough; that the two thieves should escape with their booty was a very black mark against police administration.

Questions were being asked in Parliament, an under-secretary interviewed a police chief and made pointed comments on efficiency. Then it was that Mr. Reeder was asked to "collaborate." He was a member of the Public Prosecutor's staff, and, for some strange reason, was *persona grata* at Scotland Yard, which is odd, remembering how extremely unpopular non-service detectives are at that institution.

So it came to be that Mr. Reeder spent quite a lot of time wandering about the West End of London, his frock coat buttoned tightly, his square-topped bowler hat at the back of his head, a disconsolate

figure of a man. Jewellers came to know him; they were rather amused by his helplessness and ignorance of the trade.

One of them spoke to Inspector Gaylor. "What use would he be in a raid? He must be a hundred years old!"

"A hundred and seven," said Gaylor soberly. "At the same time I wouldn't advise you to stand in his way if he's in a hurry."

Griddens was robbed that night; the contents of the strong room taken; the night watchman was never seen again. Then the Western Jewellers' Trust had a visit which cost the underwriters twelve thousand pounds. Mortimer Simms, the Court jewellers, was robbed in daylight.

Mr. Reeder was in bed when two of these robberies occurred. When he appeared after the Mortimer Simms affair he was subjected to a certain amount of derision.

But Mr. Reeder was not distressed. He continued his studies and delved into the mysteries of precious stones. He handled diamonds which were not diamonds, but white sapphires, to the top of which a slither of diamond was attached. He examined samples of the faker's art which were entirely new to the detective. He learned of Antwerp agencies which were exclusively run for the disposal of stolen gems, and of other matters of criminal ingenuity, which, he confessed in a tone of mingled admiration and shocked surprise, he had never dreamed about.

After the Mortimer Simms robbery he seldom left the West End; actually lived in a small hotel near Jermyn Street, and applied himself more closely to the study of jewels and their illicit collectors.

There was a long and blameless interval



When the taxi-driver looked the other way Danny pushed inwards the circle of glass of the jeweller's window and snatched up the case of diamonds.

during which the governor's men did not operate. Then one day a typewritten letter came to Mr. Reeder. It ran:

"Keep your eyes skinned. The Seven Sisters are going—and how! Conduit Street will be getting lively soon."

There was no signature. The paper on which the letter was written had a soft, matt surface, such as you may find in the racks of any French hotel, and an "e" in "eyes" had been inadvertently typed "é." A week passed and nothing happened.

Then, on a dreary afternoon—

The Seven Sisters lay glittering in their blue velvet case for all who cared to stop and admire. They had been written about and photographed, and usually there was a sprinkling of people before Donnyburne's plateglass window, doing homage to these seven perfectly matched diamonds which had once adorned a royal crown.

To-day, because it was raining and a gusty wind was blowing, people hurried down Conduit Street without pausing before the big jeweller's store to pay homage.

A big two-seater car drew slowly to the side of the kerb, passed in front of a stationary taxicab, and came to a halt twenty yards west of Donnyburne's. A young man, wearing a long trench coat, got out at his leisure, examined one of the front tyres carefully, and walked slowly to the back of the car. A taxi-driver, who stood on the edge of the kerb, smoking a short clay pipe, looked at the young man curiously, though there was little reason for curiosity, for there was nothing extraordinary about him. He was rather good-looking; his skin was a deep olive; on his upper lip was a small, reddish moustache. The hair under the soft hat was red, too, but nobody observed him very closely at the moment.

He walked back to Donnyburne's and

stood before the window, examining the Seven Sisters. Then, without haste, he seemed to be drawing a circle with his finger. There was a curious squeaking sound, and when he pushed at the window the circle of glass fell inward. He lifted the case, snapped down the lid, and walked back to where his car was waiting. The taxi-driver had his back towards him, and saw him pass and jump into the car, which stood with its engine running. Then:

"Stop that man!"

Somebody screamed the words from the doorway of the jeweller's. It was unfortunate that a policeman turned the corner and came into sight at that moment. He saw the gesticulating shop assistant, and as the car moved he leaped upon the running-board and caught the left arm of the driver. For a second the young man jerked backward, but he could not loose the hold. His knees gripped the steering column as the car gathered speed; his right hand fell into his side pocket.

"That's yours," he said very calmly, and as coldbloodedly as a butcher might destroy a beast, he shot the policeman through the face.

It was done in a second. He dropped the gun to his side, gripped the wheel, and spun round the corner.

He had not seen the elderly man with the side whiskers and the queer top hat—a man who, in spite of the rain, did not wear an overcoat, nor was his umbrella unfurled. If he had seen him he might not have considered Mr. Reeder a serious obstacle to his plans. Indeed, he gasped his amazement, when, just as the car took a turn, he jumped to the running-board.

"Stop, please!"

The driver dropped his hand to his side. Before he could raise it, something sprayed into his face—something that took the breath from his body and left him fighting for air.

Mr. Reeder switched off the engine,

guided the car to the kerb, and allowed it to crash itself violently to a standstill against a stationary lorry. It had hardly stopped before he gripped the young man and dragged him on to the sidewalk.

Police whistles were blowing; he saw two policemen running, and handed over his prisoner.

"Search him before you take him to the station," he said gently. "It is quite permissible in the case of a man who is carrying dangerous firearms."

He picked up the pistol from the seat of the car, examined it carefully, and dropped it into his pocket. The young man had recovered from the shock of the ammonia fumes that had been vaporised into his face, and by this time he was handcuffed. A cab drew up to the edge of the kerb, and the policeman signalled him.

"No, no." Mr. Reeder was very insistent. "There is too little room in a cab. Perhaps that gentleman would help us."

He nodded to a stout man in a big limousine which had pulled up to give its occupant an opportunity of satisfying his curiosity.

The stout man went pale at the suggestion that his car should be used for the conveyance of a murderer, but eventually he took his seat by the driver. It was to Marlborough Street that the prisoner was taken, and whilst the inspector was telephoning to Scotland Yard Mr. Reeder offered intelligent advice.

"Take every stitch of his clothing from him and give him new clothes, even if you have to buy them," he said. "I'm afraid I have a—um—rather—um—criminal mind, and I am just putting myself in this—er—unfortunate young man's place, and wondering exactly what I should do."

The clothing was removed; an old suit was discovered, and by the time Chief Inspector Gaylor arrived from Scotland Yard Mr. Reeder was making a very careful examination, not of the pockets, but of the lining of the murderer's discarded waistcoat. Between that lining and the shaped cloth of the breast he found a thin white paper which contained as much reddish powder as could be put on the little finger-tip. In the lining of the coat he found its fellow. In the heel of the right boot, running the length of the sole, was a double-edged knife, thin and very flexible and keen.

"Pretty well equipped, Mr. Reeder." Gaylor viewed the discoveries with interest. "It almost supports your view."

"It quite supports my view, Mr. Gaylor, if you will allow me to say so." Mr. Reeder was apologetic. "As a rule I do not believe in—um—organised crime. The story of Napoleon Fagins at the heads of large bodies of men banded together for—um—illegal purposes is one at which—well, frankly, I have been inclined to smile hitherto."

"He got away with the Seven Sisters, eh?" Mr. Gaylor looked around. "Where are they?"

Mr. Reeder shook his head.

"I'm afraid they're not here. That is one of the mysteries—indeed, the only mystery—of the raid. The assistant saw him from the moment he committed the crime till the moment he got into his car. When we arrested him we found neither the diamonds nor the case. The car is in the yard, being scientifically dissected, if I may employ so gruesome an illustration. I picked up the machine as it came round the corner, and there was no chance of his getting rid of the diamonds whilst he was under my eye. I searched his pockets the moment the police came up. And that—um—is that."

It was no coincidence that he had been in the region of Donnyburne's that after-

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## The THRILLER



noon. Mr. Reeder did not as a rule pay very much attention to anonymous "squawks," but he had been impressed by the paper, and the "e" with the acute accent. Such an afternoon was climatically most favourable for such a raid, and it was only by a fluke that he was not an actual witness of the murder. He had heard the shot, and almost instantly the murderer's car had come into sight.

"He has given the name of John Smith, which is highly unimaginative. There are no papers to identify him. The car was hired from the Golston Garage—hired by the week, and a substantial deposit paid. John Smith has been seen in the West End of London, but nothing is known against him, and for the moment it is impossible to trace his address. I should imagine that he was living at a good hotel somewhere in the West End of London. He has lived in Paris, I should think; his shoes, his shirt, and his necktie are French-made. He probably arrived in London a week ago."

There was nothing to be gained by questioning John Smith. He seemed to feel the disgrace of wearing block-made clothes more acutely than the brand of murderer, and when the inspector questioned him he was indifferent and unrepentant.

"There's one thing I'd like to ask you—was that old bird who gassed me J. G. Reeder? I'd like to have him alone for a few minutes."

"You with a gun, I suppose?" said Gaylor savagely.

He was no philosopher where a comrade had been killed in the execution of his duty. People who kill policemen receive no consideration from such of the police as happen to be alive.

"With your hands, eh? He'd beat the life out of you, you dirty murderer!"

John Smith was amused.

"I shan't hang, don't worry," he said, almost airily. "Don't ask me who my confederates are, because I wouldn't dream of telling you. Besides, the new police regulations prevent your asking me questions, don't they?"

He showed two rows of even white teeth in a smile.

#### THE BLOODSTAINED CAB.



HE was as confident the next morning, the more so since his hotel address had been discovered and he was allowed to wear his own clothes, after they had been carefully searched.

The proceedings at the police court were formal. An indubitable murderer was in custody, and for the moment the police were concentrating on their search for the missing diamonds. Whither they had gone was a mystery. The taxi-man whose cab was near Donnyburne's said he had seen the murderer carrying a blue velvet case in his hand; that was the first thing that aroused his suspicion. He had not seen the murder committed; he had been looking round at the moment for his fare, a middle-aged lady whom he had picked up at Victoria, and who had kept him waiting an hour, and eventually had not returned.

"It's the first time I've been bilked for ten years," he said. He had this little trouble of his own.

He had heard the shot, had seen the car go round the corner, leaving a dead man lying half in the road and half on the pavement, and had run to his assistance. A woman who was walking on the other side of the road, who also had heard the shot, and had seen the machine pass on, was

emphatic that nothing had been thrown from the car, nor did it seem likely to Mr. Reeder that the robber should attempt to throw away the gems he had won so dearly.

The car, as he had said, had been inspected, the lining removed, and had been stripped to its chassis and the inner panelling unscrewed. But there was no sign of the seven diamonds.

Not for the first time in his life, Mr. J. G. Reeder was up against the unbelievable. He had scoffed at gangs all his life; and here, undoubtedly, and in the heart of London, was operating no mere confederacy of two or three men, whose acts were dictated by opportunity and expe-

Mr. Reeder looked at him, pained.

"Aren't you being a little mysterious, my friend? You may think it odd, but I detest mysteries."

He was saved the trouble of ringing for his housekeeper, for that amiable lady came from some lower region to meet her employer.

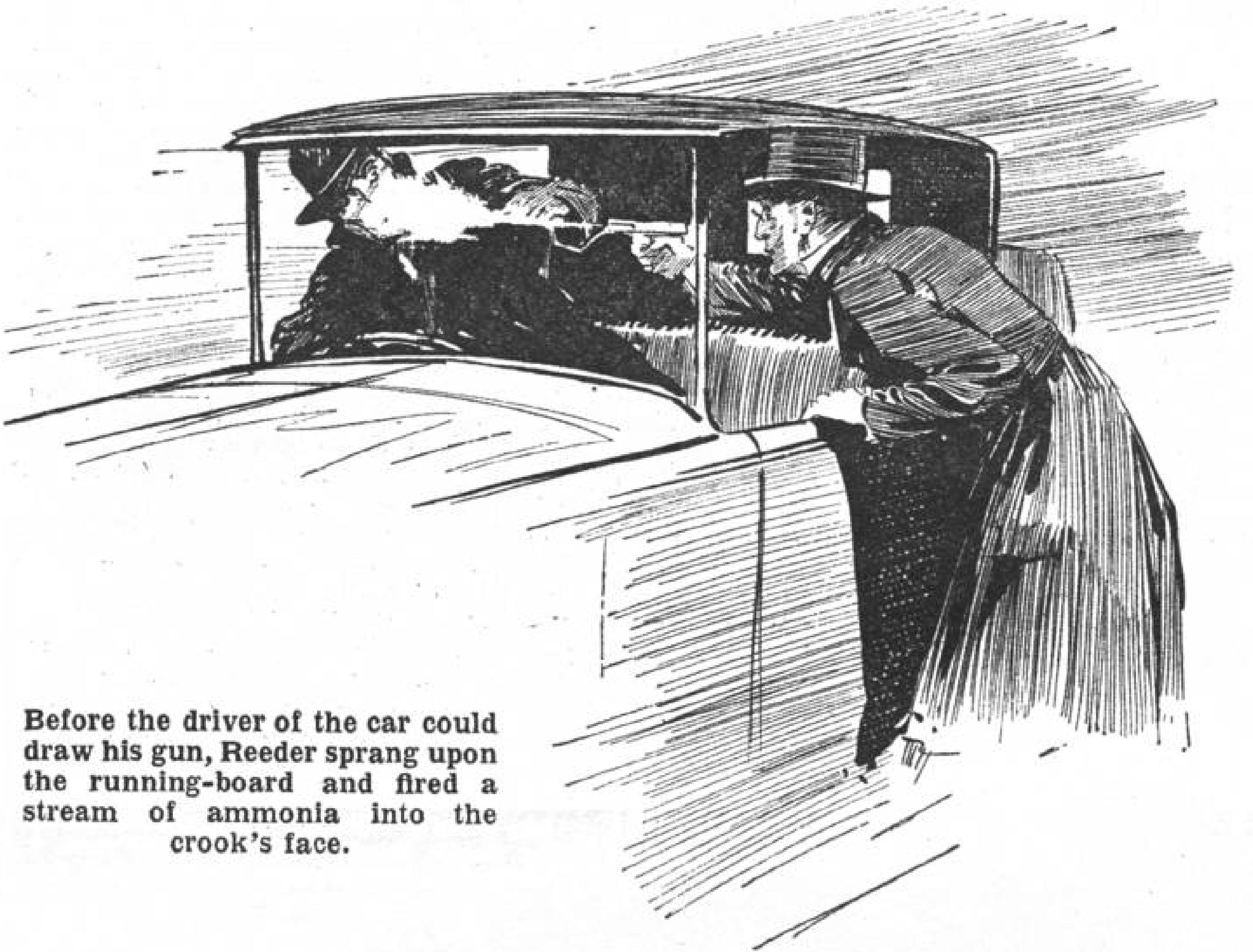
"Has anybody been here?" asked Gaylor.

Mr. Reeder sighed, but did not protest.

"Yes, sir, a gentleman came with a letter. He said it was very urgent."

"Nothing else?" asked Gaylor. "He didn't leave a parcel?"

"No, sir," said the housekeeper, surprised.



Before the driver of the car could draw his gun, Reeder sprang upon the running-board and fired a stream of ammonia into the crook's face.

diency, but a body directed by a master mind (Mr. Reeder shuddered at the discovery that he was accepting such a bogey as a master criminal), operating on pre-determined plans and embodying, not one branch of the criminal profession, but several.

