

THE THRILLER

THE PAPER WITH A THOUSAND THRILLS

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The FORGER!

Powerful Long Novel of
Mystery & Thrills by
FENTON ROBINS



CHAPTER I.
THE FOURTH WIDOW.

LESTER GARDNER, a new edge of London, lay hooding solemnly in the grip of a smoldering yellow fog. The fog was traces of the dying day had fled. In the little streets, marked at their corners by faded, flickering gas-jets, hung an air of staler mystery. One caught from them, on the idle drift of the fog, a hint of insanings, low and fatal. Occasionally, a glimpse of figure; yellow, sinking figure.

They were mean little streets. Streets that, in their mad rush down to the river, seemed fraught with danger. At their distant ends, a suggestion of the industry that lay beyond. A faint tracing of tipping, great funnels, and short, chimney stacks. Sometimes, from the water beyond, came the wet piping of a tug, and, in answer, the hoarse bay of the steamer as it moved onward.

A sense of danger hung on every step. The scattered houses, hung with whis-

The prisoner watched with a quiet satisfaction as Carban crossed to the curtains and flung them aside. The crook stood for a moment gazing down on the smoldering heap of forged bank-notes, then with a gasp he staggered. "By Gosh!" he whispered. "Gosh! Burn! Burn! All my work ruined!"

ings, and seeming to harbour untold secrets; shades of dread things; the grim, little windows, lamed with yellow light, that winked at one with evil familiarity. The faded shops that, with their much changed, smoky stretch, marked another corner; leather risk to be taken.

And there was tragedy. Death, stark and ineradicable. Not an astonishing discovery for Limehouse, perhaps; nevertheless, it was a death that achieved in the opening hours of a symphony of mastery, appreciable crime.

At the edge of the stumpy little pier that marked the Limehouse Cut entrance, two men stood. In their attitude was a tense expectancy, a sense of impending tragedy. Seeking, yet fearing to find, they peered down at the fog-swollen water. Their

scrutiny was rewarded with dismal tap-pings and evil chucklings. The lighter man crossed.

"I'm bloomin' sure I am— Ah! Look! Over there! A 'ud! I have I'd seen something!"

The policeman became more tense. "Where?" he muttered.

"There?" said the lighterman excitedly, pointing away to his right. "See it? A-bobbin' agen there pizen!"

A dozen out "Ah-h-h" proclaimed that the policemen, too, had seen it.

Uncertainly fled, and action, brisk and definite, took its place. The sudden body was taken from the water and brought to the little martiny at the side of the Limehouse Basin where, but an hour later, it was identified.

Detective-inspector Ellis looked only

FORGER



A POWERFUL
LONG NOVEL
OF ACTION
AND THRILLS

by *Fenton Robins*

down of the still form. The dismal dripping of the water that fell with monotonous persistence from the cloth to the floor kept merrily company with his thoughts. A sigh escaped him, and he turned away. The attendant policeman stepped forward to cover the body.

"Duez lui!" the inspector muttered. "He's the third they've accounted for. Where in Blazes is it all going to end?"

He lapsed into a thoughtful silence that lasted some minutes. Then, regarding his shoulder aggressively, he moved to leave. In the doorway he paused, turned, and addressed the constable.

"I'm going now, Watson. Make out some report when you get back. Don't tell the Press his identity, mind!"

Before a cherry fire in a certain very select flat in Half Moon Street, two men sat. They had been there for a considerable time in deep conversation. Yet, almost, it had been a monologue, for the

lack of the talking had been done by the grey-haired, thick-set, bull of a man seated on the left of the fire. In his strong face, with its keen, grey eyes and hard mouth, shone a glimpse of the latent aggressiveness and grim tenacity of purpose that had carried him to the position he held. The man was Detective-Inspector Ellis, one of Scotland Yard's most brilliant members.

The other, except for a slightly-wounded expression, had listened to his companion in silence. One might even have thought, by his partially-closed eyes and utterly limp attitude, that he was asleep. Indeed, his air of apparent indifference was so marked that many men would have terminated the visit with caustic remarks and an abrupt and disgusted departure.

But not so Ellis. He knew his man, and had worked with him too often not to know his little peculiarities. For certainly David Field Garth had peculiarities. His dignified, unemotional speech; his air of extreme indifference; and his utter indifference to comments of tragedy or danger. But what

was far more important than all that, and what made all his other peculiarities of no matter, was his unusual and extraordinary knowledge of counterfeits; of their tricks and limitations.

His knowledge rendered counterfeiting in all its many forms. He knew currency as a man knows the fingers of his hands. He had but to handle a piece of "paper" to at once know whether it was genuine or fraudulent, and he knew instinctively, without hesitation or the need for analysis.

Yes, Garth was certainly peculiar. Being young and good-looking, wealthy and educated, and having consequently the entrée to the inner circles of Society, it was a wonder he chose to follow the life he did. For Garth's home was under his hat, and from the point of view of police work—his one interest—the world was his best. His life, in spite of his placid exterior, was one endless repetition of racking, waiting, and rickety.

With what seemed a tremendous effort,

he opened his eyes a little and surveyed his companion faintly.

"Lookie," he murmured, "what makes you think young Bennett was murdered by this—or—gang?"

"Huh!" greeted the other. "I said that Bennett's girl had been picked up off Limehouse Cut, but I didn't say I thought they'd murdered him."

"Same, dear soul," Garth said, smiling faintly. "But you do think it, don't you?"

"Yes, I do! Listen!" Ellis' voice was hoarse. "Bennett—he was a genuine! lad, too—is the third out of four who've been detailed to try and get a line on this crowd, to turn up in the river! There's one still missing, and what's happened to him Heaven alone knows, I don't. I've been on this job myself almost a month, and, hey, they've got me rattled! I've just been at it long enough to realize I'm up against the biggest, cleverest, most devilishly-cunning crowd it's ever been my experience to tackle!"

For a little while silence followed Ellis' words, then Garth managed another question.

"Dear inspector, you intrigue me immensely. What about this girl you mentioned—'woman' I think you called her? Where does she figure in the deal?"

The other took a wallet from an inner pocket, and handed Garth a photograph.

"That's her," he said. "One of our chaps got her in the street one day, with a cheap pocket camera. This is an enlargement, of course."

Garth took the print and eyed it closely.

"I can tell you this about her," continued the man from the Yard. "She's the kinship of that crowd, and without her they can't do a damn-thing. That woman is the clearest finger that ever landed a man, before me; as, mark you, all her work is free-hand."

Her cropping of the hair-work on a Treasury note is a revelation, as she works on covers, stamps, or steel with the same versatility. She's the one we've got to get, or get good!"

Garth nodded silently. Even in so good a print, the dark-eyed beauty of the girl was obvious.

"Friend," he chuckled, "I am interested, tell me more. Who is she? Where does she hang out, and why? Somehow, she doesn't quite look the part. What do you say?"

With Garth's last sentence, Ellis grinned. It was something he had been waiting for. In fact, he was beginning to feel a little disappointed that, up till then, Garth had not made use of it. Garth's "What do you say?" always amused him. It was one of the many peculiarities of the other that he had learned to like.

"Well," he said, still grinning, "exactly who she is, we don't know. The man running the gang—he goes by the name of 'Carlson'—we believe is her uncle. Anyway, she's been with him as far back as we can trace, as' that's the time when she was a kid. He trained her to the game from the very beginning. Started her on minutiae, then it was riding and engineering, from that to free-script work, and so on right through the whole curriculum, until now she's without a peer. Where she hangs out I don't know, but when I do I'll know the gang's headquarters. So far, my attempts have met with phony failure, and that, I suppose, is why I've had orders to hold off for you."

Garth opened his eyes and sat up.

"Hold off for me," he repeated, with a rare suggestion of surprise. "And who, may I ask, issued such orders, and why?"

Ellis' grin broke out afresh.

"Home Secretary!" he replied gruffly.

"As" he issued 'em 'cos I asked him to! Garth, old man"—he leaned forward in his chair, and his voice was serious and full of sincerity—"you're the only man who can handle this. It's too big for us. It's something—oh, I don't know what, but it's something more than just counterfeiting. It's something they're willing to murder for, anyway."

Garth stared absently into the fire, and many minutes were ticked away by the little hand clock above their heads before he spoke.

"Dear old lad," he said, "I wouldn't take a job out of your hands for all the wealth of Midas, only on your terms. I'll take it, and, believe me, I'm glad! Glad to be in harness again, and glad to be working more more with the finest lads in the Yard ever turned out!"

They shook hands in solemn silence. In spite of their different wags, different outlook, different stations in life, there existed between them a bond of friendship not often found among men. Ellis studied intently to his feet.

"I'm glad, too," he said in his gruff way. "Olad somebody else will have a little of the holy war. You're getting too busy to lie to me. I'm clearing 'em. What's the first move?"

Smiling at the other's naivety, Garth lit a pipe and lighted a cigarette.

"Huh!" he began meaningly. "These you've got me! What is the first move? As far as my feeble intellect takes me, I don't quite see what we can do until we find them. Therefore I suggest that you put some more of your bright young elastic into circulation, and hope for the best."

What do you say?"

Ellis picked up his hat.

"Yeah!" he grunted. "I reloaded six of my guns each time, and came out six of my best this morning, so gave 'em the whole City to play in. I'll be off now. I've got work to do! I'll let you know if anything turns up. So-long!"

Garth made no reply, and, looking down at him, Ellis smiled in apparent disgust. Garth had fallen blissfully asleep!

Garth looked slowly up from the slouching occupation of puffing the end of a long, silver pipe in his already delinquent eye. His immediate eyes wandered around the café's table-scattered floor; on, and out on to the Strand's busiest corner. It was afternoon, and Garth was engaged in watching away certain monotonous hours at Stollin's.

His eyes returned to the table, and began again their life wanderings. Upon a certain table, discreetly hidden behind a well-kept palm, they halted. At the table sat a man and woman. Garth speculated upon the fact that his best look round had not enhanced them, and he left annoyed with himself.

From a waistcoat pocket he produced a cigarette. When it was burning to his satisfaction, he resumed his observations on the couple at the table. That he had, by an amazing stroke of luck, stumbled upon the very woman he was looking for, disturbed him not at all. He did, however, feel that the occasion warranted some recognition, and to this end he ordered a fresh tin.

After the waiter had departed, Garth fell to sleepily contemplating the smouldering end of his cigarette, as though, in its glowing ash, he hoped to discover the solution to innumerable baffling problems. Yet, strangely enough, whilst studying the cigarette, he was also studying the couple at the distant table.

The first impression he was conscious of was one of intense dislike for the man. In spite of his distinguished appearance and easy, polished manner, Garth felt an innate desire to punch the lighter's eye. Evidently why he disliked the man he wasn't at all sure. Something, perhaps about the eyes; they were a shade too close together; had, in certain lights, a suggestion of yellowness in their depths. It was Carlson, of course. Ellis' description had been, as usual, as near perfect as was humanly possible.