After the police court proceedings he went, as usual, by tramcar, a sad-looking figure, sitting in a corner seat, resting his hands upon the handle of his umbrella and expressing his gloom on his face.

The long journey was all too short for him, for he was resolving many things in his mind.

It was dark when he came to Brockley Road. As he alighted from the car, and cautiously crossed that motor-infested thoroughfare, he was amazed to see a familiar figure standing on the corner of the street. Gaylor did not often honour him by visiting the neighbourhood.

"You are here, are you?" Inspector Gaylor was obviously relieved.

Another man had alighted from the tramcar at the same time as Mr. Reeder, but he had hardly noticed him.

"It's all right, Jackson," Gaylor addressed him familiarly. "You'll find Benson up the road. Stay outside Mr. Reeder's house. I will give you fresh instructions when I come out."

They passed into Mr. Reeder's modest domicile together.

"You've got a housekeeper, haven't you, Mr. Reeder? I'd like to talk to her."

Gaylor nodded.

The two men went up to Mr. Reeder's study. The curtains were drawn, a little fire burned in the grate. It was one of those high-ceilinged rooms, and had an atmosphere of snug comfort. Gaylor closed the door.

"There's the letter." He pointed to the desk.

It was typewritten, addressed to "J. G. Reeder, Esq.," and marked "Very urgent."

"Do you mind seeing what it says?"

Mr. Reeder opened the letter. It was a closely-typed sheet of manuscript, which had neither preamble nor signature. It ran:

"Re John Smith.

"I am asking you what may seem at first to be an impossible favour. You are one of those who saw the shooting of Constable Burnett, and your evidence will be of the greatest importance in the forthcoming trial. I do not hope to save him if he comes into court. If you will help him to escape by such methods as I will outline to you, I will place to your credit the sum of fifty thousand pounds. If you refuse, I will kill you. I am putting the matter very clearly, so that there can be no mistake on either side. It is not necessary to tell you that fifty thousand pounds will provide you with comfort for the rest of your life and place you in a position of independence. I promise you that your name will not be con-

nected with the escape. John Smith must not hang. I will stop at nothing to prevent this. Nothing is more certain than that you will meet your death if you refuse to help. If you are interested, and you agree, insert an advertisement in the agony column of 'The Times' next Tuesday, in the following terms:

'Johnny, meet me at the usual place.—JAMES.'

and we will go further into this matter."

Reeder put down the letter and stared incredulously at his companion.

"Well?" said Gaylor.

"Dear me, how stupid!" murmured Mr. Reeder. He looked up at the ceiling. "That makes forty-one, or is it forty-two?"

"Forty-two what?" asked Gaylor curiously.

"Forty-two people have threatened to take my life if I didn't do something or other, or because I have done something—or is it forty-three?"

"I have had a similar letter," said Gaylor. "I found it at my house when I got home to-night. Reeder, this is one of the biggest things we have ever struck. It is certainly the biggest thing I have ever known in my experience as a police officer. It is something more than an ordinary gang. These people have money, and probably influence, and for some reason or other we hurt them pretty badly when

we took this young man. What are you going to do?"

Mr. Reeder pursed his lips as if his immediate intention was to whistle.

"Naturally, I shall not put in the advertisement as our friend suggests," he said. "Why next Tuesday? Why not to-morrow? What is the reason for the delay? The letter was urgently delivered; it is sure to call for an urgent reply. It is a little too obvious."

Gaylor nodded.

"That is what I thought. In other words, nothing will happen to you until next Tuesday. My impression is that we are in for a troublesome time almost immediately; that is why I telephoned to the Yard to have one of my men pick you up and shadow you down here. These people will move like lightning. Do you remember what this fellow said this morning in court? The whole story was a fabrication and a case of mistaken identity. That is a pretty conventional excuse, Reeder, but it was very well timed. Who are the witnesses against this man? You are one of the principals; I am, in a way, another. The shop assistant is a third. The two policemen who arrested him hardly count. Huggins, the taxi-driver, one of the most important, disappeared at six o'clock this evening."

Mr. Reeder nodded at him thoughtfully.

"I foresaw that possibility," he said.

"His taxicab was found in a side street off the Edgware Road," Gaylor went on.

"There was blood on the seat and on the window of the cab. He lives over the mews very near the place where it was found. He hasn't been home, and I don't suppose he'll come home," he added grimly. "I have got two men looking after the shop assistant, who lives at Anerley. He also has had a warning not to go to court. Does that strike you as interesting?"

Mr. Reeder did not answer. He loosened his frock coat, put his hat carefully on a side table, and sat down at his desk. He stared absently at Gaylor for some time before he spoke, then, opening a drawer, he took out a folder and extracted two sheets of foolscap.

"It is very bad to have preconceived ideas, Mr. Gaylor," he said. "I did not believe in gangs. I thought they were a figment—if you will excuse the expression—of the novelist's imagination, and here I am discussing them as seriously as though they were a normal condition of life. By the way, I knew the cabman had disappeared. It was silly of us not to have arrested him—in fact, I went to arrest him, and then I heard of the—um—accident."

Gaylor gaped at him.

"Arrest him?"—incredulously. "Why on earth?"

"He had the Seven Sisters—the diamonds. Obviously nobody else could have had them. They were tossed into the cab by Smith—whose name, I think, is Danny Brady—as he passed. In fact, the cab was planted there for the purpose. Huggins—an interesting name—was one of the gang. The blood-stained cab is picturesque, but unconvincing. I should have the Channel ports very carefully watched and circulate a description of the—um—deceased."

#### BLUE FUNK.

MR. REEDER'S theory had a rapid confirmation. "Huggins" was picked up the next night, not at a Channel port, but at Harwich, and he took his place in the dock as an accessory to the murder.

Friday came and passed. There was no evidence of reprisal. Gaylor would have placed detectives on guard before, and in Mr. Reeder's house, but that gentleman grew so unusually testy at the suggestion that the inspector decided to let his colleague die any way he wished.

"Die be—um—blowed!" said Mr. Reeder, and apologised for his vulgarity. "That letter was what is called in America a—um—'front.' In other words, it was a show-off, and meant nothing. I suspect friend Kressholm is establishing an alibi."

"A little late for an alibi," said Gaylor.

"Not so late as you think," was Reeder's cryptic reply.

It was during the trial of Daniel Brady that Kressholm came to London. There was no reason why he should not. He held a British passport, and there was not a scrap of evidence to connect him with the crime.

He had not been at his hotel five minutes when they telephoned from the inquiry office to ask him if he would see a lady. Before they told him Wenna's name he knew who it was.

Sorrow had refined, as it had aged, her. He never realised how much older than Danny she was till he saw that pale, haggard face.

"I've seen Danny," she said breathlessly. "He told me that he was coming to London. I've called here three times this afternoon. He believes in you—"

"What did he tell you?" His voice was sharp.

## GRAND FREE GIFT NEXT WEEK!



Chester's in the supplement is of full-THRILLER length, so that next week you will be getting DOUBLE VALUE for your 2d. Don't miss this astounding offer. An order with your newsagent will save you from disappointment.

Then there is Edmund Snell's latest novel, "The Death Mark," which is the yarn I have selected as a first-class support for the Supplement. A powerful story this, full of pulsating drama, the mystery of Eastern vengeance and the grim adventures of a man who had a past in Sumatra. Mr. Snell has put his best into this, and that is saying something. Read it in next week's grand issue.

But wait! The THRILLER has even a further magnificent offer to make to its fortunate readers. The following week, that is, in a fortnight's time, is our great new competition. The big idea is this. Can you write a thriller story? Most of you when reading the stories in The THRILLER must have felt a desire to try and emulate the authors who contribute to your favourite paper and to see your name on the cover. There have been moments, I am sure, when you have had your inspiration and felt the urge to write for The THRILLER. Well, here is your chance—and the possibility of winning £100 or one of the several other big money prizes offered in this unique competition. This is a splendid opportunity for all—a chance to have your story published in The THRILLER and to win £100. Keep your eyes open for further details. These are great days for Thrillerites.

Yours sincerely,

*The Editor*

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to: "The Thriller" Office, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THIS is our anniversary number. Just a year ago the first number of The THRILLER was put before the public, and from that moment the paper has soared from one triumph to another until now it stands alone, having left all other records in ruins. Yet successful as it has been, it is out to reach even greater heights, and thus we are launching it into its second year with a programme that is quite unprecedented. You have already had two of Edgar Wallace's finest stories, and now comes the third round in this great scheme.

Next week's issue of The THRILLER will contain the splendid Free Gift which I have been speaking about during the last few weeks. This is to take the form of a twenty-page, fully illustrated supplement containing a complete book-length detective-thriller specially written by Gilbert Chester. "Midnight Gold" is the title of this enthralling novel, and it is packed from beginning to end with swift action, dramatic surprises, suspense and thrills. Mr. Chester has been specially chosen to write this splendid long yarn for two reasons—viz., because he is absolutely an expert on the subject of detective-thrillers, and because of his amazing ability to tell his story with the very maximum of non-stop excitement and thrills.

The amazing value of The THRILLER is already world-famous. This story of Mr.

Danny's confidence in him did not outweigh his alarm. That he should be even remotely associated with this crime—

She shook her head impatiently.

"You needn't worry, Kressholm; I know you are in this. No, no, he didn't tell me, but I know. What can we do? You've got to save him."

He was staring at her hungrily, and, distressed as she was, she did not realise that even in this tragic moment his interest was for her and not for the man who stood in the shadow of the scaffold.

"I don't know what we can do. I'm getting the best lawyers. Only Reeder's tied him up pretty completely."

"Reeder!" she gasped. "That old man! Has he done this?"

Bob Kressholm nodded.

"He's always been down on the Bradys," he said glibly. "That old bird will rather die than let up on Danny. He was waiting for him—in fact, he arrested him."

She sat down heavily in a chair and buried her face in her hands. He stood looking at the slim, bent back. That must be the ring that Danny gave her—the glittering sapphire on her finger. He went angrily hot at the thought.

It must be ten years since that disagreeable episode in the wood. She had forgotten all that, perhaps—he had been a little raw. At any rate, she had forgiven him or she would not be here.

"I hate to see you like this, Wenna," he said. "I'll fix Reeder for you one of these days."

She sprang to her feet, her eyes blazing.

"One of these days—you? Don't worry, Kressholm, I'll fix him. If anything happens to Danny—" Her voice broke.

He soothed her with the clumsiness which was part of his insincerity.

She would have attended the trial, but he dissuaded her; she would upset Danny, he said. In truth, he was anxious that she should not meet Reeder—that astute man who had a disconcerting habit of telling unpleasant truths—and he was glad that the girl had taken his advice when, on the opening day of the trial, Reeder approached him outside the Old Bailey.

"You're giving evidence, of course, Mr. Kressholm?"

The other man turned his suspicious eye upon his questioner.

"What do I know about it? I know Danny, of course, but I've been out of the crooked game so long that he wouldn't have told me he was going to do a fool thing like shooting a copper."

"Indeed?" Mr. Reeder inclined his head graciously. "I suppose that governors do not take risks—"

"Governor!" said the man scornfully. "Where did you get that word? You've been listening to those penny dreadful flatties at the Yard! No, I tried to keep the boy straight; he's the son of my pal, and that's why he is having all the legal assistance that money can buy."

"And Mr. Huggins—who, by the way, was identified this morning by a South African police officer who happened to be in London, as Peter Hertz—is his father a friend of yours?"

For a second Bob Kressholm was embarrassed.

"Naturally, I shall look after him," he said at last. "I don't know the bird, but they say that he is a friend of Danny's. I don't even know the gang."

Mr. Reeder looked down at the pavement for a long time.

"Is there anything wrong with my boots?" asked Kressholm facetiously.

Mr. Reeder shook his head.

Flinging open the doors, the two men seized the bound and helpless figure of their victim and dragged him from the interior of the van.



"No—only I shouldn't like to be standing in them," he said. "Red Joe Brady is due for release in a month's time."

He left the master-man with this unpleasant reminder.

The trial ran its inevitable course. On the second day the jury retired and returned with a verdict of guilty against Brady and Hertz. Danny was sentenced to death, and Hertz to fourteen years' penal servitude.

Mr. Reeder was not in court. It was not his business to be there, so he did not hear the commendations of the judge, or see Danny's frosty smile as the sentence of death was passed, and there came to him the realisation that the all-powerful governor was for once impotent. He had listened to Reeder's evidence closely, and only once did he appear startled; that was when the detective told of the warning he had had that the Seven Sisters were threatened.

Mr. Reeder read the account in the late editions of the newspapers and sighed drearily.

Kressholm was not in court at the last, and had asked for an interview with the young man, a request which was refused.

It was nearly midnight, and Mr. Reeder was preparing to go to bed, when he heard the front bell ring. He had had installed a small house telephone on to the street. It saved him a lot of trouble when his housekeeper had gone to bed. He pressed the knob which lit a small red lamp in the lintel of the street door and incidentally showed the concealed receiver of the 'phone, and asked:

"Who is there?"

To his surprise, "Kressholm" was the reply.

Kressholm was the last man in the world he expected to see that night. He went downstairs slowly, switched on the light in the hall, and opened the door. The man was alone.

"I'm sorry to disturb you—" he began.

"I'll take your apologies in my office," said Reeder. "Do you mind walking ahead of me?"

He followed the visitor into the big room, which was office and living room, and, closing the door, pointed to a chair.

"I'll stand," said Kressholm shortly.

He was nervous. His restless hands moved from one button of his overcoat to the other. He put down his hat in one place, took it up and put it in another.

"I want you to understand, Reeder—" he began.

"Mister Reeder," said that gentleman gently. "If ever I put you in the dock you can call me what you like; for the moment I would rather be called 'mister,' which means 'master,' and I will be your master sooner or later, by heavens!"

Kressholm was taken aback by Reeder's correction and quite unusual emotion. He scowled a little and then laughed nervously.

"Sorry, Mr. Reeder, but this case has rattled me. You see, the boy was in my charge. His father and I were old friends."

Mr. Reeder had sat down at his writing-table. He leaned back now and sighed.

"Is all this necessary?" he asked. "It is not conscience that has brought you here; it is blue funk, isn't it?"

Kressholm went an angry red.

"I am afraid of nobody in the world!" He raised his voice. "Not you, and not that cursed—"

"S-sh!" J. G. Reeder was apparently shocked. "I do not like strong language. You are afraid of nobody but Red Joe. I wonder, too, if you are afraid of that little circus-girl who has paid several visits to your hotel? Miss Haddin, isn't it?"

Bob Kressholm stared but said nothing. He found a difficulty in speaking.

"She was—um—engaged to the young man. A fiery young woman; I remember her—yes. If she knew what I know—"

"I don't know what you mean," said Kressholm huskily.

"Then let me tell you why you have called on me," said Mr. Reeder.

He folded his arms on the table and fixed the other with a steely eye.

"When I see his father you want me to tell him that I and Mr. Gaylor were offered fifty thousand pounds to secure his escape. We were also threatened with death if we did not agree."

Kressholm's face was ludicrous in its blank amazement.