Garth transferred his attention to the girl. He made his observations by casual and intermittent glances, discreet, and oblique. They were, in every respect, nothing more than acts of like coinistry; the acts of a watching sightseer. Yet Garth was anything but idle in his observation of details. He noticed nothing.

Eventually, it must be confessed, he felt somewhat surprised, and even puzzled. As he had remarked to Ellis, the girl certainly didn't look the part, and seeing her in the dock brought the fact home to him with more force. As much as anything, her extreme youth impressed him; she couldn't be a day more than twenty-two.

Women rarely interested Garth. Certainly there never was one who succeeded in pouting him. He gave her a more searching scrutiny, and discovered points that drew forth his admiration. The neat sweep of her brow; the well-placed, heavily-lashed, violet-blue eyes; the mouth, with its soft, red lips; then below, the perfect oval of her chin, and the delicate curves of her throat.

In all that beautiful face he found points that appealed. But it was the eyes that really held him. There was something in their dark, mysterious depths that thrilled him strangely. In them he found sincerity, and a stately straightforwardness, and a hint of something he thought was scarce. He shook his head. She looked anything but a criminal.

Carlson stood up and beckoned a passing waiter. Garth could not hear what was said, but he sensed at once that they were preparing to depart. The man coughed for the girl's wrap, and she arose. It was then that Garth saw her hands.

They were long, slender, and tapering. In their firm, deft movements he caught something of their great nervous strength. They were hands that gave promise of vast capabilities. They set Garth wondering, and when the couple passed out through the tall, glass doors, he was still puffing his tin, and still wondering.

When, however, the blue fabric M. O. Sports that had carried away Carlson and the girl from the precincts of Stollin's pulled up outside a certain quiet and eminently respectable house in Thorndon Road, West Norwood, Garth was not far away.

When, in fact, they entered the house, he was a little lower down the road, industriously fiddling inside the bonnet of the car he had appropriated to follow them. And he was there even in time to see Carlson open the door with a key, which he took from his left trouser pocket—Garth was a stickler for details.

He continued to fume with his engine. He was waiting for something, and at long last he was rewarded. The door of the house opened, and a short, thick-set man emerged. Climbing into the two-seater, he started the engine and sped away along the road, leaving in his wake a cloud of blue smoke, and the echoes of a screaming, over-revved engine.

Garth checked, and started the engine of his borrowed Rover. Satisfied that he

had found the gang's base, he headed back for Stella's. He had a feeling that it was quite time he returned the coin.

GAUGHT!

From somewhere out across the gold-links a church clock tolled in the first dark hour of the new day. Others took it up, and the man, standing motionless in a dark pool of shadow, heard the chiming fade into the dim distance of the sleeping city. He smiled, and moved. With incredible speed and unceasing silence he fitted to another pool of shadow, and in this manner, clothed in black, and shod in rubbers, he worked his way, almost invisibly, along Thomson Road.

Before a certain house, a quiet and eminently respectable house, he paused. Darkness and silence embraced it. He moved, and a moment later was knocking against the front door. From a pocket he produced a long, slender piece of steel, and inserted it, with the faintest clicks, in the keyhole of the door. There followed certain soft and subtle wrist movements. The door opened, and, passing inside, he closed it almost behind him.

In the darkness of the hall he stood whilst several minutes passed, listening. Then, having satisfied himself that no one stirred, he switched on a torch. It was a special torch. Its glass face carried an arrangement of movable, metal plates, not unlike the iris diaphragm found on many cameras. He adjusted the plates until the beam was no thicker than a pencil.

Trading with out-of-the-way, he began a systematic and expeditious search of the ground floor. First one door and then another he opened, and then, after a quick sweep of his torch, he closed them again. He was searching with some definite object.

He entered the breakfast-room. The torchlight crossed the further wall—sweep past pictures, across a sideboard, and then a door. It halted, and returned to the door—a door obviously new. Other than its newness no fresh clue was disclosed, yet it was sufficient to interest the man.

He crossed the room and gently tried the door; it was not locked. Opening it, he passed beyond with a feeling that he had found that for which he sought. The feeling proved a correct one. The room was a workshop—an engraver's workshop. Closing the door behind him, he flooded the room with light, and discovered, with satisfaction, that it was worthless. Near the door he found a switch. His night's work had not begun.

Almost the first thing that caught his eye was a square of white linen. It was nailed to the wall by clips, and facing it stood a projecting lantern. In the centre of the floor, doing duty as a work bench, stood a massive oak table. Its polished top was hidden beneath an indescribable litter.

Knivings, art prints, sketches in charcoal and in water colours, lay everywhere. Here and there an odd manuscript served to relieve the monotony, and the man, who had some knowledge of such things, did not miss the masterly touch that marked each effort.

A small chest attracted his attention. Reaching over, he raised the lid. Inside he saw, each in its own compartment, bottles of acid and of ink; innumerable pens and brushes, and finally, wrapped in a cloth, which he took the trouble to open, a complete kit of engraver's tools.

He gently lowered the lid, and shook his head. So far, everything seemed very innocent and above board. Nothing among

all the things he had found suggested that the industry of the engraver was in any way unwholesome. He carried his search further afield.

Along one wall hung a tapestry of Saxons style; palpably machine woven, and an imitation. He stood for a fleeting second, gazing it thoughtfully; it held promise. He stepped to it, and could not repress a mild grunt of satisfaction when, on swinging it back, he disclosed a massive door of steel.

This was what he had been looking for. Instinctively he knew that beyond that formidable barrier lay the things that had provoked his visit.

On the left side of the door, neatly counter-sunk, was a combination dial; the only projection on that smooth surface. He toyed with it thoughtfully. It promised much leisure, yet not more than he felt capable of, for in such matters he was an expert.

He stood back a little, and meditated

The policeman and the lighterman stood at the wharf's edge peering searchingly across the rainy waters. Suddenly the lighterman pointed excitedly. "Look!" he cried. "Over there! A 'nab'! I know I'd seen something!"



upon his mode of attack. He knew, of course, that there were many ways open to him. Inside fifteen minutes, given some pity, an air pump, and a little nitroglycerine, he could blow the door completely off its hinges. Or, with a direct forced acetylene kit, he could cut the lock clean away. Again, with a sufficiently strong current of electricity, he could decompose the lock-bars by electrolysis. There were other ways, too.

He shrugged his shoulders. Such ways were not for him. They did not fit in with either his taste or his methods. His attack had to be anything but one of force. From an inner pocket he took a piece of shining steel, about ten inches in length. It was rather a peculiar gadget. It had been fashioned from a piece of highly-tempered steel, and was perhaps of three-strengths of an inch in diameter. One end had been ground down to a needle-like point, whilst the other had been beaten out to almost an inch in width. It resembled, more than anything else, an ear with the blade torn off.

The man crossed the room, and switched off the light. Guided by the beam of his torch, he returned to the door of the strong-room. Close against the combination dial he crouched, and brought into use his

strange tool. Its pointed end he placed on the steel surface, a little to the left of the combination dial. The blade-like end he gripped firmly between his toes, while teeth. He extinguished his torch, and was swallowed in the Nubian darkness.

He courted darkness. Not out of fear, but because he knew it induced a relaxation of certain of the senses, and consequently a strengthening of others. Admittedly it was rather a fine point, but, then, this was a fine job. A job that demanded a hyper-sensitive sense of touch.

With the slow precision of a micrometer, he began turning the dial of the combination. Each gently clicking tumbler, greatly amplified along the length of the steel tool, was accented by the sensitive teeth. He continued revolving the dial with infinite patience, waiting for the more heavy vibration that would mark the engaging of a lock tumbler. His knowledge of the possible permutations helped him considerably.

It was an example of the highest peak in auto-braking; the work of a true master. A demonstration of supreme patience and an unceasing delivery of feeling. Yet forty minutes had he before, with a sigh of relief, the man finally created himself. One needed to experience the ache of neck, back, and jaws to realize just how hard hard work that almost motionless figure had executed.

The man moved across to the door and depressed the switch; the need for darkness had ceased. Returning to the vault, he glanced at his watch; time, he discovered, had become rather precious. Throwing back the lock-bars, he swung the massive door open and entered the strong-room.

He was a little surprised to find that, but for a few plain chests, the vault was nothing more than a steel box. On the shelves, neatly stacked, were a large number of paper-wrapped bundles. He reached for one, and torn away the wrapper. He experienced a little thrill of anticipation; his work was not to go entirely unrewarded.

In his hand he held a one pound note. At random he selected another bundle. It contained Bank of England notes of five-pound denomination. Yet a third yielded similar notes for twenty

pounds. Then came a bundle of ten-shilling notes, then more Bank of England notes for one hundred pounds. He estimated that each bundle contained at least a thousand notes, and, counting rapidly, he found there were twenty-eight bundles.

Selecting one of the hundred pound notes, he moved out into the room, and took up a position immediately under the light. His examination was not to discover whether the note was counterfeit, for that he already knew. What interested him was whether it was a good counterfeit.

His first thought was for the paper, and for a moment it almost deceived him. He found himself handling the nearest approach to the bank paper he had ever, in all his wide experience, come across. It left him a little astonished. The more he examined the note, the more his astonishment grew. There came to him a feeling of admiration, and almost of awe. The work was practically perfect.

His knowledge of counterfeiting made him a competent judge. All the devices, artifices, tricks, and limitations of the counterfeiter he knew intimately.

Yet in the note he held nothing was missing. It was more than a mere photographing taken out by hand, for the watermark was perfect, down to the last line. Its printing, too, was good. Not superimposed with a much pigment and brush, but executed in a waterproof ink of good colour.

The adaptation it won from him was well merited. It wasn't any single feature of the note that called it forth, but the work as a whole. Even to the "aging" process, the simulated, the cleverly frayed edges, and the mechanically abraded surface. It would have deceived anybody; certainly, of course, the knowing few, of whom he was one.

Folding the note, he placed it away in one of his pockets. He recalled his need for haste, and moved into the trunk. His first thought was to place those thousands of spurious notes beyond the possibility of circulation. Then there were the plates; then, in particular, had to be found.

He knelt on the floor of the trunk, and took up one of the bundles. Breaking it open, he made a small heap of some of the notes. From his pocket he took a box of matches. He struck one, and held its flame against the edge of the pile. The paper caught, and in a moment the heap was burning merrily. Shortly, a few at a time, he did the notes to the hungry flames.

He was fully aware of the risk he was running. He realized how the smoke would resemble to other noses and probably betray him. He realized, too, the penalty he would pay, if caught. Yet the work he was doing was imperative, and there was no other way.

He took up the twenty-shilling, and last, bundle. Pending to light a cigarette, a sound came to him, and he listened. It was the sound of a door opening—the work-room door! With a strange jerk he took the wrapper away, and piled the notes recklessly on to the flames.