"That is just what you wished to ask me," Mr. Reeder went on, "but you don't exactly know how to broach the subject. Well, it is difficult to convey to a police officer the fact that you have both tried to bribe and threaten him without involving yourself in a lot of trouble. I will save you a little trouble, anyway. You were establishing your defence. You trained this boy the way he has gone, and it is going to take the whole Metropolitan Police Force to save your life. If you are wise you will go back to France and let Red Joe give the French police the bother of arresting him for your murder."

"If you think I am afraid of Red Joe—"

Mr. Reeder nodded.

"You are terrified, and I think you have very good reason."

Reeder walked to the door and opened it.

"I don't want to talk to you any more, Kressholm." He glanced down. "I see you are wearing shoes this evening. Well, I should not like to be in those, either."

Kressholm gave no further explanation. None of his gang, seeing him now, would have recognised the ruthless governor they knew.

A PRISON TRAGEDY



DANNY BRADY was a foolish young man, but he had quite enough intelligence to know that his appeal, which he would make automatically, was doomed to failure. He was completely satisfied on the subject

when the governor, making his morning visit to the condemned cell, told him that a parcel of books had arrived for him.

He showed Danny the list and told him he could have one volume at a time. Danny chose "The Life of Napoleon." He spent the greater part of the day writing a letter to the girl he would never see again, and took "The Life of Napoleon" to bed with him. About eleven o'clock he put the book on the floor.

"Leave it there," he said to one of the watchers. "I don't think I am going to sleep very well to-night."

Now, a condemned prisoner may not sleep with his face covered. When Danny drew the coarse sheet over his head one of the watching warders admonished him.

"Turn down that sheet!" he said.

Just at that moment the sheet began to go red very rapidly, for Danny had cut his throat with a safety-razor blade which had been carefully bound into the cover of the book.

All the available doctors could not save Danny's life; he died before twelve. The prison governor and four warders sat up all night long taking evidence from the warders concerned.

Mr. Reeder went down and saw the book. Afterwards he called at a London hotel where he knew Kressholm was staying. The man had recovered something of his old poise. He expressed his deep sorrow at the death of his young friend, but could give no information about that fatal "Life of Napoleon." He admitted that in his youth he had been a bookbinder—that fact was registered on his documents at Scotland Yard, for Bob Kressholm had been twice in the hands of the police.

"I know nothing about it," he said. "I only put 'bookbinder' because I thought I'd get an easy job in prison. I don't see how the razor-blade could be put into the binding—"

"It is a very simple matter," said Mr. Reeder patiently. "The boy had only to tear off the inside paper, and it was easy, because it was stuck with gum that had not even been set."

He and Gaylor made a search of the man's baggage, but found nothing in the nature of a bookbinding outfit. There was not sufficient evidence to have justified an arrest, but Kressholm spent that night in Scotland Yard answering interminable questions, and was a weary man when they had finished with him.

The sensation came into the afternoon

papers in the shape of a short paragraph issued by Scotland Yard:

"Daniel Brady, lying under sentence of death, succeeded in committing suicide last night at eleven o'clock. The weapon was a safety-razor blade which had been smuggled in to the prisoner, bound in the cover of a book, by some person or persons unknown."

It was the next day that the inquest provided the full story of the tragedy. Mr. Reeder read it from start to finish, though he had heard the evidence of every witness before the case came to court. He was reading the newspaper in the room where he had interviewed Kressholm, and had put it down by his side, when there was a tap at his door and his housekeeper came in.

"Will you see a man named Joseph Brady?" she asked.

Mr. Reeder drew a long breath. He looked from the woman to the newspaper, then picked up the paper, carefully folded it and put it into his waste-paper basket.

"Yes, I will see Joseph Brady," he said softly.



Mad with fu his death an

Joe had not changed, save that his hair, which had been red, was almost white, and the smooth face that Reeder had known was drawn and haggard.

Reeder pushed up a chair for the stricken man, and he dropped into it. For fully five minutes neither spoke, then Joe lifted his head and said:

"Thank heaven he went that way!"

Reeder nodded.

"I read about the case in prison." Brady's voice was even and steady. "I thought I'd get to London in time to see him, but I got there the morning after it happened. I could have seen him then, but it would have meant going to the inquiry and giving evidence and telling a lot of things that I want to keep to myself."

There was another long interregnum of silence. The man sat, head bent, his hands to his face. He showed no other evidence of his emotion. After a while he looked up.

"You're as straight a man as I've ever met, Reeder. I've heard other lags say they look upon you more as a pal than an enemy, but that isn't why I've come to see you. I've come to talk about"—there was a pause—"Kressholm—Bob Kressholm."

"Why bother with him?" asked Mr. Reeder, and knew he was saying something very inane.

A quick smile came and left the man's face.

"I thought I'd tell you something. I know all that Kressholm's done to my boy, and I know why he did it—about this kid Wenna, I mean. No, I haven't seen her; I won't see her yet. I've been talking with the boys, you know—the underworld, you call it—"

"I don't, but quite a lot of people do. And what did they tell you?"

"They say Danny was caught on a squeal—that somebody planted you to get him. The same man, I guess, who told you about

my printing plant in the caravan." He paused expectantly, and when Mr. Reeder said nothing he laughed harshly. "I thought so! I've got money—stacks of it. I'm one of the few crooks who have ever made a fortune and kept it. I'm going to spend that money wisely. I'm going to use it to kill Kressholm."

Mr. Reeder murmured something admonitory, but the man shook his head.

"I'm telling you that I'm going to kill him. That's going to be my little joke. But I shan't be caught, and I shan't be punished. I'm going to hang him, Reeder—hang him by the neck till he's dead. That's the sentence I've passed on him! And neither you nor any other man will know it. That's the thought that's keeping me sane."

"You're mad, Joe," said Mr. Reeder, with unusual roughness. "No murderer ever gets away with it in this country. I'm not taking too much notice of what you say—I feel terribly sorry for you. If I were not an—um—officer of the law I should say he deserved almost anything that's coming to him. Get out of the country—go to the Cape or somewhere. I'll help you at Scotland Yard—"

Red Joe shook his head.

"I stay here. I'm not leaving this country, even if Kressholm leaves. He'll come back—there's nothing more certain than that—and I'll kill him, Reeder! I came to tell you that, and to tell Scotland Yard that."

He picked up his hat and walked to the door. For once in his life Mr. Reeder found himself entirely devoid of speech. He walked to the window and looked out. A taxi-cab was waiting; he saw the man enter and drive off, and, going back to the telephone, he called Gaylor.

The inspector was out and was not reachable. Mr. Reeder contented himself with writing the gist of the interview and sending it by express post to Scotland Yard.

It occurred to him afterwards that it was his duty to arrest the man summarily; he was a convict on licence, and had uttered threats to murder, which in itself was a felony. But somehow that solution never occurred to Mr. Reeder. And it must be admitted, although he was on the side of the law, that it took him a long time to energise himself into ringing up the hotel where he knew Kressholm was staying. He did not expect to find that good hater, and was surprised when, after a short delay, Kressholm's voice replied to his.

The man listened and laughed scornfully. Evidently something had happened which had removed his fear of Red Joe, and what that something was Mr. Reeder was curious to know, but was not satisfied. It was Bob Kressholm who pointed out the strict path of duty, and Mr. Reeder was pardonably annoyed.

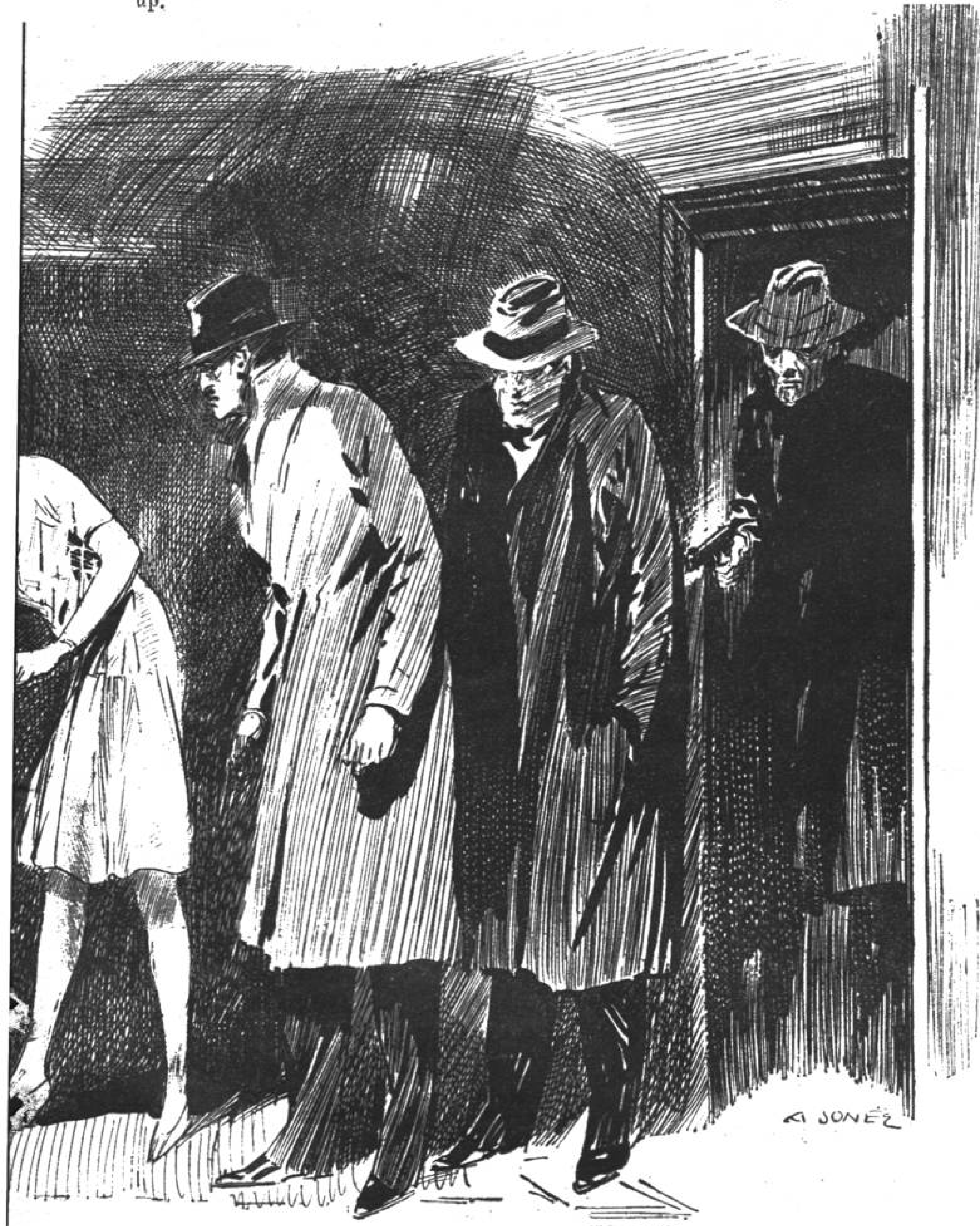
"If he threatened me, why didn't you pinch him?" demanded Kressholm. "You'd look silly if he did me in—but he won't."

"Why are you so sure, my dear friend?" asked Mr. Reeder gently.

"Because, my dear friend," mocked Kressholm's voice, "I am a pretty difficult man to reach."

#### THE CARAVAN SECRET.

MR. REEDER was well aware of the fact—Kressholm never moved without his escort of gunmen. He had seen them hovering in the background that day at the Old Bailey. Not for nothing was he called "the governor"; the very title presupposed a following. He had doubted his escort since he heard that Red Joe was out



ry, the girl stood over the bound figure of Mr. Reeder, accusing him of sending Danny to and threatening him with a terrible revenge. Then the door slowly opened and a figure, gun in hand, appeared in the aperture.

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of prison. A man slept in the rooms on either side of him. He had a guard outside the hotel. Kressholm would have gone to Paris—he knew the bolt-holes better there; and had a certain pull with important officials, and, but for Wenna, he would have left England on the day of the inquest. But Wenna was unusually humble and pathetically helpless. Old Lew Haddin came down to London to bring her back to the show. He was not so much concerned by the tragedy which had broken her as by the loss of a great circus attraction.

"I'll come when I'm ready," she said.

Lew complained sadly to Kressholm that girls were quite different from what they had been in the days of his mother.

"No respect for God or man—or fathers," he quavered. "She's afraid of nothing. She was making lions jump through hoops when she was ten, and she thinks no more of dropping two thousand feet on a parachute than you and me would think of walking downstairs."

He complained, but left her alone.

She had so far forgotten her old detestation of Bob Kressholm that she used to go to dinner with him in his suite. If she contributed nothing to his happiness—for she would sit for hours, hardly speaking a word, staring past him—she added zest and determination to this man who was in her thrall. He saw a grand culmination to these years of disappointment and rebuff. Red Joe he did not fear—he would be "taken care of." If he was uneasy at all it was because Joe made no direct attempt to see him, did not communicate by word or letter.

Though he professed to be without fear, he heaved a sigh of relief when he heard, from the man whom he had set to shadow him, that Brady had left one afternoon for the Continent. For one moment he had an idea of ringing up Scotland Yard and reporting this irregularity. A convict is not allowed to leave the district to which he is assigned, and a breach of this law might bring his return to prison to complete his sentence.

Only once he spoke to Wenna Haddin about Joe. She answered his question with a shake of the head

"No, I haven't seen him—poor man, I expect he's too heartbroken to see anybody. I think if anybody loved Danny as much as I did it was his father."

She thought for a long time, then she said:

"I'd like to see him. Perhaps he'd help."

"With Reeder?" And, when she nodded: "Don't be silly! Joe thinks Reeder is the best chap in the world! That surprises you, doesn't it? But then, you see, Joe doesn't know what Reeder's done for him. That old man is as artful as the devil. If you told Joe he'd laugh at you."

She was eyeing him steadily.

"Why? If you can convince me you could convince him."

He was rather taken aback.

"I didn't convince you, I merely told you the truth," he said.

She did not answer this, and he reached out and laid his hand on hers. She made no attempt to withdraw it.

"Poor Red Joe!" Her voice softened.

He never knew how simple or complex she was; whether she was either, or just a humdrum medium made radiant through the eyes of his passion. Old Lew Haddin, white-haired and obese, could talk for hours in his monotonous, sleep-making voice, and always the subject was Wenna and her peculiar values. Red Joe once said she had the brains of a general, but, by accounts, some generals are rather stupid.

"Why poor Joe?" he asked, and suddenly tightened his grip on her hand.

"We have kept his caravan just as he left it," she said. "Nobody uses it, of course; I tidy it every week. Lew grumbles at the cost of haulage" (she invariably referred to her parent in this familiar way), "and deducts it from Joe's share—he owns half the park." As she spoke she looked at him oddly. "You are a friend of Joe's?"

"Yes."

She nodded.

"Then I can ask you something. He was charged with forging banknotes, wasn't he? Could they imprison him again supposing they found something else against him?"

Kressholm became suddenly very attentive.

"Like what?" he asked.

"Bonds and letters of credit. I found the plates in the wall lining of the caravan. He had a sort of secret panel there. Nobody knew it."

Bob Kressholm's heart leapt.

"Are they there still?" he asked. He tried to give a note of carelessness to his inquiry.

She nodded.

"Yes, the plates, and the papers, and everything. Could the law punish him for that?"

He considered this.

"I shouldn't think so," he said.

He had hazy notions about the English law, but here he saw the making of a second charge, which might easily dispose of a serious menace. She told him that Joe had had an assistant, a man who still worked with the circus, and who was the only person besides herself who had access to the van.

When he left her that night Kressholm had made up his mind. He tried to get in touch with the detective, but J. G. Reeder was out of town. He was working on a case in the South of England. What that case was Kressholm learned from the newspapers, and his hopes rose higher.

#### THE LIAR.



MR. REEDER was very heavily engaged, but found time to call at Kressholm's hotel.

"I'd have come to you—" began Bob.

"I'd rather you didn't." J. G. could be offensive on occasions.

"I have already a—um—bad name in Brockley."

Kressholm swallowed this with a grin.

"I noticed in the newspapers that you were working on a case, and I wondered if I could help you," he said. "I'd like to do you a turn if I could."

"I'm so sure of that," murmured Mr. Reeder. "It is a great joy to know that one's efforts are appreciated by the—um—unconvicted classes."

Without further preliminary Kressholm told him of what he had learnt from the girl, and J. G. Reeder listened without apparent interest. Yet, if this story were true, here was a big link in the chain he was piecing together with such difficulty.

"Are you sure that this story isn't suggested by the foolish paragraph you read in the newspapers?" he asked.

"If I die this minute—" began Kressholm.

"You would go straight to hell," said Mr. Reeder gravely. He was one of those old-fashioned people who believed in hell.

"No, this is straight, Mr. Reeder," protested Kressholm. "I thought that you

ought to know this. I'm not telling you this because I'm scared of Joe, so that I want to get him out of the way. I am telling you—well—because I feel that you ought to know."

Mr. Reeder nodded slowly.

"In the interest of justice, of course," he said. "Very—um—commendable. Where is this—er—entertainment park at the present moment?"

"They will be near Barnet next Monday," said Kressholm; then, anxiously: "What is the law on the subject, Mr. Reeder?"

J. G. pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"I'm not a lawyer," he said. "But, of course, it is very, very wrong to—um—be in possession of the instruments of forgery. And this assistant, you say, is still carrying on the—er—bad work?"

"So she—se I understand," Kressholm corrected himself hastily.

He offered a suggestion which was received without comment. Joe's caravan was invariably parked on the outside edge of the camp, and could be approached without observation. The night watchman who patrolled the fair ground rarely went as far.

"I will undertake to get you the key of the van. As a matter of fact, I am staying the night on Monday. I suppose you could get a search-warrant, and that sort of thing; but I am asking you as a personal favour to make sure I'm right before you get a warrant. I do not want to be brought into this."

"You don't want to be brought into anything, Mr. Kressholm," said Reeder unpleasantly. "Hitherto you have been very successful. Is the young lady a friend of yours now?"

If he had stopped to think, Bob Kressholm would have realised that no young lady's name had been mentioned.

"We have always been good friends," he said, and then realised his mistake. "I suppose you mean Miss Haddin? I don't know what she's got to do with it."

"A nice young lady, but rather—impetuous," said Mr. Reeder. "She thought I was responsible for Joe's arrest, when really it was you. She probably thinks I was responsible for Danny Brady's death, when it was—um—you know, I think, who it was. It is all very interesting."

Mr. Reeder had something to think about. Nobody credited so staid and matter-of-fact a man with such an insatiable sense of curiosity as he possessed. All that night until he retired to his chaste bed-room he pondered the information Bob Kressholm had offered. His acquaintance with the law told him that the re-arrest of Red Joe would be followed by an acquittal. The man had served imprisonment for an act of forgery, and if some other act, which had occurred concurrently, was revealed, the law would take a lenient view.

The mysterious assistant was another matter. Mr. Reeder had not heard of an assistant, but then there was quite a number of happenings about which he knew nothing.

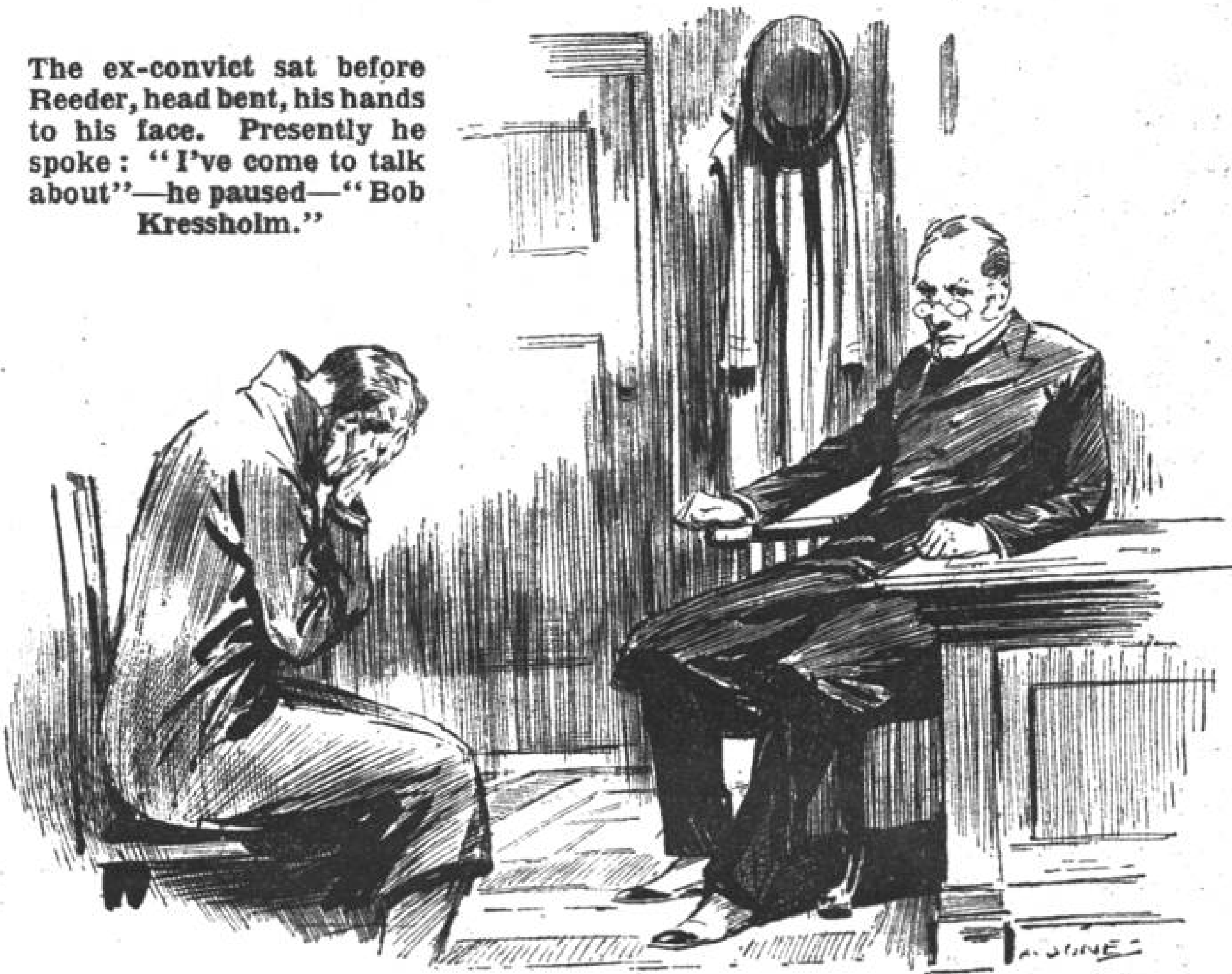
It was a coincidence that he had been occupied for two or three days with the matter of forged letters of credit. There was no secret about this. The fact that the forged letters had been cashed and that Mr. J. G. Reeder, "the well-known forgery expert," had been in consultation with certain bank managers in Brighton had been published in the morning newspaper, and had been read by Kressholm. The man who was passing the letters had also negotiated some bearer bonds of a spurious

character. That fact, too, was public property.

And yet all the evidence he had accumulated pointed to a certain *hochstapler* in Berlin about whom the Berlin Criminal Court were pursuing close inquiries. There was a German end to it beyond any doubt, but that did not mean that the letters had not been forged in England. A search warrant would be easy to secure, and as easy to execute. Yet he hesitated to make the necessary application. If the truth be told, Mr. Reeder had a sneaking sympathy with Red Joe.

The police thought they had removed every kind of plate and press from the van. It was quite possible that the press had been renewed and was being employed to

The ex-convict sat before Reeder, head bent, his hands to his face. Presently he spoke: "I've come to talk about"—he paused—"Bob Kressholm."



print from the plates which only Joe could have made. He consulted Gaylor on the subject, but the inspector was not enthusiastic. It was one of those frequently recurring periods when the police were unpopular because they had failed to secure two important convictions, and the usual questions were being asked in the House of Commons.

"It's the German crowd, I should think. Where did you get the information from? I'm sorry."

That was a question that police officers did not ask Mr. Reeder; he either volunteered the source or refused it, for he was very jealous about betraying the confidence of the least worthy of men. There was reason in this, because such revelations frequently compromised other and more important "squeaks."

Reviewing all the possibilities, J. G. Reeder decided not to pay a nocturnal visit to the Haddin menage, and when Mr. Kressholm rang him up at his home, he cut short the elaboration of that gentleman's instructions.

It was a disappointed man who travelled to Barnet on the Monday afternoon, though his discomfort was short-lived.

He had re-established contact with Wenna Haddin—an amazing accomplishment, all the more remarkable because he had recovered all the old fascination she had

exercised. Ten years is a very long time; men and women change in that period, especially women.

But time had stood still for Wenna; the slim beauty of her went to his head like wine, and when she gave him a cold welcome at the door of the big caravan which old Lew had built for her, he could have shut his eyes and believed that it was only yesterday that their acquaintance had ended dramatically in that little plantation near the Exeter fair ground.

"Lew is away," she said. "He has gone to Liverpool to see a shipment of wild beasts that has arrived from Africa. You will sleep in his van."

He glanced at her sleeping bunk, covered now with a gaily-coloured cloth. Above

the head of the bed was a framed photograph of Danny Brady—the only picture in the van.

"Poor old Dan!" he said. "I feel responsible."

She looked at him steadily.

"Why?" she asked.

Kressholm shrugged his shoulders.

"I should have given him a better training. Honestly, I tried to keep him out of the crooked game, Wenna."

She smiled faintly.

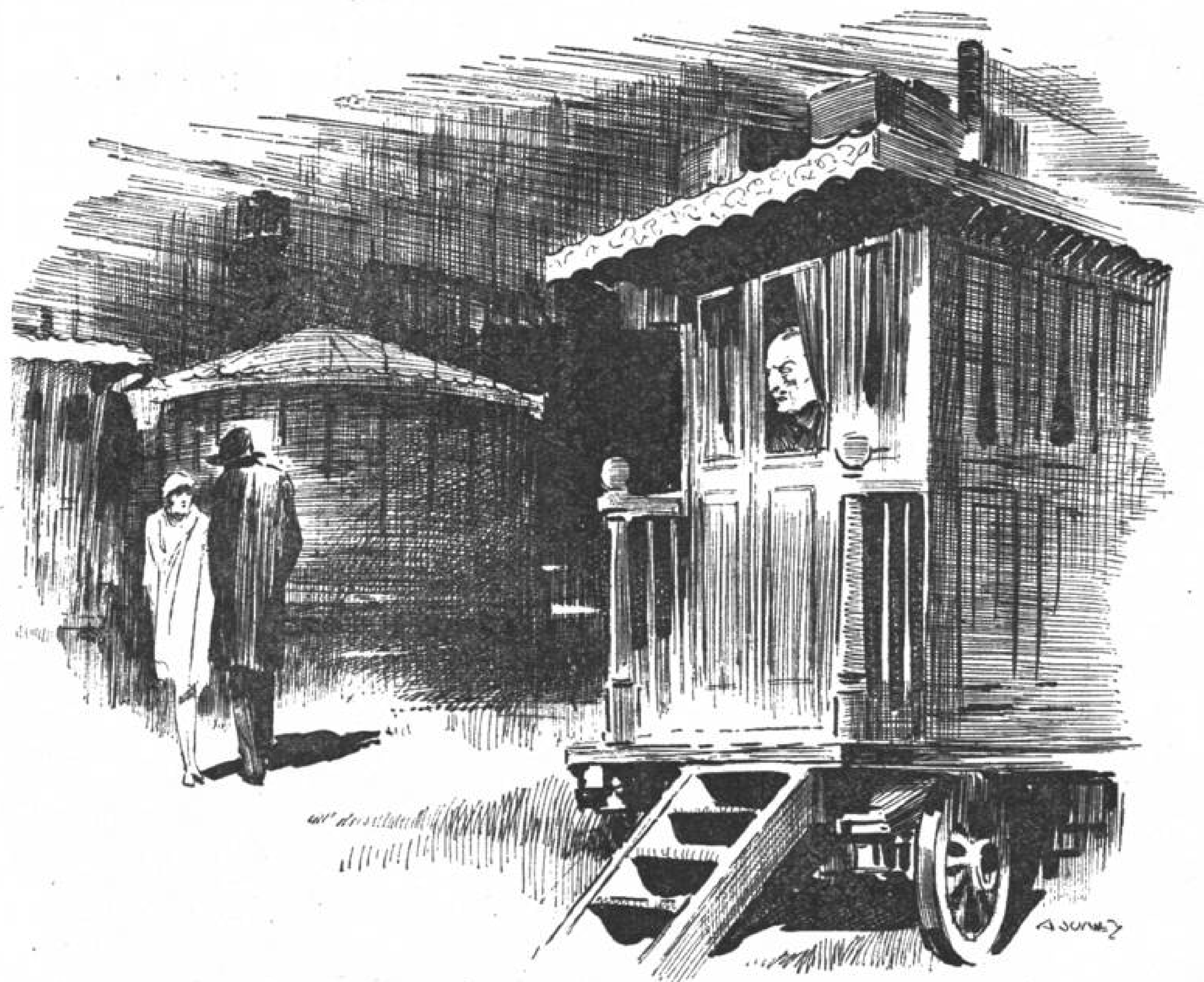
"He was too useful for you to keep him out," she said. "Let us be sincere with one another as far as we can be."

She had the disconcerting habit of directness—nobody made Bob Kressholm feel so foolish as she did.

"You're 'the governor,' aren't you? I've heard about you, of course," she went on. "We have all sorts of queer people working for us—old gaolbirds, and people who should be if they had everything that was coming to them. Were you in London when Danny was arrested?"

He shook his head.

"I rarely leave Paris." And then, feeling that the occasion called for a little frankness: "I'll tell you the truth, Wenna. I knew that Danny was doing this job. He was one of my best men. He was impetuous and undisciplined. The last thing I said to him before he left Paris was, 'For



Drawing the caravan curtains, Bob Kressholm peered out. A man moved out of the shadow of a covered wagon a dozen yards away, and then, to his amazement, he saw a girl's figure go to meet the mysterious watcher.

heaven's sake, don't carry a gun.' He promised me he wouldn't."