A shadow moved across the lighted floor, and the man looked up with a late smile; in his hand was the last note of that rank stock. In the doorway, staring in at him with incredulous eyes, was a man clad in a dressing-gown. The expression on his face was far from pleasant, and in his hand was a well-used automatic.

"Put up your hands, ease you?" His voice positively quivered with rage.

The smile of the knowing man grew.

"Just one precious little moment, dear son," he murmured. "This is the last one."

He reached forward slowly, and dropped

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the note he held on to the dying fire. The other burned thickly.

"Don't play the fool!" His voice was dangerously quiet. "Get up, and put up your hands!"

The knowing man climbed stiffly to his feet, and passed to shut the doors of his trousers before complying with the other's command. Behind the man with the gun, he observed, another man had appeared, also carrying an automatic. Doubts as to making a break were hopeless.

He raised his hands, but in preference to extending them he rested them upon his head. The man armed moved past him, his right arm extended at a grotesque angle.

"And will you now raise your hands, please?"

The voice was soft, almost silky, and pregnant with menace. The prisoner read the danger signal, and with all his old cunningness did as he was told.

"Now please sit yourself in that high-backed chair," the voice went on. "And—sit—move with caution!"

The man seated himself. A sigh escaped him. It seemed, he reflected, a mean trick on Fate's part, and just when he had been doing so well. He turned his head to observe his new captives, and recognized him instantly. It was Carban, the chief of the gang. The girl was with him, and, to his surprise, they were both dressed for the street. It was quite evident that they had just come in. Carban motioned with his automatic, and spoke again.

"You may now lower your arms and rest them along the arms of the chair."

The prisoner did so obediently. He was speculating as to what could have kept the two out to that hour of the night; he had thought them in bed. Carban spoke to the girl.

"Pay," he said. "I am sorry to have to press you into service. Please get that roll of picture-card from the mantelpiece, and secure our energetic friend, will you?"

The girl made no reply, but moved to do as she was bid. The man in the chair smiled slyly; he was still hoping to make a getaway. When, however, his head was suddenly garroted against the fastened back of the chair, the smile left him. Near to choking, he was kept in this position whilst his wrists and ankles were securely bound, and it was Carban who smiled. Then, when the work was complete, his neck was released, and he was able to breathe freely once more.

"What's done's this gag, Berry?"

"Don't know," replied the man with the gun. "But I reckon we'll squeeze it out of him in a minute. See if he's got a gun."

The short man moved behind the prisoner, and passed exploring fingers over his person. He did not find one, and moved away.

"His?" he said.

Following the discovery that he was not armed, the prisoner, risking the movement, calmly fiddled his arms. The face of the man with the gun hardened at the movement. It failed, at second thought he seemed to accept the position as being quite as safe.

"Well," drawled the prisoner, "and what do you contemplate as a next move?"

"That," replied the other grimly, "has got to be decided. But you're not hoping to get out of here after, are you?"

"Why in goodness' name not?" questioned the prisoner in astonishment. He was watching his captives closely, but saw nothing to afford him even a spark of comfort. Yet the look of utter composure still hung about his eyes; he appeared altogether in the extreme.

From the corner of his eye he saw the door of the room commence to open. Who entered, he knew not, nor did he care. It was an opportunity, and he took it.

"Quickly, en Avant!" he yelled. "We've got 'em steady!"

The man with the gun swung round with a starting curse. His movement was instinctive, and even as he turned he sensed the trick. He turned back, but was too late. With his first movement the prisoner had jumped into sudden action—violent and swift.

The man with the gun went down to a beautifully-timed right that had its origin somewhere near the prisoner's knees. A gun barrel, and in the narrow confines of the room its report was deafening. He heard the bullet whine past his ear as he jumped for the gunnys. His long carried him on to the man, and they went to the floor in a kicking, cursing heap. There the struggle ended with unexpected abruptness. The two bodies became suddenly motionless; tense. The gunnys screamed in agony, and following closely on the scream came a horrible snapping noise. Their tensed attitudes relaxed.

THE GIRL!

Staring the prisoner got to his feet. The other lay motionless on the floor, his right arm extended at a grotesque angle.

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into his face had crept a new expression. It was difficult to define, but it held a promise of unpleasant things to come. They drew inside him bared a knee, remaining cowed.

Carban put away his automatic.

"That, my dear," he said, "is a neat piece of work. Allow me to congratulate you."

The girl, leaning against the table, seemed not to hear. There was a strange air of defiance on her face, and her eyes had taken on an animal-like transference. The man in the chair addressed her; his voice was hard, sneering, and cutting.

"I must endorse that, kind lady. Your parenting was splendid. You have evidently had lessons in that somewhat medieval art?"

The girl winced at his words and turned away. Carban laughed, closed the door, and moved across the room to the still grunting man. Reaching down, he helped him to his feet.

"What is it, Slater?" he asked. "Broken arm?"

The injured man nodded, and swore.

"Yes, chief," he answered. "The lighter keeps his business?"

"I saw it," Carban murmured. "He's a fast worker. But what's been happening here?"

"Everything, chief!" replied Slater, indicating the gaping vault with his sound arm. "Look at that damn steam-room. He went through it like he knew it! Combination, no—well, look inside!"

There was something in the man's voice that brought a cringe to Carban's lips, and made him more with clarity to the vault. He froze in his tracks. Minutes passed; he seemed unable to believe the evidence of his eyes.

"By gosh!" he almost whispered. "Gone! Gone! Every one! All my work ruined!"

The discovery seemed to stun him. He turned slowly, and stared, awfully yet perplexedly, at the bound man. Speech was beyond him. It was the entering of the man who had been knocked out that brought him to himself.

"Fix!" he barked. "Take Slater and down his arm, then give him a stiff drink. Come back after, both of you, and you, Slater, dress yourself."

He turned his attention to the man on the floor. With a cover he watched the man struggle to sit up.

"That's right, Berry!" he snarled. "It's time you moved. Shaked how many you've made of things, haven't you?"

At Carban's voice the man looked up, startled, and scrambled hastily to his feet. Crossing his swollen jaw, he looked dazedly around the room, and swore when he saw the man in the chair.

"Well!" snapped Carban impatiently. "What's happened?"

"Chief," grunted Berry, "that's the stinkiest guy I've met. Listen! I awoke with the tang of smoke in— A thought occurred to him. "Say, have you seen the vault?" "Well, thinkin' the place was on fire, I got up an' come down. I followed the smoke to here, an' looked back at what I saw for a gas. I called Slater, an' between us we had him good. Then the door opened. He yelled out like it were the police, an' I turned. What happened after that, I don't know. I went out with a crack on the jaw!"

Carban turned away disgustedly.

"Turn out his pockets!" he snapped. "Everything, mind!"

The man moved to obey. Bending over the chair, he emptied the prisoner's pockets with unnecessary care. The

fruits of his search he placed on the table in a little heap. The man designated as chief began examining the various things. The door opened, and Slater and the girl entered the room.

Carban was absorbed in reading the contents of a sheet of loose-leafed paper. Watching him intently, the man in the chair knew the game was up. He turned his eyes to the girl; she had halted just inside the door. More than ever he was struck by the clean, wholesome beauty of her face. It still wore that peculiar expression, that air of latent rebellion.

It set him wondering, and he forgot the searching she had subjected him to. That, he told himself, at least, had been done because she had had no choice. Carban turned, and leached to the girl. He held in his hand a sheet of paper.

"Put this signature through the lantern," he ordered.

The girl took the sheet of paper in silence, and crossed over to the lantern. A minute passed. The man in the chair heard the snap of a switch. In black, smoldering across the white of the screen, his signature appeared, with letters a foot high.

"Now then," Carban said to the girl, "see what you can do with it."

The girl moved across to the table and scolded herself. From the little chest she took ink and a suitably pointed pen; then, from a drawer, some sheets of paper. For some seconds she stared at the enlarged signature, and then bent to her task.

She handed the effort to Carban, in silence. He took it, silent also. Scratching off the lantern, he changed the sheets. Then, having passed to light a cigar, he switched on again.

The man in the chair, accustomed as he was to even the severest of tortures, could not but help feel gratified at what he saw. The copy, even under such adverse magnification, stood out almost flawless; every twist and stroke perfectly reproduced. He, whose signature it was, recognized it for a perfect facsimile of his own handwriting.

He realized with his very first glance that in this young, apparently innocent, violet-eyed girl, he beheld the most accomplished forger the world had ever known. With sudden force it came home to him just how great a menace to Society she was. At least, he corrected himself, whilst she remained in Carban's hands; for that she was quite a free agent he would not believe.

"Yes," acknowledged Carban, "that's pretty good! For the moment that will do. You can go to your room now, and pack; we shall be leaving here in an hour."

The girl made no reply, and moved across to the door. In the act of going out she halted and turned back.

"What," she asked slowly, "happens to him?"

Carban removed his cigar with a sudden gesture, and stared hard at the girl.

"That," he barked, "is our ally! Do as you are told!"



Silently the figure crouched there in the darkness, working patiently on the lock, striving to force his way into the crooks' stronghold.

The girl glanced helplessly at the man in the chair, and went out, closing the door after her. The look intrigued him, and, but in his thoughts, he stared absently at the door. Carban's voice brought him back to his immediate surroundings.

"My friend," the chief began, "how you discovered our hide I do not know. Nor does it matter much. In the course of a few days we intended leaving here; now we shall leave at once. Have you had some considerable damage, but, more than that, you have proved yourself a serious menace to our interests. Therefore, regrettable as it may seem, I have decided upon your immediate demise. There have been others before you, but they have not been so successful. Nevertheless, they too have died. You, because you have proved your ability, shall die a different death; it shall be a more refined, a more—er—unpleasant death. Our vault seems to have interested you quite a lot; it shall continue to do so. No doubt it will become somewhat close towards the end, but that cannot be helped."

Carban broke off into cold chuckling. The man in the chair, however, in spite of the awful death with which he was threatened, did not even blink. Carban addressed his two companions.

"Here, give me a hand with this chair; we have no time to waste!"

Knowing that the three men dragged the chair into the vault, they dragged it with him, and the prisoner yawned, as if utterly bored with the whole proceedings.

Carlsen moved out, his companions ahead of him.

"Good-bye!" he screamed, as he swung the massive door. "In the morning your headquarters will receive a letter from you, telling them that you contemplate becoming a job-a-bore. By the time they have read your letter, you will, to all intents and purposes, be one. Good-bye, Mr. Gerald Garth—good-bye!"

The door closed with a dull, muffled thud.

In the vault was darkness—the darkness of the absolute night; the intense and utter reassurance of the night that endures far over. With it came a silence—a silence as of the dark sea bottom—the silence of the speckles.

Garth drifted into a state of pleasurable apathy. The agonizing pains that had attended each inspiration of his surging lungs died to a dull ache. There there came to him a ringing in his ears, and a violent throbbing at his temples. This was followed by a flagging sensation at his extremities. A tepid unconsciousness possessed him. Time, as he knew it, ceased to be.

Lights danced before his eyes. They grew, swirling and gyrating, until they compassed his entire outlook. He found himself gazing into yawning abysses, ruddy gulfs, and red, ghastly channels of hideous and unobtainable fire. It faded, and he drifted into an apathetic endurance of dull pain. Without care—without hope—without effort, The Grim Reaper drew close.

Garth flung back his head, and ferred a dejected little smile. For a moment it changed, then it faded. A sobbing cough shook him, and his head sagged forward on to his chest.

The vault door swung open. Light from the room without entered, and the darkness fled. A form sped in; it was the girl. With the bullet she carried she slouched feebly at the couch that held the unconscious man in the chair—the cords she had tied. He fell forward, and it seemed

all her strength to hold him. Spurred by his inert condition, she half-carried, half-dragged him out into the room.

A horrible fear gripped her that he was already dead. She tore loose his collar and tie, and bared his chest. Then feverishly she proceeded to administer artificial respiration. Twenty awful and exhausting minutes dragged by before she saw the muscles begin to tingle from life tips.

She panted, and found with relief that his lungs had resumed their duties. From that point his recovery was rapid, and it wasn't long before, with the same old lung ache, he was sitting up, puffing, with obvious enjoyment, at a cigarette.

"Lady," he said slowly, "I rather felt you'd return. You don't seem to it in with that crowd and their rather cordial ideas of the value of human life."

The girl got to her feet. A sob shook her, and she spoke with difficulty.

"I must go now. I—I'm glad I was not too late. You must keep away from them; they are utterly ruthless. I— Good-bye. We shall never meet again!"

Garth smiled.

"Somehow I think we shall. Tell me, is Carlsen related to you?"

She crossed to the door.

"Why," she asked, her voice barely audible, "are you so interested in me?"

Their eyes met and clung, and when Garth spoke it was without his usual flippancy.

"I think I shall always be interested in you."

For a moment she stood as if to answer, then she was gone.

"My dear old laddie," Garth drawled, "if you will derive any satisfaction from raiding the house, do so by all means. But you will find, as I have so patently related, that at the moment it compares quite favorably with the cupboard of wincey rhyme-lane."

The two were sitting in Ellie's private office at Scotland Yard. Garth, after the girl's departure, had set to and made a thorough search of the house. He had been more than a little surprised to find that, during the time he had been incarcerated in the vault, the contents of the house had been ransacked. It stood bare and empty, and the job stood complete even to the placing of a "To Let" board in the front garden.

From the house he had made his way to the Yard. Comfortably ensconced in Ellie's office, he had related, to that worthy's unbounded astonishment, his night's adventures. He had assured that a raid would be a waste of time, Ellie granted.

"But," he ejaculated, "What do you reckon is the next move then?"

Garth yawned with great gusto.

"Dear soul," he murmured, "there is only one move possible for this bright person, and that is most emphatically—S-E-E! This is the end of the first round, and I think we may call it a draw. To-morrow, we must begin again. Good-night, old girl. I'll ring you in the morning."

THE BASE IN RUSSELL SQUARE.

"Well," said Detective-Inspector Ellis, "as far as I can see, we're up against a brick wall. I've had five men out on the beat for the last three days, and they haven't sniffed a thing. The gang seems to have vanished into thin air."

Garth lit his fifth cigarette. The two were sitting on a seat in St. James' Park. They met there, of all places, because Garth, making the appointment over the phone, had naïvely provided the seed for a little fresh air. Ellie, who knew his friend better than most men, sensed that he had reached a stage where he was treating nobody.

"Well, well," Garth remarked idly, "Just observe the unbounded energy of that little worm. That's the eighth time he has tried to push his way through that old cigarette packet! Bruce's spider's got nothing on that worm. An' that's what we must do, keep on trying. You won't get dependent, laddie; we have such to be thankful for. This number, for instance—make a note of it, U.Y.8082. Rather a strange number, isn't it? It's the number of a taxi plying for hire in this city. I observed it this morning."

"For Bruce's sake, Garth," Ellie grinned, "What are you driving at? What's all this about a taxi?"

"Taxi?" queried Garth. "Oh, yes, I was telling you. This morning that taxi passed me, and in it was Carlsen and the girl. I was in a bus, and by the time I'd topped off it had vanished in the stream of traffic. Now give me your car. I've been making a few odd inquiries these last three days, and in a minute I'm off to make some more. I want you to operate from Clapham. Fix up there as a travelier for 'Ideal Homes,' or something of the sort. Then, when you're fixed up, let me have your address. We've got to fix-comb this city from top to bottom. Try and trace that taxi number, although I'm not expecting much from it. By the way, did you know Carlsen had done time at Dartmoor?"

"No!" said Ellie, surprised. "How do you know?"

"Inquiries, laddie—inquiries," Garth answered laughingly. "His name was 'Barman' then. He kept his own parsons, and got away with it!"

Ellie swore.

"Well," he muttered, "that might be useful, one day."

Garth tossed away the cigarette he was smoking, and got to his feet.

"Oh, hey," he said brightly, "I must pay along now. Will we see you in the future, old boss. Toots!"

Garth strolled off across the grass, the personification of laziness. Ellie watched him go, pushed his head to the back of his head, and swore, with a few oaths, of the retreating figure. Yet it was noticeable that he swore good-humoredly.

Manchester Road, and, at its far end, Clapham Common, looked unusually dreary. It was a depressing beauty at the best of times, but, as seen through the driving curtain of fog and rain on that certain late afternoon in May, it looked positively melancholy. The road, with its miserable little houses huddling together as though from the rain, was deserted.

Then from around the corner at the Common and came a pony and cart. Utterly indifferent to the road's air of drab bleakness, it clattered its way along with noisy gusto. It slowed, and before a dingy little shop devoted to birds and their



The vault door swung open for a moment the girl stood there, a look of horror on her face. Garth sat just inside, bound and helpless, his head sagging forward on to his chest.

accessories, it stopped. The driver, clad in a decrepit ulster coat and a check cap of lead pattern and doubtful age, alighted. Admiring Crowsfoot—for thus he addressed his horse—to keep still, he entered the shop.

"Cricket, ma, 'ere's a day—eh?" he began, with all the intonations of Bew. The old lady behind the counter blinked, returned a quivering agreement, and inquired his business. The man drew a Washburn packet from his pocket and extracted a cigarette.

"Boker stiggins 'ere name o' Lewis, ain't there?"

The old lady agreed, and the man lighted his cigarette.

"Tell 'im," he said, puffing diligently. "I'm 'ere. Name o'—puff—" Cobb—'Arry Cobb."

The old lady nodded, and vanished through the glass door behind the counter. A few minutes passed, and she returned.

"Will you come this way, Mr.—" Cobb? she requested, in her dry, ready voice. "Mr. Lewis is in his room."

The visitor lurched to the back of the counter, and through the door into the room beyond. Seated before the bright fire, Lewis, the book agent—or if you prefer it, Detective-inspector Ellis—watched the man enter. Cobb, quite undisturbed by the other's scrutiny, removed his dripping ulster and hung it, in a heap, on the door.

"Afternoon, mate?" he greeted cheerily.

"Well?" barked the disappointed Ellis. "What 'is' 'ere do you mean?"

Ellis' mood was like the weather—variable. The past week had done much to contribute to such a state of affairs. In the first place the business trail had, as Garth had predicted, proved a blind one. He had traced the visits easily enough, but only to find that the driver could give him no information. He had, he told Ellis, picked up his fare outside the Strand Corner House, and had dropped them at one of the theatres. There there was Garth; he hadn't seen a sign of him since the day they had parted in St. James' Park.

True, the week had been a busy one, in all conscience, but that only made things worse. With all the inquiries he had made, the careful sounding of official circles—and unofficial ones, too—the investigation of all the countless anonymous friends of the underworld, the establishing of an elaborate line of espionage, and the invasion and inspection of all the likely holes and corners of the great city. For it all, Ellis could show—nothing. Small wonder he was short with his visitor.

"Lummas!" Cobb retorted. "Get a liver one, ain't yer? Can't a fellow a-sell on 'er now?"

Ellis got to his feet automatically; he was beginning to feel suspicious. The other spoke again.

"Dear, kind inspector—these wunt's another dived like it is the whole of London—don't you know your old friend?"

Ellis gaped, not and so a fish out of water. Laughing, Garth pushed him back into his chair.

"Be sorted, portish one, and for goodness' sake give me a decent cigarette."

Ellis, considerably recovered, and more than a little delighted, looks into a grin. He complied, and Garth puffed with content pleasure.

"Garth, old son," Ellis smiled, "your digress is splendid. I was contemplating handing you a thick ear when you dropped your little Red secret. Any news?"

Garth nodded.



As the crook opened the rear door of the auto, firmly holding the fatal bag, a hand suddenly reached out of the darkness. A force pressure gripped his throat and he was dragged reluctantly into the interior of the car.

"Laddie," he murmured, "I have found them!"

Five simple words, yet they meant everything to Ellis. He sat up abruptly, and felt that, after all, there was a purpose in life.

"Where?" he asked quickly.

Garth contemplated the glowing end of his cigarette thoughtfully.

"In a very small mansion facing on to Russell Square."

Ellis gasped.

"Good Lord! Russell Square! What a nerve!"

"Yes," Garth replied. "It's all that. But also it shows good judgment. It's what you might term a fair example of the privacy of conspiracy. One does not, as a rule, associate counterfeiting jobs with low-rented mansions and four-figure rentals. What do you say?"

"Well, then," Ellis grinned, "how did you find 'em?"

Garth shrugged his shoulders.

"Look, old man—clever lark! A certain gentleman named 'Squidder' MacCollins put me on the trail. I believe you know Squidder, don't you? He's a dip, or something of the sort."

Ellis nodded, and Garth resumed.

"Squidder was pulled in with some others in a gaming-house raid at Manor Park. I happened to be in the station when they brought the chaps in. On the door Squidder they found a note, full of notes. Made from currency thus anything else I looked them over. They were counterfeit, and their very perfection betrayed their origin. Need I say the dear Squidder went through the hoop, and, of course, he squeaked?"

Ellis' face wore a look of comprehension. "That's great," he commented. "Small beer for them, though, isn't it?"

"Yes," Garth agreed. "It is. But, dear fellow, you may well imagine some thing had to be done to get a little ready cash together. Squidder, mind you, was

unloading some pretty big stuff at that gaming-house. Now, I suppose, somebody will take his place and the game will go on."

Garth lighted another of his friend's cigarettes.

"But what about the child—Carson?" Ellis queried.