She was looking past him out of the curtained window, and she sighed.

"Reeder, of course, knew as much about the business as I did—I'll hand it to that old bird; he's got the best information bureau in the world."

She looked round at him.

"And yet he's never caught you," she said. "That's queer, isn't it?"

Bob Kressholm chuckled.

"The man who catches me has got to be up very early in the morning," he said complacently.

#### AT 4 A.M.



WENNA changed the subject abruptly, told him the news of the camp. They had had to shoot an elephant the previous week; he had got out of hand and attacked his keeper. Four new

turns were coming from Germany; they were acrobats, and a new woman rider.

He learned from another source, when he was wandering about the grounds, watching the men renovating the vans, that Wenna had had a narrow escape from death when the fair was at Nottingham. The old balloon in which she made her spectacular ascent had burst in mid-air, and she had only just time to release herself. Even then, the parachute did not open until she was less than a hundred feet from the ground. Fortunately, she had fallen on the top of a straw rick, uninjured.

He talked to her about this over the meal she had served in her van.

"It was nothing," she said carelessly. "I was hoping the parachute wouldn't open—I'm glad it did now. There's something I want to do very badly. Lew's got a new balloon; it's the one you saw being filled in the grounds."

"You've got to cut this parachute-jumping, Wenna," he said.

"Why?" she asked. She did not raise her eyes from her plate.

"You're going to cut the circus business altogether." His voice shook a little. "This morning you said I was the governor—I am. I've made a fortune, Wenna, and I'm cutting my little circus, too. I've bought a villa at Como, where I'm going to live half the year, and I'm going to travel the other half. I'm going to call it the Villa Wenna."

"Why?" she asked again, and when he spoke his voice was husky.

"I've wanted you all these years, and now more than ever. I've only loved two women in my life, Wenna, and you make me forget the other one."

She pushed the plate away from her and looked up at him suddenly.

"Is this a marriage proposal, or are you suggesting one of those attachments that are so popular in circuses?" she asked coolly.

Her self-possession took his breath away.

"Why, of course—marriage," he blurted. "You're thinking of what happened that time at Exeter? I've hated myself ever since. Wenna, I'm crazy about you."

He reached out for her hand, but this time she drew it away.

"I'll think about it," she said brusquely, and at that moment the big Swede who was her servant came in with a huge pot of coffee.

He was a big man, hideously ugly, and

lame in one leg, the result of a bad fall; he and his brother had been Wenna's bodyguard as long as she could remember. They were both past the age for active work in the ring, but Kressholm had always thought, and had no reason to change his opinion now, that he would prefer the hug of a bear to a rough and tumble with these broad-shouldered giants.

"Stephan wears well," he said, when the man had gone, and added jocularly: "I believe if you told him to cut my throat he'd do it."

She seemed disinclined to discuss Stephan, and when the table was cleared she found a pack of cards and they played picquet together. Throughout the game she seldom spoke, and he had the impression that her mind was far away from the cards, though she played with all her old skill. But in other respects she was vague, distraite, and when she spoke at all, which was rarely, she gave him the impression that she was making a conscious effort.

At the end she threw down her hand and leaned back in her folding chair with a sigh.

"So you're going to marry me, are you, and take me away out of all this? Como?" She shivered, and her face hardened. "That's where we were going, to Como—Danny and I," she said, very evenly. And then she changed the subject with that odd abruptness which he had observed of late. "Have you seen Reeder?"

The question startled him out of his self-possession.

"Reeder?" he stammered. "No; why should I see Reeder? You've got that man on your mind."

She nodded.

"Yes, very much on my mind. You haven't seen him?" Her eyes were searching his face.

Kressholm laughed. He realised how artificial that laugh was. Wenna turned to a cupboard set in the wall by the bed-head, and, opening it, took out a key.

"You asked me if you could look over Joe's van—here is the key of it. You won't find the plates, and you're not to make any attempt. I'm trying to get in touch with Joe. I want him to take the things away."

She was going to say something, but checked herself, walked to the door and opened it.

"Good-night," she said.

He tried to take her hand, intending no more than to kiss it, but she snatched it away from him and slammed the door before he was half-way down the steps.

He found the Swede waiting to show him to his van.

"You want to see Joe's van, don't you?" He had a hoarse, deep voice which was hardly human.

"Sure," said Kressholm. "You might show me where it is. I don't think I'll look at it to-night; I'll wait till the morning."

The Swede led the way in silence past shrouded wagons and traction-engines, stopping before a van the contour of which, despite the darkness, Kressholm recognised. He only wanted to locate it, in case Reeder changed his mind. Then he followed the Swede back to his own sleeping-place, bade him good-night, and went inside, bolting the door.

(Continued on page 142.)



# THE FINE ART OF FORGERY

A Striking Article on How "Dud" Notes get into Circulation.

EVERY now and again there is a great scare about the passing of "dud" notes—both Bank of England and Treasury. They are about the last things on this earth you would expect anyone to try to copy, but it is frequently done to sheer perfection.

At first the difficulties in the forger's way may not appear so colossal as they actually are. But look at a Bank of England note very carefully. Yes, you say, the design is very complicated, and there is some extremely intricate engraving. The paper, too, is specially prepared, and it is the watermark in this that is one of the chief stumbling-blocks of the note-forger.

Then there are the words "Bank of England." They are used very freely, and the forger must not miss one in his home-made note. Get hold of one of the new one pound bank-notes. Go over it with a fine tooth-comb, so to speak, and count up the times those words, "Bank of England," occur.

Two hundred of those groups of words can be counted, plainly enough. But including the word-groups where part of "Bank of England" is hidden by other lettering and the design of the note, the phrase occurs two hundred and forty-seven times!

So the pains to which the forger must go, to produce a note that will pass the scrutiny of the most eagle-eyed of cashiers and bank officials, is absolutely infinite. That the forgers so frequently succeed, is made manifest by the newspaper reports which crop up regularly registering warning from the authorities for everyone to look twice, and then again, at every note which is in the slightest degree suspicious.

Starting with the peculiar and characteristic paper on which these forged notes are so cleverly printed, this is very difficult to obtain. It is manufactured practically in secret, and naturally the precious stuff is jealously guarded. Without it, the average forger's hopes of manufacturing something which would pass even on top of a bus on a pitch-dark night would be almost nil. For the very first thing you observe about a bank-note is that it crackles.

For more than two hundred years that genuine paper, the particular property of the Bank of England, has been made in one mill only. Forgers have long since given up the attempt to "pinch" supplies of it, and so every scrap they use has to be manufactured by themselves. This paper proved such a stumbling-block at first that for sixty-four years there wasn't a single attempt at bank-note forgery.

Then, when someone started the ball rolling, forgery became astonishingly brisk. The Bank was "done in the eye" to a severe extent, particularly by a genius known as Price. At engraving he was an absolute master. He copied the wording and designs on bank-notes until he could do them with his eyes shut.

The next thing was making the paper. He managed it—how, Mr. Price only knows. Then came the question of ink, for the actual printing. Well, he managed to provide himself with ink in every way similar to that used on genuine notes. He had to get down to the printing after that. To bring in a private printer would have meant sharing the spoils—and increasing his chances of expiating his crime on the scaffold.

But Charles Price was going the whole hog, so straightway he set up his own private printing press! Then the forged notes started to roll out merrily, but nothing of his activities was suspected until the Bank cashiers were treated to a perfect stagerer by the discovery that they had paid out on at least fourteen forged one hundred pound notes!

He was run to earth eventually through the messenger whom he employed to change the spurious notes. This man did the work in all innocence. Time and again he used to be sent to buy lottery tickets, with bank-notes of high denomination. Scarcely any other job was given to him by his employer—whom, by the way, the messenger never got a good look at.

The employer was always heavily muffled, and always the messenger had to deliver the lottery tickets and the change (the most important part of the business, of course) to his employer, who was waiting for him in a coach in the locality.

For a time the frequency with which he had to go for lottery tickets did not seem at all peculiar to him, for then lotteries were approved and even encouraged by the government, and there was always at least one "on." At last he did grow curious as to the why and wherefore of his job, but before he could grow really inquisitive the Bow Street Runners got him.

There wasn't much he could tell the police, other than his employer's address. And even that wasn't much use, for when the Bow Street men went to that address, the bird had flown. Mr. Price had departed briskly—but the forgeries did not stop. He was a wealthy stockbroker, which, in itself, would have served to divert suspicion from him.

But he was suspicious enough himself, for it was proved afterwards that not a step did his messenger take on one of his master's criminal errands but he was shadowed closely by a woman, who was the stockbroker's confederate.

Price cropped up again later on, invisible as usual, this time practising a different kind of forgery. With consummate cheek and skill, he started adding "oughts" to genuine notes, transferring tens into hundreds and hundreds into thousands! People were now beginning to be afraid of every bank-note offered them, for even the highest trained bank officials were hard put to it sometimes to say definitely whether one of their notes was genuine or otherwise.

The end came with dramatic suddenness. A big party was given one night, at which silver plate on the tables was admired tremendously. Some of that rich plate had been hired specially for the occasion. It wasn't returned when it should have been, and the tradesman who owned it decided to pay in the bank-notes which had been deposited by the hirer against its prompt return. The notes were dud!

The tradesman had no difficulty in proving whence he got the notes. They came from a wealthy stockbroker, who was no other than the one and only Mr. Price. That fixed the forger completely and finally. But, fearing to face disgrace and trial and most probably Tyburn Tree, the guilty man robbed the executioner of a job by taking his own life.



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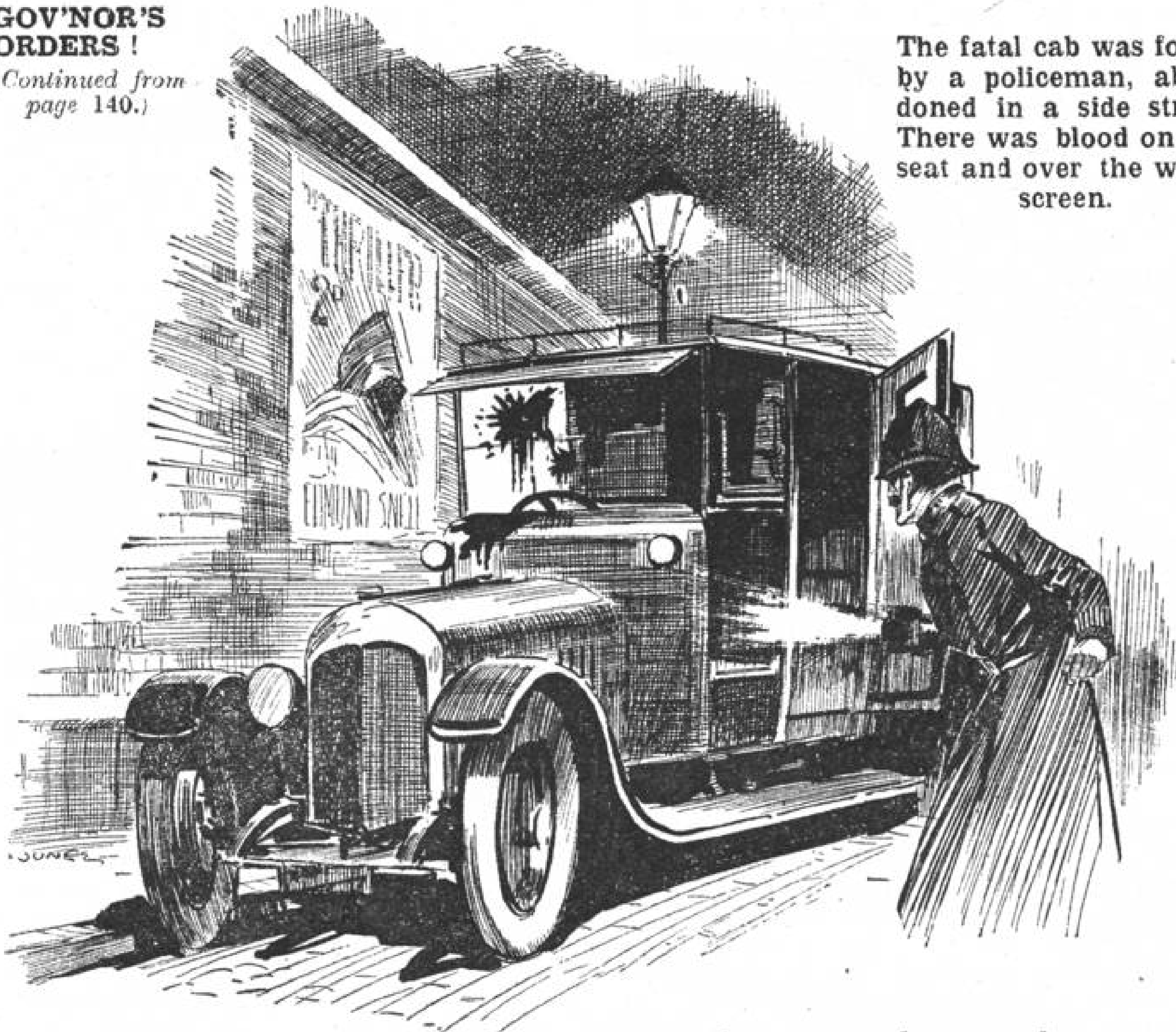
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## GOV'NOR'S ORDERS!

(Continued from page 140.)



The fatal cab was found by a policeman, abandoned in a side street. There was blood on the seat and over the wind-screen.

Wenna puzzled him. He had the sense that she was expecting some tremendous happening; her mind was certainly not upon her visitor.

By the aid of a travelling-lamp which the Swede had lit for him, Kressholm sat down to finish some important work that he had begun before he had left London. It was true that he was surrendering the title of which he was so proud, and the chieftainship of the group of gangs which he had directed so skilfully. There was reason, more or less; his jewellery factory at Antwerp had been visited by the police, and from the fact that they were accompanied by an English detective, Bob Kressholm guessed that this search was a direct consequence of the Seven Sisters raid.

The French police were working, too. He had received news that a "club" of his had been raided; worse still, his own private apartments on the Etoile had been visited by detectives and searched.

Unless he had fallen into some error, it was impossible that he could be associated either with the gang or with the Antwerp establishment. His connection with questionable enterprises was hidden four deep, and the police would be clever to connect him with any of the big jewel robberies which had exercised European police circles during the past five years.

Now was a good time to finish, with Joe on his track, and Reeder knowing considerably more about him than he had guessed.

He was totalling up his investments and bank balances in various parts of Europe, and the sum of them was most satisfactory.

He undressed, put out the light and went to bed. He did not sleep well, though the bed was comfortable enough. Somewhere in the fair-ground a lion was roaring hungrily throughout the night. He dozed, only to wake to a sound which, even in his sleep, had got on his nerves.

He looked at his watch; it had stopped, and, heaving out of bed, he went to the door, drew aside the curtains and looked out.

He uttered an exclamation under his breath.

A man moved out of the shadow of a

covered wagon a dozen yards away, and then, to his amazement, he saw a girl's figure go to meet the unknown watcher. A distant church bell boomed four o'clock.