"Laddie," Garth darted his lambskin. "Carson is not the chief! My industry during the last few days has been comparable with that of the dear little bee, and I have heard a lot. There is somebody where Carson again. Somebody who is held rather in awe, and is referred to as the 'Professor'. As far as I can gather he keeps on the background always. I know that he is somewhere in London, but that's all. He is simply the brain of the gang, and let me remark, he's some brains, too! He is working to bring off a coup that doesn't bear thinking about!"

Garth's pause was from Ellis's breathless.

"What?"

"You know," Garth went on to explain, "all our banks, our credit systems, our negotiable security methods, our business, in fact, all our money machinery, is dependent upon one thing. That is, the probability of paper. The business man of this modern world of ours has got to know that the paper he's handling is genuine, that his banknotes are authentic, and that his drafts and currency certificates are reliable."

"Sure enough," Ellis agreed, somewhat mystified.

"Well, the Professor's idea is to smash all this. He aims to undermine the whole structure of world commerce by creating a lack of faith in paper. His plan is to flood the world with counterfeit stuff—stuff which, as we know, defies detection by any but an expert. Governments will suffer, and banks will crumble. Chaos will stalk unobtrusively across the financial world.

The gang, of course, will be busy making hay while the sun shines!"

"My heavens!" whispered Ellis. "What a coup!"

"Tonight," Garth resumed more slowly, "the first half million goes into circulation—unless we stop it! At a quarter to ten tonight Carlson will emerge from the house in Russell Square, and will enter a chauffeur car which will drive his wife to St. Pancras Station. The car will enter the square from the south side, and will drive round the island to the house. The driver of that car will be—you!"

"Will it?" Ellis queried in surprise.

"Yes," Garth nodded. "Now listen. Just after the car enters the south side of the square, it will suffer a puncture of one of its rear tyres. The driver—that's Slater—will alight, will probably swear, but will certainly change the wheel. When the change is completed he—well, he'll be handed it. You will then take his place, and I will be in the back, comfortably tucked away. You will drive round and pick up Carlson, who will be carrying a large suitcase of brown leather. The rest of it you can leave to me. You are thinking it would be a lot easier to take a bunch of plain-clothes men and raid the place, aren't you?"

Ellis volunteered no reply, but Garth knew he had read his friend's thoughts—correctly. He resumed.

"Perhaps it would be easier, but it wouldn't be anywhere near as thorough. It's certain we wouldn't get the Professor, and he's the man we want to get, believe me. Again, the commissioner is resigning at the end of this year, and bringing this case to a successful termination will pain a lot of weight. What do you say?"

"Good for, Garth," Ellis stammered, "you're not after the commissioner's job, are you?"

Garth laughed.

"No, you silly ass, but you see! And the way I'm figuring, you're going to get it!"

"Hah!" Ellis granted. "You're always running some water-tight ideas. Anyway, I'm with you on this deal; no'll bring this case home on our own, or best!"

Grimacing, Garth struggled into the old-fashioned coat, and dragged his cap to the approved angle.

"Meet me at the north corner of the square at nine-fifteen." He changed his voice as he opened the door. "Yes! Oh! right, mister, I'll be out all right!"

TRAPPED!

As exactly a quarter to ten a tall, well-dressed man emerged from the door of an imposing, ancient mansion in Russell Square. In his hand he carried a brown leather suitcase. Down in to the edge of the gutter, evidently waiting for him, was a large, chauffeur car. With a little smile of satisfaction the man moved out from the sheltering porch—it was raining heavily—and loaded for the car.

In the act of opening the door, he glanced, and threw a sharp glance up and down the square. Satisfied that his movements were not being watched, he opened the rear door of the saloon, and, stooping, got inside. A form reached for him, and he closed thickly.

Ellis, sitting at the wheel, smiled grimly. Having up his engine, he craned the car forward. He was somewhat amazed to find as to what was expected of him. He could feel the car rocking and shuddering with the fury of the struggle that still raged in the cramped space behind him. Through the open window drifted an odorous procession of gasps, grunts, and profane comments. He recoiled, with a grin, Garth's professed aversion to physical violence.

"Then—then you caught the moving ball of an approaching policeman. The man was crying the car with obvious suspicion. Ellis wondered if the man would stop him. He realized, of course, that he had but to speak the word, and the man would

pass on. But he wondered if it would suit Garth's plan to speak that word. Instinctively he felt it would not.

Garth's methods were his own, and some of his moves were rather irregular and open to public criticism. It would be said at once that they should have raided the house in the usual way, and have been satisfied with what they got. If this little scheme went the right way, it would be commented; if it didn't—well, it would be a horse of a different colour. Ellis made up his mind that the policeman had to be kept out of it as far as was possible.

They had drawn close to the watching officer. From behind there still came indications that Garth wasn't having it all his own way. To another the betraying signals, he raised his clutch and let the engine roar.

Then Ellis swore foully. With distinct undertones, clear above all other sounds, came the report of a revolver. It was followed by more violent indications from the combatants, and then a comparative silence.

The light, at least, was over, and Ellis sighed with relief. He did not, for a moment, doubt who was the victor. Only too well he knew the dynamic energy and terrific fighting abilities that lurked behind the mask of sweet business that Garth affected.

He had observed here, at the report, the policeman had started, and then increased his pace. Still torn by uncertainty, Ellis coasted his engine into a spluttering backfire. He saw the policeman relax somewhat, and then a voice came on his ear. "Beiter," Garth was demanding loudly. "What the devil is the matter with that engine of yours?"

"It's all right, sir," Ellis replied sheepishly. "She's missing a little on one. She'll pick up in a minute."

Garth was leaning out of the window. Sitting well back on his head—to conceal the fact that it was too small, was Carlson's top-hat. In his hand—to account for the little cloud of smoke that drifted out of the window—was a lit cigar. Ellis grimaced broadly, let in his clutch, and sped away from the still watching constable.

He heard Garth's voice addressing him. "Ease down now, kiddie. It was a disappointing affair, and much as I hate violence, I was obliged to put him to sleep with the butt-end of his gun. The blighter tried to shoot me!"

"Dreadful!" Ellis grinned. "Now listen. You next look in to the Yard with this bird. You can drop me at Broad Street police-station on the way. Change his name with the Bartman job; that will hold him until we've got our own charges ready. When you've freed him, I want you to come right back to Russell Square; I'll meet you there."

Ellis nodded, and, watching his chance, cut across New Oxford Street. He swung into Broad Street in a heave, but well-restrained, slid, and by the time he had reached the station he had slipped to a crawl again. He ceased that Garth was out on the running-board, and tumbled his head. Garth nodded at him encouragingly.

"All okay, kiddie," he murmured. "Will see you later on. Tada!"

Ellis acknowledged the farewell, and saw him swing easily on to the footpath; in his hand was the brown leather suitcase. Treading heavily on the accelerator he jumped forward into St. Andrews Street, aiming to cross Trafalgar Square.

Garth, ascending the station steps,

HUGH CLEVELY NEXT WEEK.



MR. CLEVELY has written a really splendid yarn in "The Death Squad."

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had had one idea when he left the train at Langton and set out to walk to the little village of Little Wicks. That was a quiet, rural locality. Yet he had gone Ellis wore thin buttoning and was wearing a quiet conversation when suddenly, by way of a burst of revolver bullets, he was plunged into a whirlpool of amazing adventure and thrills, breath-taking thrills. You too, cannot fail to be electrified by this exciting story. Make your rush to "The Death Squad" next week in **THE THRILLER**. It's something a "thriller" should be—and that term.

How did you like Furler Reiner's prize-winning story this week? I feel sure that when I tell you that this, like our **500-000** winning **M.S.**, is a first effort, you will agree with me that it is a most creditable performance. The third annual **M.S.**, the author of which will also receive **£50**, will be published in a few weeks' time.

Yours sincerely,

The Editor

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passed, and watched the car take the corner. At times, he reflected, Ellis was awfully reckless. The red tail-light vanished, and, with an odd little smile on his lips, Garth pushed open the door and entered the chair-room.

It was exactly twenty minutes later that Garth alighted from a taxi in Southampton Row, paid his driver, and walked slowly away in the direction of Russell Square. The driving wind had dropped, and the rain was falling in a steady, drizzling downpour. Yet Garth, strolling slowly on his way, seemed unaware of it.

At a cross street, he passed. It was empty, and gleaming like a drained luncheon. Lately gas lamps threw up scintillated and shimmering reflections from the pooled, mirror-like asphalt. He was standing, he sensed, in a canyon of silence. The theatre hour had passed, and the mighty city stood silent and deserted, as though suddenly depopulated by some vast and incredible catastrophe.

Garth sighed, somewhat depressed, and crossed the square. In the same quiet way that had marked all his previous movements, he slowly climbed the steps that led up to the entrance door of a certain, big, brownstone mansion.

From his pocket he took a bunch of keys; originally they had belonged to Carlson. He selected one, and inserted it gently in the keyhole. Almost without sound he opened the door, and stepped inside.

He stood motionless and alert in the unlighted hall. With every sense fully alert, he quietly appraised the situation. Garth, though he frequently utilized it, did not like the dark. It irritated his nerves—ones that were as those of a hunting beagle. He sensed something in the deathly silence that disturbed him, annoyed him. The utter stillness seemed to manacle him, limit by limit. Just what the menace was, he could not say, and in that very absence of knowledge lay the core of his mental unrest. One thing only he was sure—some other shared the darkness and the silence with him.

He began to move forward, outstretched hands feeling before him like antennae. In this manner he progressed some distance, careful to let no sound betray the extent of his advance. Then, with the speed of a lightning flash, all thought stopped. His next move was unconditioned, spasmodic, a movement of sharp recoil. Had his fingers touched a red-hot wire he could not, have moved more quickly.

But there something which he had touched was a hand. Momentarily his groping fingers began to tangle with another set, outstretched like his own. Instinctively, as might the fingers of deep sea monsters, the two hands had locked together, then as suddenly broken apart. To the scintillating brain behind them, each outer telegraphed its message of danger and the need for action.

The action, on Garth's part, became one of unthought acrobatics. Leaping and twisting, jinking, sliding, and sidestepping, he moved backward and sideways with oceanic speed. This suddenly, unexpectedly, he collided with yet another figure.

Arms closed about him, and a burning head split his lip. He went to the floor, his adversary with him, a struggling, snarling pair. Tightly he was conscious of voices calling curiously. A light opening into being, and as the club swung down it exploded in a blinding flash of whirling, roaring flame. Garth lost interest in the proceedings, slumped inertly, and lay in a sprawling heap—and in the wide!

THE GIRL AGAIN.

Garth opened his eyes, and the act seemed to cover an immeasurable period. Looking about him, he found only darkness. A black pall seemed to hold him with its very solidity. It was as a liquid, a heavy, overwhelming fluid. A groan escaped him. His brain, warped with its agony, whispered to him that he was blind. Every inch of his body throbbled and burned, and his very arteries seemed capable of flaming, scorching fire.

This, he thought, was—Hell!

There a coldness descended upon him, and it was wet. It refreshed him, cooled him, the tortured flesh and gnarled the fires that raged within. The pain left him, and his breath came in mighty, surging gusts. And he lay there, weak and exhausted.

Slowly his strength came back to him, and after a while he tried to rise. He found himself standing on a carpet, and he awoke dimly. The pile of the carpet was gargantuan in its depth. He found



Helpless as he was, Garth stared with a shudder of revulsion at the figure seated opposite him. One look at that lean, narrow, manuring face, and he knew that the man was that arch fiend—the Professor!

himself like a man in a bog—treading on a substance that sank away from under him. Wobbling and plunging, he felt lost and helplessly bewildered. And all around him was the darkness—the darkness of bottomless pits.

He halted, and stood swaying unaccountably. He felt nauseated, and his head spun horribly. To his nostrils came a perfume, a heavy, numbing perfume that he tried to brush away. He felt it creep into his nostrils until they became filled; until, his half-crazed brain told him, they would burst.

Then he saw the light. It was born in the distance. The immeasurable distance that seemed to mock his sight. Dully he watched it grow. From an infinite pinpoint it swelled at an alarming rate. He could not tell where it all came from; where lay its center, and where its outer edges. With unsway straightness it swept toward him, leaping up and absorbing the opposing darkness. Like a dull, purple stain it spread across the room. When every nook and corner was filled, its movements ceased.

Looking about, Garth realized with a start that the room he was in was not his own. Nor had he ever seen such a room before. It might well have been a room from the halls of nightmare. It was, he assured himself, the product of an overcritical-minded architect, executed by a crazy builder.

How many sides it possessed he knew not, certainly it exceeded four. The ceiling created a strange sense of oppression. In one corner it seemed to slay heights, in another the floor beneath it, unless one inverted to hands and knees, was tactics.

The walls were hung with curtains of heavy plush, and, like the carpet, they were of a deep, purple tone. Upon them, cunningly brocaded, was a conglomeration of weird, horrible creatures. Monstrous spiders, writhing serpents, lizards, acropuses, and countless others he failed to identify. Gazing upon their blood-red projections, he was conscious of the malignant air they radiated. They seemed, he thought, to move, to stir restlessly and with stealth, as though awaiting his presence there.

At a far end of that crazy room, where its crazier ceiling was of reasonable height,

stood a table, a long, low thing of massive build. Of legs, there was no sign; its outer sides reached down to the floor, and the whole looked for all the world like a monstrous block of wood, inlaid with parts of blood-red carving.

Upon this table he saw a number of strange things. Retorts, racks of test-tubes, apparatus, phials—there were things without end. He saw instruments, gleaming and scintillating strangely, which were, he thought, of a kind unknown to science. He saw books—heavy, vellum-bound tomes of ponderous size.

His eyes wandered across the before-mentioned litter—across, and beyond. At the far side of the table he saw a chair—a deep, luxurious chair. In it appeared a man. A small man; squat and thick-set, with unadorned legs and abominably long arms. From the lipless gash that was a mouth hung a cigarette, long and thin, and the swarming leather of his smoke that seeped from its glowing end seemed to struggle vainly to hide that horrible, dirty-yellow countenance.

From the instant that Garth's eyes met those of the seated man, all else was forgotten. One look, and he knew, from the things he had heard, that the man was—the Professor!

With a shudder of revulsion he took in the details of that lean, narrow, manuring face. He tried to look away, and could not.

He found himself observing the head, hairless and pale-looking, large and distended, as though about to burst. He observed the dumb-like lower, and sensed the mighty brain that lay behind—the brain that guided the activities of the gang of convicted experts.

He observed the eyes, pale-blue and watery, and strangely flecked with green, lustrous and shimmering. The thin, predatory look of a snake. The lips, almost that served for a mouth. The small pointed chin, and brows, the stumpy neck and humped shoulders. The skin was smooth and hairless, and had the appearance of being soft and spongy.

Again, in spite of his iron nerve, a shudder shook Garth. His senses grew, and the room revolved drunkenly. The curtains on the curtains began again their furthest stirrings, and the feather of smoke from the cigarette swirled and grew. It bore down on him in a massive cloud, and its head and silvery fringes lapped at him hungrily. It seemed pouted with desire; insatiable and peculiar; grey and gruesome. Then the eyes abstracted themselves inexorably into his roving vision. They stared at him, half veiled by their cartilaginous vision. Harrowing over him, they seemed to be analyzing him; peering in at his soul.

They began to swell, and, sick and weary, he watched them grow. They grew until he found himself drifting in a sea of blue, pale and watery; a sea flecked with patches of lustrous green. In faded, the tide of purple light retreated, grew small, then died away. Garth returned to the shocking darkness from whence he had emerged.

Once, it seemed he struggled out of it. He thought he lay with his head in a woman's lap. Thought he heard her murmuring sweet words of comfort, soothing and caressing. Thought he felt lips, hot and burning, pressed against his own. Thought that surely he must have died and awoken in Heaven, and he must have thought ahead, for a gentle laugh followed the thought. Something hot and wet splashed from his cheek, and he knew it for a tear. Then came a loud clang, followed by a deep, booming sound that continued with monotonous, nerve-racking persistence. He opened his eyes in time to glimpse the fleeing figure that had left him at the first alarm; he glimpsed her in time to recognize her. A happy sigh escaped him. Then a blank blackness shrouded him.

A loud, really thrilling, brought consciousness back to Garth. He opened his eyes, but was still in complete darkness. For many minutes he lay still, struggling to think. After a while, he remembered. He recalled, with a bitter little smile, his adventure in the house in Russell Square. Then he recalled the dream—it dream it was. The strange room, the Professor, and the girl.

He tried to get up, and discovered he was bound hand and foot. Then his thoughts drifted to Ellis. He fell to wondering whether he had got Carlsen in all right, and began to hope that Ellis would succeed in effecting a rescue.

From somewhere on his right came a groan. He knew instinctively who had groaned, and hopes of success died still-born. He twisted his head with a very little smile.

"Ellis?" he called. "Is that you?"

A stirring sound, as of a moving body, came to him. Another groan that was choked off short and twisted into a heart-felt curse, and then the voice.

"Gosh! Is that you, Garth? I was just beginning to figure out how long it would take you to get me out of this!"

"Dear old buddy," replied Garth, with a smile, "that is a splendid example of great minds thinking alike; I was just busy on the same problem. We are certainly in a bad way, what do you say? Tell me, how did they get you?"

Garth's question evidently brought back bitter memories to the C.I.B. man, for he precluded his reply with another vehement curse.

"Can't tell you much, I'm afraid," he growled. "Carlsen must have been playing possum. I hadn't gone far before I heard a faint humming noise. I turned, and looked a cloud of high-powered gas right in the face. After that—well, there is no other story! My light just went out—plant! What happened to you?"

"Ladlie," replied Garth, in a pained voice. "I, too, displayed an astonishing lack of brains. I wandered into that dark, silent house with all the innocent faith of a wee bairn. My intrusion, strange to relate, was rewarded. The moment was conveyed by a crack on my timber pate with a club. Really, it was a most average blow, and that club must have weighed at least two tons. When I had the synaptic apparatus of the brain, I never withdrawing a few remarks to him on the subject of physical violence. What do you say?"

Ellis found himself chuckling in spite of himself. Garth, he felt convinced, would talk nonsense on Judgment Day. About to speak, he halted. The sound of foot-steps came to them. A swirling blade of light groped across the floor towards them. It grew, then, through an open doorway, came a man; in his hand was a hurricane lamp.

The light from the lamp threw up the details of their prison. The low, dripping roof; the stone walls, green and slimy; and the damp, mottled floor—it was a cellar. There was much about the place that reminded a scoundrel. It was cold and dismal, and its air thickened with an odour rotten with decay.

The man placed the lamp on the floor. Frying him, Garth felt that the quart form was familiar. For some moments the man stood staring down at his prisoners

dispassionately. Then he moved a little, and the flickering light lit up his face. Immediately Garth recognized him.

It was the Professor! He stood staring down at them. His face wore a strange, sinister smile, and his glittering, reptilian eyes gleamed hatefully. At last he spoke. His speech was slow, silky, abject, and triumphant.

"Meditate," he began. "Incompetent mortals, now you shall pay for your impotence. For some time past you have interfered with my plans. You shall interfere no more. In due course I shall remove you."

Garth had struggled up into a sitting position. He leaved back against the wall with a hoarse cry that was, in itself, a snarl. He rasped.

"Ellis, old trout," he said, addressing his companion, "please observe, it speaks! Bewildering creature, what do you say?"



Rising from the unconscious moor, Garth swung round suddenly as footsteps sounded beyond the curtain. He was too late. A man stood in the opening—and even as Garth moved came the blinding flash of his automatic!

At the words, eagerly drawn, and dripping with moisture, a snarl of rage escaped the Professor. He jostled towards them, then, regaining control of himself, he stopped, and an evil chuckle shook him.

"Ah, my brave young friend!" he said softly. "Does you will speak less boldly. I have some interesting little experiments prepared for your benefit. You shall draw near to death many times before I shall finally let you go, and when you do go, it shall be accompanied by agonies unthinkable. I have many little creatures I want you to meet first, though. I have a beetle—a beetle you have never seen before. I have called it the 'Drooping Death.' I have others; but why talk of them, you shall meet them all."

The Professor broke off with another fit of his evil chuckling, and the pupils of his eyes began to change strangely. His whole body shook with his unsteady glee. It was a

sight to impress even the most unimpressible of minds.

Ellis looked at Garth.

"Good for!" he muttered. "The man's a maniac! A dangerous, homicidal maniac!"

Garth grinned.

"True! The old lad certainly seems a bit off, doesn't he? Seems to have given his keeper the slip. What do you say?"

The Professor recovered himself abruptly. Garth's hectoring speech, his utter indifference to the existing circumstances, seemed to upset the man's balance. He wanted to glaze, to see them cringe. He credited them with a mentality equal to his own. He found something different, and failed to understand it. Picking up the lamp, he moved over to the door.

"I go," he said. "In a few minutes one of my creatures will share this collar with

you. It will bite, and you will go down the road to death. But you shall not die. My skill will bring you back—to start again!"

The door closed with an ominous thud. In the dark of the collar, the two men were left to wait for—what? Garth heard Ellis' voice.

"How are your eyes, old man? I can't shift mine?"

"Hopeless!" Garth replied. "I'm trussed like a lolly loll. It seems we're well as truly in it now! I'm frightfully sorry, old man; I can't help feeling that I let you in for this!"