The man and the girl had disappeared. Presently they came into view again—it was Wenna. There was no other figure like hers in the world; he could not be mistaken.

She stood for a little time, talking in whispers to the Swedish giant, then stole away as softly as she had come.

He was puzzled, a little alarmed. What were they doing there at that hour of the morning? He resolved to ask the girl at the first opportunity. Though he had advertised his fearlessness, he shot a second bolt on the door and went back to bed. It was daylight when he woke to the hammering on the door. The Swede was wearing his Sunday best suit, and a collar that fitted awkwardly round his muscular throat.

"If you want any breakfast you'd better have it," he growled. "Hans and I are going away for the day."

He brought in a tray and put it on the bed whilst he fixed the table folded against the wall of the caravan. When Kressholm had dressed and shaved he went to the girl's van and found her sitting on the steps, a cigarette between her white fingers. There was no evidence that she had been up all night; she was as fresh and rested as though she had slept the clock round.

"How did you sleep?" she asked, without looking at him.

"Badly. You ought to give those lions something to eat. Wenna, what were you doing near my caravan at four this morning?"

He expected her to deny this, but, to his surprise, she did not attempt to conceal her presence at that hour.

"Somebody left open a door of the monkey cage, and a couple of them got out," she said. "They usually obey me—we found them. Did I disturb you, or was it the lions? They're old, and angry because they can never get enough to eat. I want Lew to shoot them and get another pair. Sims, the trainer, is afraid of them, which is bad—Lew will have to fire that man. When a trainer is scared of the animals he's taming, he ought to quit."

"I'll do a little taming," he said good-humouredly.

"You!" was all she said, but it annoyed him.

Before he could express his annoyance she went on:

"There was only one man who could deal with lions, and that was Joe. They'd stand on their heads for him, though he was never a trainer. Give me that key!"

He had forgotten all about the key.

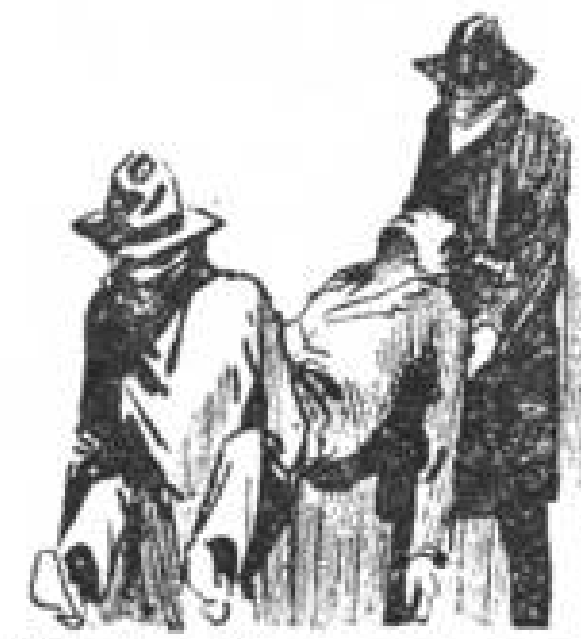
"I thought of looking round Joe's van," he said.

"I've changed my mind," she said.

She was waiting on the step to take the key from him.

Something was wrong; how badly wrong he could not guess. He did not know that she had been waiting all that night for the advent of Mr. Reeder, and that she had counted on his treachery to bring the detective into her hands. Her hatred of the man who had brought her lover to his death was an overwhelming obsession. Reeder did not know this; it was unguessed even by Kressholm. He was to make a discovery before the night was out.

## THE CONVICT'S REVENGE.



MR. REEDER had had a heavy day. He had been successful in isolating, if not in capturing, the authors of the letter of credit. They were, as he suspected, a German gang operating in Leipzig.

That afternoon he spent the greater part of an hour on the telephone, speaking to the German police, and, though weary in mind and body, he had the satisfaction of an accomplishment as he made his way home.

He left Scotland Yard just before dark, and reached home without any mishap. His housekeeper came to him and reeled off the names of callers and the gist of telephone messages. She had an unusual memory, and rarely committed telephone messages or even names and addresses to paper. He listened with closed eyes, stirring his tea, as he went through her record.

"A man called a quarter of an hour before you came in—a very tall man—a foreigner, I think. He wanted to see you. He said his name was Jones."

"A very foreign name," murmured Mr. Reeder, in a facetious mood. "One of the Joneses of Constantinople!"

The housekeeper, who had no sense of humour at all, said she wasn't sure about that.

"What did he want—just to see me?"

"That's all, sir. I thought he acted a bit odd."

Mr. Reeder smiled benevolently.

"All people act odd, according to you, my dear lady. I'm afraid you have a mystery complex. You read too many—um—detective stories. Did anybody else call and act odd?"

She couldn't recall anybody who was not absolutely normal. Strange people did come to this modest house in Brockley Road, and they had names that were stranger than Jones. Mr. Reeder did not regard the personality or business of this particular visitor worth considering, and settled himself down to spend a peaceful evening preparatory to an early retirement. He had hardly finished his toast when his housekeeper came bustling in.

"He's called again—Jones. He says he's got a message from Mr. Brady—Mr. Joseph Brady."

Reeder nodded.

"Show him up."

The big man who came awkwardly into

the room he had never seen before; he could not have forgotten a face like Stephan's.

"I come from Mr. Brady." He spoke very slowly, in the sing-song tone of a Scandinavian, and he was obviously ill at ease.

"What is the message?" asked Reeder.

The man cleared his throat.

"He asked me to say you come to him because he is ill, and he dare not come out because of all these talks about credit letters."

Mr. Reeder frowned. So far as he knew, Joe Brady was abroad.

"Where is he now?"

"He is out of bed, got up," said the man, "and now he himself is downstairs in the car."

"Tell him to come here."

The man shook his head.

"He will not come, that he says. If you will speak for him a little while, he shall be very pleased. I was with him working at the circus, the assistant of him."

Mr. Reeder remembered the mysterious assistant whom for a short space of time he had suspected.

"All right; go down and wait. I will be with you very shortly."

It was not extraordinary for him to have these furtive interviews with men who, wisely or wrongly, refused to come to his rooms, and, although it was not what he expected of Red Joe, there might be a very special reason, and there was no harm in learning what it was.

When he got downstairs and closed the front door behind him he saw the man waiting on the pavement. A spatter of rain was falling; the beginnings of a north-west gale swept the deserted street. Near to the kerb was what Reeder thought was a tradesman's small delivery van. He did not give it a great deal of attention until the man pointed to the curtained back of the vehicle.

"He is there. Because of his sickness we have to carry him on a bed."

J. G. Reeder was half-way to the van when he smelt the trap.

It was too late—an arm like a steel bar closed round his throat, a huge hand covered his mouth. But it was no feeble old gentleman that the Swede was throttling. Reeder wrenched round, and, freeing his arm, struck a blow which would have paralysed any man of ordinary strength.

"Hans!"

A second man leaped through the opening at the back of the van. Mr. Reeder did not feel the stick that struck him. When he recovered he was lying full length on a mattress. The car was apparently moving along a main thoroughfare, for he could hear the clang of tramcar bells. His hands and his legs were tied together, but they had not attempted to gag him.

"If you make a noise I hit you with this iron bar," said a threatening voice.

Stephan was squatting by his side.

Mr. Reeder's head ached a little, but not very much. He had, he boasted, the thickest skull of any man associated with the police force. But he would have dearly loved to have his hands free, and suggested this course in a weak voice which advertised his febleness to the hearers. But they were adamant.

Where were they taking him? He tried to catch a glimpse of the road they were following, but the tarpaulin covers at the back of the van had been laced tight. They were still on the tram-lines, and after a while he guessed by the fall in temperature that they were crossing the river.

He was resigned to anything which might happen, and was ready to justify whatever disaster might overtake him. His stupidity

had been unbelievable. To be caught by a trick which would not deceive the most junior detective that ever patrolled a London street! For that he deserved everything that happened.

But why—why? He had no active enemies; none, certainly, who could contrive so theatrical a vengeance. There were many who disliked him intensely, and prayed nightly for something unpleasant to happen to him; but they were first-year men, languishing in Dartmoor and Parkhurst, and no scheme of reprisals survives the first twelve months of prison. They would meet him when they were discharged with a self-conscious smile, and apologise to him for all the things they had promised when they were sentenced.

Kressholm's gang? It was hardly likely. Kressholm had nothing to gain.

Mr. Reeder then remembered the story of the caravan, the obvious step that had been made to bring him to the amusement park. Kressholm couldn't get him there one way, so he was trying another. And yet Kressholm had no reason for taking a step which might jeopardise his own safety.

The girl!

The solution came like a flash. Kressholm had been the dupe. Of course, it was the girl who had told him all this fanciful story about forged plates, and Kressholm had fallen for it. She knew he was a traitor, then? That was some satisfaction, though little comfort. Mr. Reeder began to take a serious view of the position. Men he knew, and he could foretell to an *nth* what steps they would take in certain eventualities; but a woman was a mystery to Mr. Reeder, and had always remained so. If this fiery young woman had any reason for avenging the death of Danny Brady there might be some unhappy consequences to this ride.

The journey seemed interminable, but

after something that was over an hour and seemed just within the limits of eternity, the car turned from the road and jolted over a rough track. Mr. Reeder's hearing was very good, though there were times when he pretended to be slightly deaf. He heard strange sounds which could only have one significance. He was being taken to a circus, and the mental prediction he had made was fulfilled.

There had been a scheme to get him here, but he was perfectly certain that Kressholm was not in it.

As the car stopped, Stephan leaned over and folded a silk handkerchief over his prisoner's mouth, knotting it tightly behind. He and the other man who descended from the driver's seat lifted the detective and carried him across the field.

Rain was falling more heavily now, and the wind was so strong that the men staggered under their burden. Their progress took them past a monstrous, pear-shaped object which swayed and rolled so far that it touched one of his bearers.

This was the balloon on the trapeze of which Wenna swung, to the awe of rustic crowds.

Presently he felt himself being lifted into a caravan, and a few seconds later was lying on the dusty floor. Red Joe's caravan—he recognised it, and well he might, for he had once searched it most thoroughly. Stephan dragged him partly to a sitting position and propped him against the wall before he unfastened the handkerchief about the prisoner's mouth.

The only light came from a tiny oil-lamp hanging on the wall, and by this he saw that the windows of the caravan were shuttered, as also was the glass upper half of the door. Hans went out, but Stephan waited.

"I hope you won't have to wake the



When Mr. Reeder came to he was lying bound and helpless on the floor of the van. A grim figure was bending over him. "Make a sound," said a snarling voice, "and I'll hit you with this iron bar."

young lady from her beauty sleep," said Mr. Reeder politely.

"You shut up!" growled the Swede. "You'll be sorry when she comes!"

"I shan't be sorry when you go," said Mr. Reeder frankly. "You have certainly the most unpleasant face I have ever seen. I hate to hurt your feelings, but—ugh!"

Before the Swede could answer him the door was pulled open, and Wenna Haddin came in. She wore no hat or coat; her blouse was spotted with rain, her hair wildly dishevelled. She looked what she was, the very spirit of fury.

"You know me?" she breathed.

He looked at her critically.

"Yes, I think so."

"Danny's girl—you know that! You tripped Danny. I've always hated you. You caught him, and then, when you knew he would appeal—"

She stopped. The words would not come.

"I found another means of killing him!" said Mr. Reeder. "Did Kressholm tell you that, too?"

"You know what I'm going to do to you, don't you?" she went on breathlessly. "I'm going to put you in the lions' cage, and if

anybody wants to know how it happened, we'll tell them about a man who was prowling in the night—a sneaking, prying old detective!"

She turned quickly. Somebody was turning the handle. Before she could shoot the bolt Kressholm was in the caravan, looking from one to the other.

"What's the idea? What are you doing?"

"What I tried to do last night," she said. Her voice was like steel. "I've got Reeder to the camp, where I wanted him! I thought you'd bring him—you told him all that I told you? Well, that was a lie—there are no plates here. I read in a newspaper that he was looking for forged letters of credit, and I passed this yarn on to you because I was sure you'd squeal. Joe always said you were a squealer!"

"And Joe," said Mr. Reeder, "was right."

There was a certain flippancy in his tone, though there was little excuse for light-heartedness.

"What are you going to do with him?"

Kressholm looked from the prisoner to the girl. The governor governed nobody now; he was ludicrously impotent.

"He's going in the lions' cage—that's where! Into the lions' cage, and if you interfere I'll put you there, too!"

She was half-hysterical. The actualities were more ugly than the plans of vengeance she had dreamed of. She was stricken with horror at the thing she planned to do.

The three of them stood looking down at where Reeder sat. Their backs to the door, none saw it open, until a rush of cold air made the girl turn.

"Hallo! Giving a party?" said the newcomer.

And then he saw Reeder, and his mouth opened wide.

"The man who murdered your son, Joe! Reeder—he sent you to prison—"

Her voice was shrill, unnatural. Watching her closely, Mr. Reeder saw that she was on the verge of collapse. He saw something else—the white-faced Kressholm edged back along the side of the big caravan, but he did not pass Red Joe, whose hand shot out and gripped him.

"Is that so?" Red Joe's voice was a drawl. "Untie that gentleman. Hi, you Swede, I'm talking to you!"

There was an automatic pistol in his other hand. The giant was glaring at the intruder; at a signal from the girl he would have leaped to his death, but she put out a shaking hand.

"Untie him. You don't know what you're doing, Joe."

"I guess I do," said Red Joe.

Mr. Reeder rose and stretched himself. By the time he had recovered the circulation of his numbed hands he was alone in the locked caravan. He thumped at the door, but without success. There was nothing to do but to sit and wait.

Two hours passed, and then a key grated in the lock; the door swung open. It was Red Joe. He came in, closing the door behind him, his hands thrust deep into his pockets.

"There's a car waiting for you to take you home, Mr. Reeder," he said. "I'm sorry this happened. This girl was mad. I guess she's always been a little bit that way. She knows now. Kressholm told her the truth."

"Where is he?"

Joe's shoulders rose in a shrug.

"I've killed him," he said calmly. "She doesn't know; the two Swedes don't know. I sent them to their caravan. But I killed him as I said I'd kill him. I was going to shoot him, but then the other idea came to me. It gave me a chance of keeping my promise—to kill him so as you'd never find his body. I'm telling you this—we're alone together. If you can catch me I'm willing to be caught."

"You're under arrest," said Reeder.