"Not!" Ellis asserted. "Don't you let a cheap idea like that worry you. Another thing, we aren't dead yet, not—." He broke off suddenly, then, in a thick voice, he spoke again: "Garth, I— Did you hear anything?"

"Yes!" Garth replied. "I can see something, too! Somehow, I have a feeling that we are about to be rescued!"

A light filtered slowly into the collar. Twisting around, Ellis saw, with a gasp of amazement, that one of the stone flags of the door was slowly lifting. The arm raising the flag came into view, and Garth, who was also watching, saw with an anticipatory thrill that it was feminine.

When the flag opened almost upon its end, it was propped in position with a stick. The arm disappeared, to be at once replaced by a hand. It was the girl—Ray. With an athletic grace of her shoulders she swung herself up and into the room. She threw her eyes, white teeth she carried a knife.

Remembering the knife from her mouth, she crossed the room to the two bound men, and it was noticeable that she approached Garth first. A few soft strokes, and he was free. He sat up and slowly bent his limbs, then he fell to massaging them. The girl moved on to Ellis and freed him also.

"Hurry!" she urged. "There is no time to be lost!"

Moments passed before either of the men recovered the use of their limbs. The girl lit her lip agitatedly, and stared about the gloomy corners of the collar in fearful anticipation.

"Oh, do be quick!" she begged again.

Garth struggled to his feet.

"We are ready," he said. "Is this way far back or do you must wait. Lead us!"

Ellis was on his feet, and the three moved across to the flagstone. Looking down, they saw, but six feet below, the floor of what appeared to be a tunnel. To one side stood a lantern.

"Down you boys, Ellis, old man," Garth said, grinning. "Don't knock the lamp over. I'll hand the lady down to you, then follow myself, carefully bolting the door!"

Gravelling at being made to go first, Ellis did as he was bid. The girl was standing ready; that she had been quite capable of entering seemed forgotten. Garth took her hand, then from a far corner came a soft thud. Garth tensed, and swung wildly. The girl clutched his arm in fear.

"Don't get away," Garth reassured her. "Get you below; I'll— Look out!"

A squat, brown-furred creature emerged from the gloom in a scurrying rush. Garth had a vision of glistening, amber eyes, a small, gaping, tooth-filled mouth, and a drooping, red tongue, then the thing was on him. He acted instinctively, yet coolly. His right leg swung back and swept forward again in a powerful, well-timed kick.

The thing catapulted backwards. Garth heard it thud against the wall and fall to the floor. He became conscious that the girl was down, and they were calling to



him. He dropped to his hands and knees, and slid through the hole on his stomach, feet first. Suddenly he saw the thing again. It leapt for his face. With a frantic effort he jerked himself backwards through the hole, taking the supporting stick with him.

As he splashed on the floor of the tunnel, he heard the thud of the closing trapdoor. With it he heard a rat-like squeak, and then a sickening, scurrying noise. A cry of horror was wrung from the girl. Garth got slowly to his feet.

"Close that," he commented. "Had to make quite a quick trip for it. Seems to me I wasn't the only one that 'sopped,' either. What do you say?"

Ellis grinned, but the girl shuddered, and picked up the lamp.

"We must hurry," she said. "Time is getting short. Come, follow me."

She moved off along the passage. For what seemed hours, yet was barely six minutes, the two men followed the girl. At last Garth was conscious of a freshening of the air, and a bang that held of open water. The tunnel swung sharply to the right, and they found themselves in the open air. Before them was a towing-path, and beyond the broad rapids of the river. They halted, and stood staring out at the water. The girl sighed, then pointed away to her left.

"That way," she said, her voice low and sad, "will take you to safety. Go now, for I must return."

She made to move, and Garth gripped her arm.

"No!" he cried. "You must come with us. You cannot go back to that murdering crew. Let us take care of you."

Slowly, and in a manner that was infinitely sad, she shook her head.

"You do not understand," she answered. "I stay with them, and they use my ability, not because I wish it, but because I must!"

"But why?" Garth burst out. "They can mean nothing to you, and if you fear them I—"

She interrupted him.

"Four times," she said solemnly. "Do I fear them, you say? To fear for myself? Listen, I will tell you. I have a younger sister, Mary, years ago my parents died, and I was left alone in the world to care for myself and my sister. My father was an engineer, and he left me with much of his skill. Then our uncle came along, and he took us into his care. He is the man you know as Carlson. He spent a lot of money training me in the finer arts of the engineer, until at last he asked me to resign, until at last he asked me to resign a Treasury note as a bribe. I did so, and the finished work astonished him. He went away, and when he came back the Professor was with him. That was the beginning of all our troubles."

"Ah!" said Garth as understanding came to him.

"The next thing," the girl resumed, "was as often from the Professor to make his plans for him. He's got some wild idea about flooding the world with counterfeit notes. I refused. They my uncle tried to use his influence, and when that failed they left me alone for a while. One day the Professor came to me and told me he had taken my sister away. He gave me to understand that as long as I did as he I was told she would be quite safe. That ended the matter; there was nothing I could do. I—I love my sister more than life itself. As long as I work for them she will be all right! If I stop, or try to get the police to act, she—she—! Oh, it's—"

Her voice broke, and dry sobs shook her. Garth stopped close, and placed a sympathetic arm around her shoulders.

"Little lady," he said thickly, "I am beginning to understand much that was before, a mystery. Cannot we rescue your sister and also remove the hold they have on you?"

"Ah," she replied, shaking her head. "I wish it were possible. He is cunning. Thinking I might attempt something of the sort myself, he took steps to make it impossible. He has injected some unknown poison into my sister. To keep her alive he has to inject an antidote every twenty-four hours. If, for any reason, it is not done my sister will die. Oh, don't you see the diabolical cunning of the man? I dare not betray him, nor take my sister away; I would only be causing her death if I did. If only there was something that could be done! I hate this dreadful life!"

Following her words, a tragic sigh descended upon the little group. Then the girl spoke again.

"Listen! If I can obtain some of the antidote the Professor injects into my sister I wonder if a specialist could find out anything from it? It might be sufficient to enable him to say whether he could do anything to rid her system of the poison. If he could do anything I would then consider stealing her away. Yes, I will try that. Mr. Garth—her voice had a note of pleading, and, strangely thrilled, Garth took her hand—"I'm afraid I cannot do much without help. Would you be willing to come if I called?"

Garth answered, his voice deep and sincere:

"When you want me I shall be waiting. I cannot speak for my friend here. He has his position to think of, while I am a free agent. I have given my word, and I have given it gladly."

A sort of indignation came from Ellis.

"It's all right, mate," he said gruffly.

"Don't you listen to Garth. He's always trying to bag all the excitement for himself! When you send for him I'll be right along, too!"

Garth laughed, and slapped his companion on the back affectionately.

"Oh course you will, old man. But I couldn't resist stringing you a little!"

The girl smiled. Slowly, as if reluctantly, she freed her hand from Garth's.

"I must go now, or they will be expecting me. I thank you both from the bottom of my heart. Frey Heaven our opportunity will come soon. Good-bye!"

Before another word could be said she had scrooped up the lantern and fled back into the tunnel. For some seconds the two men stood looking after her in silence. It was Garth who spoke first.

"Ladies, I'm going to marry that girl! I think she's the most wonderful creature in the world! What do you say?"

"Huh!" Ellis ejaculated scornfully. "As if the girl would be so easy as to marry a trouble-baiting old like you! Come on, let's get going. I want to see this place, and the house in Russell Square, raided!"

"Garth," Ellis rambled digressively, "the way that crowd strip a house at about beats me!"

Garth smiled, and wriggled into a more comfortable position. The two were returning from raiding the house on the river. Following their car were two others, packed to capacity with plain-clothes men. The main, as in the case of the house in Thorncliffe Road, had proved an after failure. The two houses were bare and empty. In fact, had not Garth found traces of the larvae that had been used to remove the staff, Ellis would undoubtedly have had some unpleasant questions to answer.

"Yes," Garth replied, nodding. "Yet I must be frank with you. It is only what I expected. They are a highly-organized crowd. Why they go to all this trouble, though, unless it's to impress us with their ability to vanish, I don't know. It is the end of the second round, and I rather think we win by a narrow margin. To-morrow we must begin again. Tell your friend to stop at this next corner. I'm all for a spot of slumber. Oh, I forgot! You'd better call at Broad Street and collect that bag. It's got half a million of counterfeit money in it!"

THE TATTOOED DETECTIVE.

Garth opened his eyes, and sat up in bed suddenly. For a second he wondered what had awakened him. Some sound had drifted in through the heavy slats of sleep that had wrapped him. Then he layed it again, and his air of innocence relaxed. From the room beyond came the shuffling of the telephone bell. He reached across his head to the hanging switch and flipped the room with light.

He glanced at his watch and discovered it was past four. From the pocket of his pyjama-coat he produced a leather-bound cigarette case and a box of matches. Utterly indifferent to the impatient shuffling of the bell, he proceeded to light himself a cigarette, and not until it was burning to his satisfaction did he attempt to sleep.

Throwing back the bedclothes, he swung himself to the side of the bed and pushed his feet into a pair of slippers. He paused to prevent himself the luxury of a good stretch, and in the act there was much that was reminiscent of a busy painter. Slipping on a dressing-gown, he passed through into the breakfast-room beyond. On a little table at the side of the fireplace stood the telephone.

It occurred to him that he ought to see who was calling him at such an hour. A little sigh of resignation escaped him, and he took into a convenient chair and drew the instrument towards him. An impatient voice came to him, and, detected as it was, he identified it as the voice of Ellis.

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"Hallo!" he called. "Yes, Garth speaking. What's that? In the river? Who? Oh, I see! Yes, I'll be right along, lad. The mortuary is straight the Lambhouse Out Boat, isn't it? All right, give me thirty minutes."

Garth slowly, thoughtfully, replaced the receiver.

A week had passed since the rail-road inter-continental had been made on the houses at Russell Square and the river. It had meant, as he had told Ellis, that they had had to start all over again. Starting all over again was a proposition that not infrequently came to Garth—it was part of the life. Invariably such a beginning involved work that was tedious, uninteresting, and anything but engaging. He had learnt to take it with a stoical smile, a necessary evil that had to be borne. And now, at the end of the long, hair-raising week of progress, of countless meetings and inquiries, there arose this fever. The bright and pillaring forms of a new-born hope—of a mail suddenly attended upon.

He backed out his Sports Afton from the rear end, and headed, with his left hand on the wheel, on a reckless speed, across London for the East End and Lambhouse Basin. With doors greying the eastern horizon, he crossed the dock, square little building that huddled at the side of the lighter-staked landing.

Death in its most violent form—murder—awaited his inspection. Inside the room he halted, and his unobtrusive eyes surveyed the scene before him. In the little mortuary were five slabs. Four of them were empty, the fifth bore a still form, discreetly covered by its conventional sheet of white muslin. At the far side of the corpse stood three men, and their eyes were upon him. One of them was a policeman in uniform, another, stripped to his underclothes, was also a policeman, the third was Ellis.