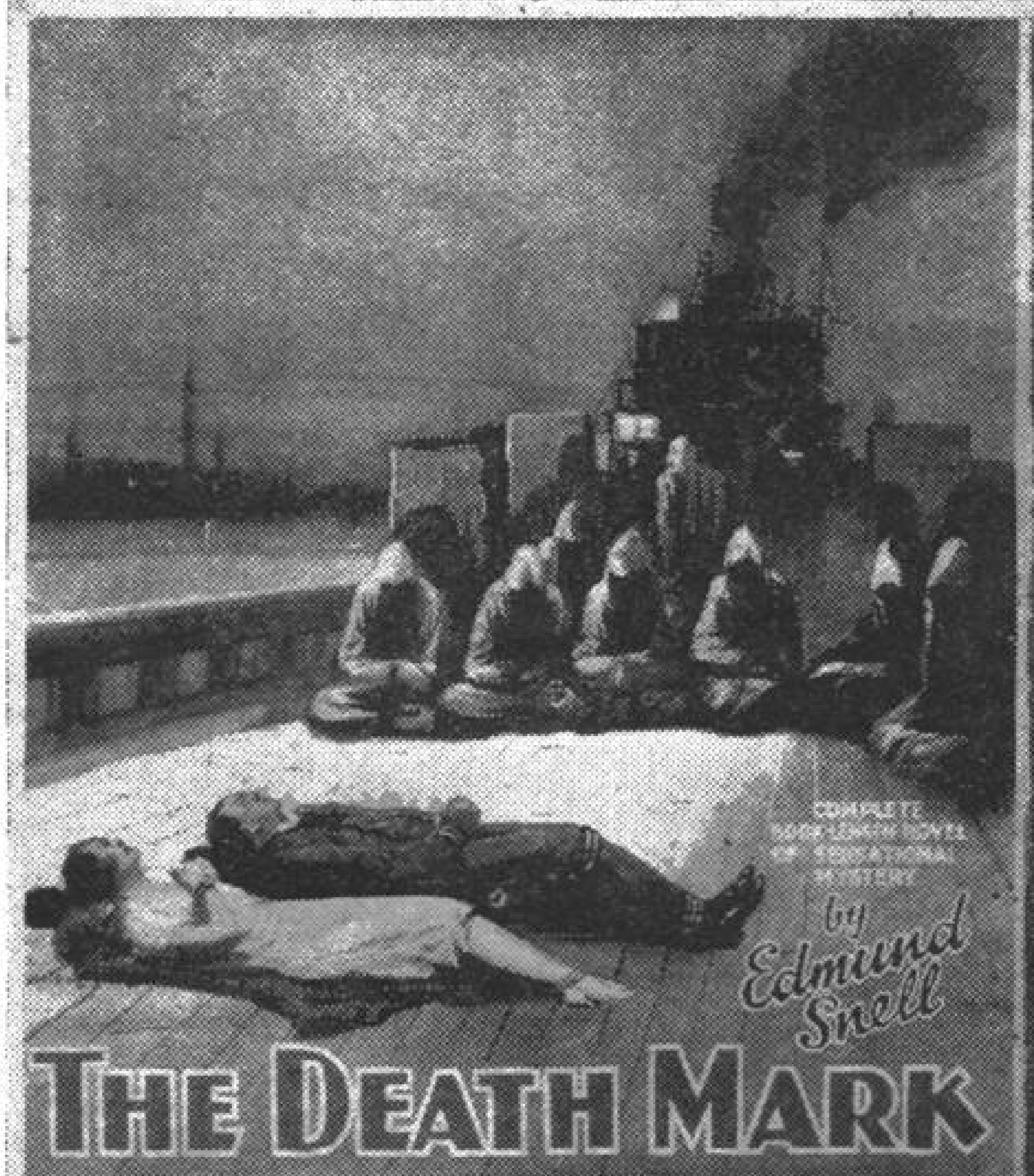
All that night the police searched the fair-ground, but there was no vestige of Kressholm. The night watchman had heard nothing—but then, he had been busy pegging down flapping canvas, and an hour before dawn the balloon had broken from its moorings and sailed away. The only people who ever saw that balloon again were officers on a homeward-bound Cape boat. They saw the big, sagging bag falling into the sea; there was no car attached to it, but something was swaying to and fro in the gale.

"Almost looks like a man hanging from that balloon," said the chief officer. He did not check the speed of the boat; the balloon had fallen five miles away, and a heavy sea was running.

This conversation was not repeated to Mr. Reeder for years afterwards. Even then it was quite superfluous. He had already decided to his own satisfaction the way Bob Kressholm went.

# HAUNTED TO DEATH

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Dr. Crippen leaving the Megantic at Liverpool under arrest.

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that Stirred the World.

by  
Phyllis Lewis

**There is a moral in every crime story.** Many of those who have read of the murderer Crippen look on him simply as a ruthless, cold-blooded killer whose apparently dastardly deed caused more sensation than perhaps any other murder case since. Yet such was not the true character of the little doctor. Terrible as was his sin, shocking as was the whole sordid case, there was something far deeper than many imagined that drove him to his grim crime—the destroying of his soul by the woman he had loved—his wife. Following is the vivid story of this true-life drama.

#### FOREWORD.

IT has been told that Dr. Crippen most chivalrously married Belle Elmore whilst she was living in New York under the protection of another man. No gratitude rose in the woman's cold heart, and for seventeen years she exploited Dr. Crippen mercilessly, flaunting before his eyes her illicit love affairs and shamelessly demanding from him not only far more money than he could provide, but also the most menial and irritating services. In every way possible she showed contempt for him, until at last he could endure this state of affairs no longer, and turned for love and sympathy to his little typist, Ethel le Neve.

The girl, who looked up to him and adored him, soon warmed a heart that for so long had seemed turned to stone, and in the throes of emotional reaction, Crippen was unrecognisable. He was transformed from the meek, long-suffering husband into a desperado who took the law into his own hands, condemned his wife to die, and himself inflicted upon her the sentence. The friends of the late Belle Elmore became suspicious, however, as to the truth of his story that she had died in California, and they asked Scotland Yard to investigate.

Of these investigations and their dramatic climax, the story shall now be told.

"WHAT a wonderful invention that is!" Dr. Crippen, alias Mr. Robinson, uttered this remark to the captain of the s.s. Montrose, as he listened to the electric crackle and clicking of the ship's wireless—not dreaming that, even as he spoke, Captain Kendall was wirelessly the news to Scotland Yard that he felt certain that he had captured the man for whom Scotland Yard had offered a reward, together with Ethel le Neve, the doctor's beautiful sweetheart.

Dr. Crippen, of course, could not guess this. He believed that he had made a perfect "get-away," and that he would begin life afresh once he had landed at Quebec with the dainty creature that, disguised in boy's raiment, sat at his side, and who was down on the passenger list as "Master Robinson," nephew of the older gentleman of that unremarkable name.

But much water had run under bridges since the fatal night when Hawley H. Crippen had murdered his wife. That terrible event had occurred on January 31st, 1910, and this was July.

His personality underwent a complete

bouleversement, a metamorphosis, and he changed from the gentle, even chivalrous nonentity that he had been, into a stern and pitiless judge—more, an executioner!

Suddenly it must have seemed to him that the world was not big enough to hold the two of them—himself and the woman he had once worshipped, and whom now he had come to hate with cold and poisonous hatred. One of them must die—and the ego that had cried out unheard for sympathy and affection during the long and empty years of their marriage commanded that it be given a chance, that it survive whoever perished.

Not even Ethel le Neve's acquiescence to his every desire, her obvious love of him was enough. He wanted, through his revenge on his wife, to become free to enjoy the devoted companionship of the one human being in the world who thought him wonderful and clever and good, and made of him her hero.

Thus, although it was entirely out of character, in view of the fact that Dr. Crippen was of the kind that invariably spoils and pets women—in a word, was the typical American husband—he slew beautiful Belle Elmore, buried portions of her body, covered with quicklime, in the cellar,



DR. CRIPPEN.

and got rid of some of the rest in a mysterious fashion, probably by throwing it overboard when he took Ethel le Neve for an unofficial honeymoon to Dieppe.

For some weeks it had seemed as though Crippen's secret would be safe. Then he committed an indiscretion. He attended a ball in company with Ethel, who, in the guise of his housekeeper, was now taking Belle's place at Hilldrop Crescent. He allowed her also to wear some jewels that her friends remembered as having been Mrs. Crippen's. The latter had been treasurer of the Music Hall Ladies' Guild, and the members of this body became intensely curious as to why she had left England so suddenly. When the announcement of her death had appeared in a theatrical publication, Crippen had been called upon to answer many alarming questions.

Although the murder had been committed on January 31st, it was not until June 30th that the matter was brought to the attention of Scotland Yard.

On July 8th Inspector Dew and Sergeant Mitchell called upon Dr. Crippen. They were not sure that a crime had been committed, and suggested merely that he might like to give them some explanation of his wife's disappearance.

The next six hours were spent in most curious fashion by the police officers and Dr. Crippen. The latter was working hard as a dentist, and he had a number of patients. The officers were anxious not to interfere unduly with his business, and so it was arranged that he should take his patients when they called, dictating a statement in the intervals.

Crippen began by saying that he supposed that he had better tell the truth about his wife. The officers agreed.

"Well," said Crippen, startingly, "the stories I have told about her death are untrue. As far as I know, she is still alive!"

Just as the surprised officers were about to speak, a patient arrived, and Dr. Crippen's story was interrupted. He returned from time to time and told of his parents, of his own early education, of Charlotte, his first wife, who had died and left him a little son, and finally he came to his momentous romance with Belle.

"She was only about seventeen years of age, and I, of course, was about thirty," he said, with a touch of wistfulness.

He went on to describe how he fell in love with her, and of the prompt decisiveness with which he married her, and which must have been as surprising to himself, even in retrospect, as to his listeners. He spoke of his untiring efforts to surround her with luxury, the various cities he visited in the hope of improving his position. He mentioned her ambition—an absurd one in view of the fact that she had a poor voice, and, in any case, was unwilling to work seriously—to become an opera singer, and how he had consented to pay for her training and to leave her in New York while she studied, although he had come to England.

Then he approached the more crucial period of his life. He told that after they had settled down together in London he had had to visit America on business, Belle remaining this time in England.

"When I returned (to London) I found that she had been singing at smoking concerts for payment, and that a certain American music-hall artiste had been a frequent visitor at her house.

"She told me," continued Crippen, "that this man visited her, took her about, and was very fond of her, also she was fond of him.

"I may say that when she first came to England from America her manner towards me was entirely changed, and she had cultivated a most ungovernable temper, and seemed to think I was not good enough for her, and boasted of the men of good position travelling on the boat who had made a fuss of her, and, indeed, some of these visited her.

"I never saw the American actor, but he used to call when I was out, and used to take her out in the evenings.

"It is quite four years since she ever went out at all to sing, and, although we apparently lived very happily together, as a matter of fact there were very frequent occasions when she got into the most violent tempers, and often threatened she would leave me, saying she had somebody else she could go to and would end it all.

"I have seen letters to her"—here the little doctor's voice sounded choked, as he dictated—"which ended, 'With love and kisses to Brown Eyes.'"

A danger that must have haunted his mind as he spoke to the men from Scotland Yard, and which, no doubt, he had overlooked at the moment of the crime, was that Ethel le Neve might become involved in it. Now, he had not only to deceive Ethel, who most certainly did not guess that he had poisoned his wife, but to protect her. And, since he was chivalrous by nature, the difficulty of accomplishing this latter objective must have been torment to him. But, by exerting rigid self-control, he managed to continue both his dental work and his story with apparent equanimity, and to explain that on the night of January 31st there had been a dispute between himself and Belle. According to Crippen, Belle had said:

"This is the finish of it. I shall leave you to-morrow, and you will never see or hear of me again."

Crippen went on:

"She had said this so often that I did not take much notice of it, but she did say one thing which she had never said before, viz., that I was to arrange to cover up any scandal with our mutual friends and the Guild the best way I could.

"I came to business the next morning, and when I went home, between five and six p.m., I found that she had gone!"

Again Crippen paused, while the officers

gazed at him with interest. Never had they had a less murderous or violent type before them. It seemed almost incredible that anyone should believe him guilty of a crime, but nevertheless it was their duty to clear up the mystery of Belle Elmore's whereabouts.

Crippen, reading perplexity, perhaps, in their eyes, carried his story a stage further, and said:

"I realised that she had gone, and I sat down to think it over as to how to cover up her absence without any scandal. . . . I wrote a letter to the Guild saying that she had gone away, which I also told several people. I afterwards realised that this would not be a sufficient explanation for her not coming back, and later on I told people that she was ill with bronchitis and pneumonia, and afterwards I told that she was dead from this ailment."

A few questions elicited the fact that, although she had earned practically nothing, since she was a failure on the stage, Belle had had a joint bank account with Dr. Crippen.

"It pleased her," he said, "to think that she was signing cheques—several blank cheques were always already signed by her, and some of them have been changed by me since her departure. . . ."

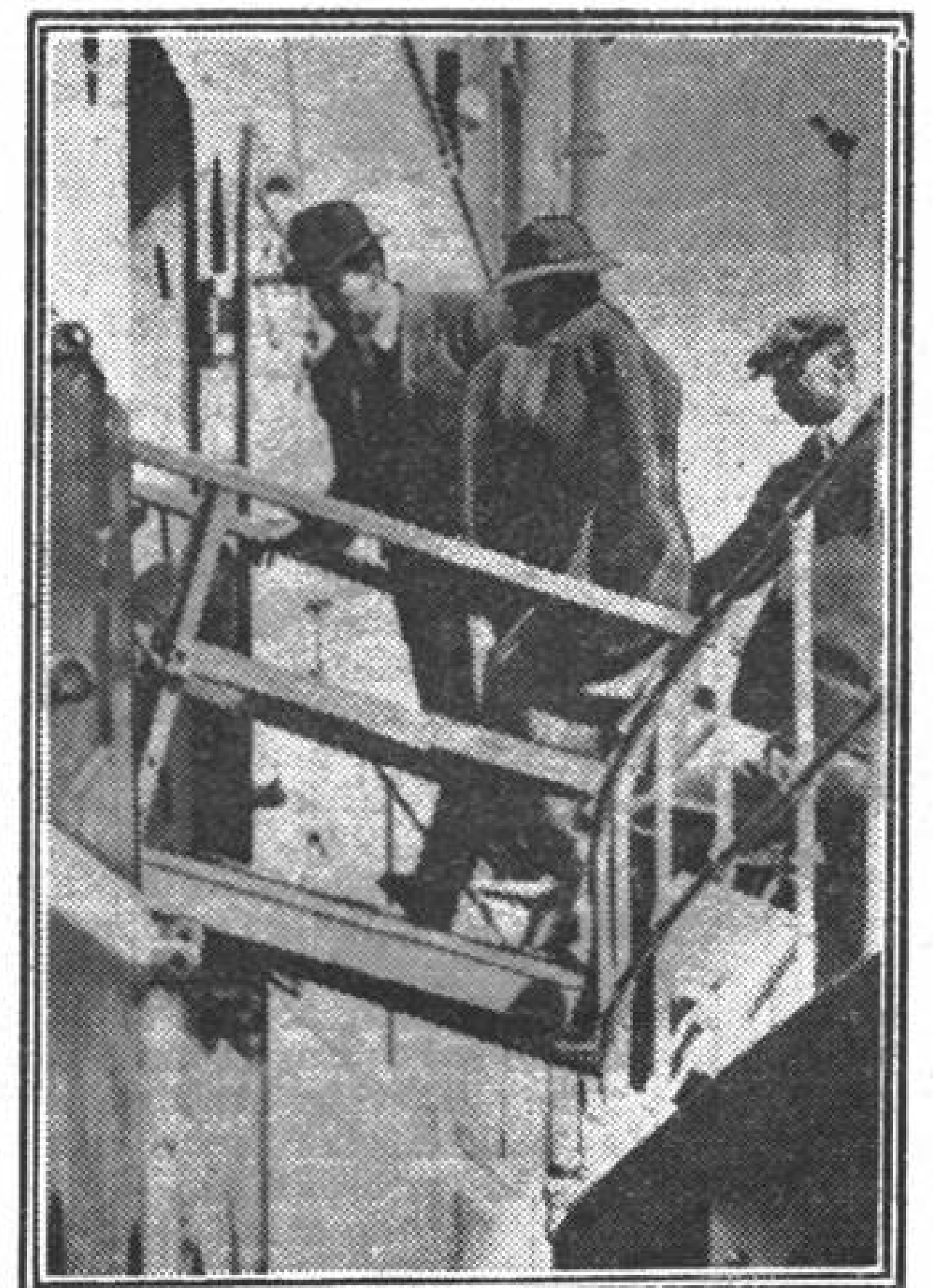
Crippen unwisely declared that he had never pawned or sold anything that had belonged to Mrs. Crippen since her disappearance, but confessed that Ethel le Neve was now posing as his wife. He added that he believed that his wife had gone to the United States, and then, half-hypnotised by his own story, perhaps, added dramatically:

"I shall, of course, do all I can to get in touch with her, so as to clear this matter up!"

Crippen showed the inspector all over the house—including the cellar where the remains of Belle Elmore were hidden.

With superb sangfroid, for a little man who by nature was timid, he forced himself to ask the inspector whether he could suggest any means by which Belle Elmore could be found.

"Would an advertisement be any good?" he inquired. Since the inspector agreed that it might be helpful, he asked him to



Dr. Crippen passing up the gangway of the Megantic immediately after his arrest.

help him to draft it, and jointly they made up the following:

"Will Belle Elmore communicate with H. H. C. or authorities at once. Serious trouble through your absence. Twenty-five dollars reward to anyone communicating her whereabouts."

This advertisement was not destined to see the light of day, but the mere composition of it gives an added touch of melodrama to a situation that already pulsates with human emotion.

But the visit of the officials had broken Crippen's nerve. He could not face further inquiries. His one desperate desire was to get safely away, taking with him the girl he loved. He went to his office and sent out an employee to buy a suit of clothes and some underwear to go with it. He gave up his glasses, shaved off his moustache, and, as much altered in appearance as possible, he started for Antwerp.

Ethel went with him—in the guise of a boy!

There can be little doubt that, even when she heard the doctor's extraordinary proposal that ostensibly she should change her sex and pose as his nephew, a lad of about sixteen or seventeen, she was still ignorant of the murder. He persuaded her that to do this meant to save him from scandal.

To little Ethel, who had led, hitherto, a quiet and humdrum life, this masquerade suggested only romance, thrills. She regarded the whole thing as a daring escapade, and, cutting short her beautiful hair at a period which anticipated by some years, shingled heads, she entered into the spirit of what she deemed a great adventure.

Meanwhile, Inspector Dew, who, although he realised that it was too early to have received an answer to the advertisement for Belle Elmore, were she in America, was uneasy. He probably could not have told why. He was made aware by "a feeling in his bones," that queer sensitiveness that sometimes comes to those who deal with great crimes, that things were not as they seemed. And so, for no particular reason, he managed to find time to call upon Dr. Crippen at his offices. He did not find the doctor, of course, but he was shown two letters received from him, that indicated that he had gone abroad and would not return voluntarily.

That which had been only a suspicion, scarcely a definite enough suspicion to warrant a search of 39, Hilldrop Crescent, in the light of Dr. Crippen's disappearance crystallised into the certainty that beneath his smooth story lay not only mystery, but crime!

Had the little doctor not tried to save himself, had he stayed quietly where he was, the chances are a million to one that, as no corpse resembling Belle Elmore had been found, the officers of the law would have had to let the matter rest, and the fateful examination of the cellar in his erstwhile home would never have taken place.

While Crippen and his sweetheart—the latter looking like a very attractive and charming young boy—were dashing about on the Continent, remaining only for a short time in any one place so that they might not attract attention before sailing on the

Montrose from Antwerp, where they had arranged to board her, Scotland Yard was circulating a description of them throughout the world.

But it was only when the police discovered human remains in the cellar of 39, Hilldrop Crescent that a warrant was taken out for the arrest of the vanished lovers. For four days after this, however, Crippen and Miss le Neve evaded suspicion, and when the Montrose sailed on July 20th they were aboard, their disguise still undiscovered.

Within forty-eight hours, however, Captain Kendall, the commander of the vessel, had wirelessly the news that two men, travelling under the pseudonym of Robinson, were in reality Dr. Crippen and the girl he loved.

The captain took pains to become friendly both with "Mr. Robinson" and his young "nephew," and so amiable was he to them that Dr. Crippen never guessed that he suspected him as the murderer of Belle Elmore.

The captain spent a good deal of time in talking to the strange pair, and thus it came about that, even as the story was being sent by wireless, the unhappy doctor all unsuspectingly remarked as he listened to its ceaseless dispatch of dots and dashes: "What a wonderful invention that is!"

Meanwhile, here are excerpts of the message that the Morse code brought from the s.s. Montrose, at the order of the captain:

"... I discovered them two hours after leaving Antwerp. . . . My suspicion was aroused by seeing them on the deck beside a boat. Le Neve squeezed Crippen's hand immoderately. She seems thoroughly under his thumb, and he will not leave her for a moment. Her suit is anything but a good fit. Her trousers are very tight about the hips, and are split a bit down the back and secured with large safety pins. . . . He continually shaves his upper lip, and his beard is growing nicely. I often see him stroking it and seeming pleased. . . . He sits about on the deck reading, or pretending to read, and both seem to be thoroughly enjoying all their meals. . . . he is now busy reading: 'The Four Just Men.'"

Poor Crippen! Was he visualising himself in the rôle of one of the "four just men" who wrought summary vengeance on evildoers, or as one of their victims? Who can tell?

Every now and then Captain Kendall's wireless messages would contain some interesting incident or comment, as, for example, when he telegraphed:

"On one or two occasions when walking on the deck I called after him by his assumed name, Mr. Robinson, and he took no notice. I repeated it, and it was only owing to the presence of mind of Miss le Neve that he turned round. He apologised for not hearing me, saying that the cold weather had made him deaf.

"At times both sit and appear to be deep in thought. Though le Neve is, perhaps, ignorant of the crime committed, she appears to be a girl with a very weak will. She has to follow him everywhere. If he looks at her she gives him an endearing smile, as though she were under his hypnotic influence."

Inspector Dew, meanwhile, had sailed from Liverpool on the Laurentic, and, as the route was more direct than from Antwerp, where Crippen had embarked, and the ship faster, he reached Father Point before the Montrose.

(Continued overleaf.)

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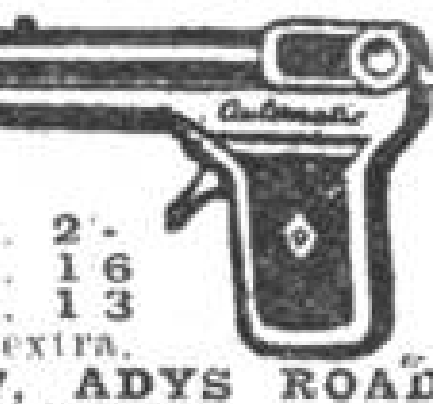
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## THE CRIME OF DOCTOR CRIPPEN.

(Continued from previous page.)

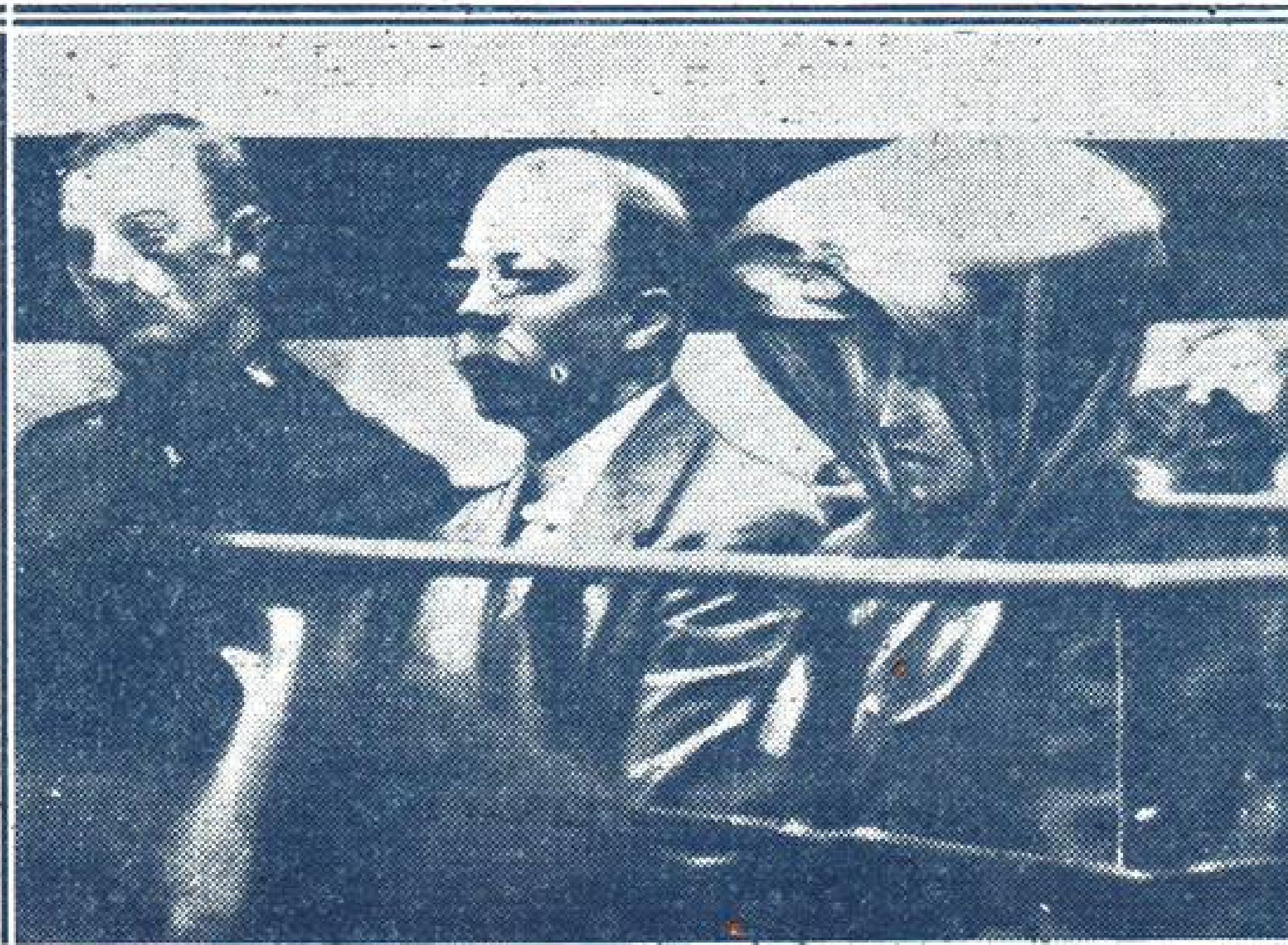
Crippen had no idea that his brief term of liberty and happiness with Ethel le Neve was so near to its tragic end. The sudden appearance of the Scotland Yard detective came to him as a complete shock. But when told that he would be arrested, his response was typical of the man:

"I am not sorry. The anxiety has been too much."

On Dr. Crippen was found a note which indicated that he had intended to commit suicide, but his own explanation was that he had bribed a ship official to help him to escape, and had planned to leave this message as camouflage. On it were the pathetic words, evidently intended for Ethel le Neve:

"I cannot stand the horror I go through every night any longer, and, as I see nothing bright ahead, and money has come to an end, I have made up my mind to jump overboard to-night. I know I have spoiled your life, but I—but I hope some day you can learn to forgive me. With words of love, your H."

The chances are that this suicide plan was contemplated in reality by Crippen, but whether he would have carried it out or no is another matter. At all events, he was compelled to deny it when he pleaded "Not guilty" to the charge of murdering his wife, since it was distinctly compromising.



Dr. Crippen and Miss Le Neve in the dock at Bow Street Police Court.

Crippen, even as the cold steel of handcuffs closed about his wrists, thought of the girl he loved. He inquired how she was, adding: "It is only fair to say that she knows nothing about it. I never told her anything!"

He asked anxiously whether he could see Ethel before he left the ship, and, pale with sorrow, he added:

"I do not know how things will go. They may go all right, or they may go all wrong with me. I may never see her again, but I want to ask you, if you will, to let me see her, but I won't speak to her. She has been my only comfort."

Crippen did see her.

Crippen realised only at the end of his strange journey that happiness for him, escape from the past, was for him a mirage—the unattainable. From the moment that he saw Inspector Dew of Scotland Yard on board the ship, which had brought him across the Atlantic, he knew, deep within him, that his case was hopeless. His words came close to expressing these thoughts; for although his mind leapt to Ethel le Neve at the very instant that he was handcuffed, and he uttered a passionate wish to look upon her once again, even though he be not permitted to speak to her, he remarked that there was no way of telling whether things would go well or badly for him, and that he might never see her again.

Crippen had the long voyage back during which to think out the future, or all of it that remained to him, and there can be no doubt that his every thought was for the girl that he loved, as he had once loved the wife who had driven him to slay her.

In spite of the circumstances—according to a recent publication—the late Sir Edward, then Mr. Marshall Hall, the great lawyer, was convinced that Crippen had not intended to murder his wife, but that he had given her an overdose of hyoscin that she might be unconscious while he invited Ethel le Neve to stay the night at Hilldrop Crescent. And this defence would not have been altogether impossible to believe, for Crippen had not shared his wife's room for some long time; he was madly infatuated with Ethel, and having just lost the more important part of his work, he was perhaps too short of money to take Ethel anywhere other than his home.

Crippen, however, would not permit it to be suggested that Ethel was near the

premises on the night of the drama, and, therefore, although he saw a way of saving his own life, he would not take it, lest it bring further discredit or danger upon his sweetheart. To those who knew the gentle little doctor, this action was typical. He had sacrificed himself always when he loved. Until Belle Elmore turned his slave-like devotion into cold and critical dislike, he sacrificed himself unstintingly for her pleasure. And now that he had given his love to Ethel, he was prepared to make even the supreme sacrifice for her.

During the time that Crippen had been away, Scotland Yard had been busy, and never did the world-famous toxicologist, Sir William Willcox, and Sir Bernard—then Mr.—Spilsbury, do a more

brilliant piece of work than in establishing, from the remains that were found in the cellar, the murder of Mrs. Crippen.

There were no bones found. The head had been disposed of in some way that has never been proved. Organs were missing. Only by studying the way in which the minute hairs on the skin grew were the great pathologists able to prove the contention of the Crown as to the identity of Belle Elmore's corpse.

(Of the remainder of the trial, of Sir Marshall Hall's efforts to save the doctor's life, and of the dramatic end, will be told next week.)

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