Garth removed his hat, and moved slowly across to the white tray. As he did so Ellis stepped to meet him. He spoke, and his voice was solemn and heavy.

"Garth, old man, the man who was waiting has turned up. A policeman picked him up on the Lambhouse dock, almost in the identical spot where Bennett was found. By Heaven, it's wonderful! Where will it all end? That sound is rattling. But here. This log found something. Today here"—he indicated the man in shirt-sleeves—"was washing the body and made a discovery. Look!"

Ellis raised the mattress, and exposed the face of the dead man. Garth bent forward, a little whistle of surprise escaped him. On the side of one foot, crudely tattooed, was what was obviously an address. It was recorded in red, and was probably the work of a murderer. Garth read it again. The address was: "17, Seaming Street." He straightened up, and Ellis dropped the sheet back into position.

"Thank you, Valley," Ellis said to the man in shirt-sleeves. "You acted in a very practical manner. I will remember it."

He took Garth's arm and moved across towards the door.

"That is all, old man," he said. "I thought you'd like to see it yourself, though. His pockets were empty, but that was evidently something they never thought of. Let me look to your side. I want a word—no! hardly. You found a theory, too."

They strolled into the two-story in silence. Throughout the drive back Garth was somewhat preoccupied, and so the silence remained unbroken until the two were comfortably ensconced before an electric fire in Garth's breakfast-room. Garth passed his unobtrusive companion a tumbler half filled with neat Scotch, and indicated the adjacent sofa.

"Now, then, dear old inspector," he murmured. "Let's hear your theory. I'm so awfully interested."

Ellis ignored the slyness and took a long drink.

"I don't know what you'll think of it," he began dubiously. "But it strikes me as being pretty sound. This lad who's just been found is the last of the four. The first was found at slack water at the mouth of the Regent Canal. The second was found down at Tilbury, got out with a last cry. The third was found off Lambhouse Cut at high-



One of the stone flags began to rise slowly. A head and shoulders appeared, and the two prisoners saw it was the girl, Fay. Between her arms, while teeth was clasped a knife.

water—that was Bennett. And now this last one. High-water again, and practically the same spot. Are you following?"

"Sure, my old man," Garth replied, nodding.

"Well, it's a matter of some speculation as to where these bodies first entered the Thames, but, personally, I think I know. They all entered the Thames at the same place, and that place is—the Regent Canal! It needs some explaining as to how they drifted down the canal to the river without being seen, I must admit, but it doesn't strike me as being. Now, then, that address. Do you know where Seaming Street is?"

Garth shook his head, and admitted that he didn't. Ellis passed to drain his glass, then resumed.

"No, I hardly expected you would. It's a dingy, little street back of the Galvanic Road. The Regent Canal passes under that street! Well, that's about as far as I can go. I've got a feeling that the house in Seaming Street has some intimate connection with the gang, and I believe that it is from that house the bodies have been dumped into the canal. Myself—that's this last movement, have stumbled upon it. I think, too, he must have had some idea that something might happen to him, and that was why he took the precaution to tattoo the address on his foot. No doubt he figured that if anything did happen to him, and his body was afterwards found, the address would be investigated, and something discovered."

Ellis, his theory explained, looked at his companion expectantly. He set a great store by Garth's opinion. Garth nodded, threw away his cigarette, and spoke.

"Dear old lad," he said. "You've got it nicely. I agree with you in every detail. Now, something comes to tell me that at the house in Seaming Street we shall find the gang's new base. What do you say?"

Ellis got to his feet, and picked up his hat preparatory to leaving.

"Yes," he agreed. "I'm with you there. I've going home now for a couple of hours sleep—I need 'em. Later in the morning I'll see what I can get out about that address. Then, probably after lunch, I'll phone you. That, eh?"

"Sure," Garth nodded broadly. "Only don't call me too early, I just naturally hate that 'phone bell!"

The body of a man was extracted from the Fluffy or Ewerhouse Cut entrance in the early hours of the morning by a patroling police-boat. The man was clad in European clothing, and it is supposed that, arriving at his stop, he went down slipped and fallen of the gang, and, being unable to swim, was drowned.

Garth laid down the paper. For "Lancet" he had read "detective," and he knew that

that short paragraph marked the passing of Barker, the door-bell jangled, and before he could rise to answer it the door flew open and Ellis breezed in.

"Well, my man," he greeted. "I think we see on the trail at last."

Dropping his hat carelessly on the floor, he sank into a chair with a contented sigh. Garth eyed him skeptically, and smiled.

"Yes," went on Ellis, "I had that glint in Seaming Street looked up this morning. Who do you think I see there?"

Garth contemplated the ash on the end of his cigarette.

"I haven't the foggiest. Might be Dick Turpin, for all I know."

"Hold it," Ellis countered. "Dick Turpin no quantity!" "Billy the Left," my man, "Billy the Left!" He only came out about four months ago after doing three years for outrage elsewhere. You ought to remember him, considering the part you played in putting him away!"

Garth did remember, and grinned.

"Billy the Left, eh?" he mused. "That sounds quite interesting. Got any suggestions?"

Ellis shook his head.

"No," he admitted. "I haven't. The man seems waste a bit of thinking and, I fancy."

"Wrong, lad," Garth disagreed. "The man seems to be awfully thoughtful! I shall chat Billy tonight. You will remember when he had his place in Penningfield. I gathered most of my confidence through visiting him in the guise of one 'Tap,' Kinnella, a thick-packer and what-not. Well, he never knew right to the end that it was Tap who put him away. As 'Tap,' Billy was very fond of me. My smoking ways appeared to his sense of what was right. To-night Tap will see him again!"

Ellis rose.

"Might have known it?" he growled.

"Treat you to log all the confinement."

"Can you tell me anything about the place that will be useful?"

"Yes," Ellis replied. "But it isn't much."

"Shush!" Garth's eyes shone. "You know this. He was turned up in the last job, only he couldn't fit him. Entry is gained by a private knock-two taps, one, and then two again—and on the panel, not on the knocker. That's as much as we've found out."

"But what's worrying me is what am I going to do?"

"There, dear old lad!" Garth murmured. "You've got me! Couldn't you do a bit of hunting, or work, or something? What do you say?"

"Fiddlesticks!" exploded Ellis. "That's what I say! Confounded infernal fiddlesticks! The standard rule is get your gun. You've got to stand back for that, or I'm asking to go."

They went, both grinning.



Before the door of the crooks' den, the strange figure paused and knocked—unsuccessfully. A moment, then the door opened suddenly, and through the aperture a face peered cautiously.

ELLIS IS JUST IN TIME.

A smart, unshod, downcast-looking creature shuffled across the corner and entered the street called Staining. He was a poor specimen of humanity, in all conscience. From his sloping and rounded shoulders hung an shaggy-curly mane and unshakably stiff, in his head, encasing the detestable hair, was a hat of doubtful age, and certainly too big.

Below the broken hat-brim was a drawn and haggard face. The eyes were dull, looking in haze, and having pupils strangely contracted. The nose was thin, and the protruded nostrils had an odd habit of twitching. This twitching was also evident in the weak and quivering mouth. It was a gray hair—mashed, it might have been white. It was the face of a notorious drug-addict.

Towars, freckled and mottled the other in sickness, terminated in boots that might once have been brown. They were large boots—far too large for the man who wore them—and if his dragging step was any testimony, they were far too heavy.

Before the door of Number Seventeen the man paused. After a moment of hesitation he knocked—twice, then once, then twice again, and he knocked on the panel. Some moments passed, and the man occupied there in talking with fervor frequency up and down the ill-lit street.

He was reaching up to knock again, when the door opened suddenly. No word was spoken, yet he seemed to understand, for he stepped inside. The wretched little man who had opened the door closed it again. Still no word was spoken. He shuffled off along the dark passage, and the unshod one followed. The passage terminated in a door, and this he opened. Still in silence, and still followed by the unshod one, he entered the room beyond. A smoking and flickering oil-lamp furnished scant illumination.

In the room he halted, turned to examine his visitor, and then, for the first time, looked the visitor.

"What th—?" He broke off and stared.

"Deliver!" he gasped. "It's Tag, ain't it—Tag Kinnell?"

The visitor nodded and answered in a hoarse voice:

"Ye, Billy, it's me straight. 'Ow's things?"

The wretched little man with the sandy hair and lumpy back gazed the addressee inquiring.

"Was th' blame an' you a-shut' of, comin' 'ere, m' who told you th' knock, hey?"

"It's aw' right, mazy," the other reassured, not a little put out by the wretched one's hostility. "Ye knows you can trust an ole pal, eh? Things is pretty rotten w' me these days, w' I was 'gud' poor would guess just 'like th' of work—eh? He dropped across Number Seventeen yesterday, it was 'a' m' m' th' knock. Gived me a couple's bob, too, 'e did."

Billy the Leth eyed his visitor doubtfully—suspiciously. He had long held an unworkable idea that Tag had in some way that eluded him, been intimately connected with his recent misadventure. He decided that it would be better for his health if he kept Tag at a safe distance, and so that end he shaped his speech.

"'Bout Tag," he answered hoarsely. "But th' ill ain't in business these days. Can't 'elp no m'ow. He's just. He's in a pretty bad way myself. Any'ow, you must 'up on 'im, He's expectin' a visit. He'll thought you was 'in, or th' warden' 'ave let you see. Scow, he—"

Following boldly along the bare passage came a knock, the same knock as Tag had used. Billy the Leth ceased abruptly.

"'Tis 'e! Ye wait 'ere till th' ill comes 'in into another room. You can't close th' door."

He shuffled off along the passage to answer the knock. With his departure the corner, native denizen of Tag vanished. He moved with surprising speed in the closing door, and reached it in sufficient time to prevent it entirely closing, and, all things considered, he moved with surprising alacrity.

He heard the front door open, and then the peevish greetings of the two men. Then came in turn the excited voice of the visitor.

"'Tis Billy," he started off, "up into yer top story quick! We gotta meet th' ill here—"

The voice of Billy cut in on the speaker.

"'Ow you say?" he snarled. "He got a flaming number (house)—don't 'ave 'em to 'out, do you? Wait 'ere, Billy see 'em 'out safe!"

Footsteps sounded along the passage, and then Billy peered suspiciously into the room Tag was endeavouring to light a small slip of paper between the bars of the grate. He succeeded, and applied it decorously to the grimy cigarette—held between his lips.

"'Nah, then, Tag," Billy called. "Come on, you must 'elp 'em. 'Bout th' ill can't 'elp 'em."

He led the way along the passage, and showed Tag out with indifferent haste. The wretched "Downright" he attended with a care and slammed the door.

Tag's passage took along the street way, if anything, slower than that of his arrival. Once around the corner, however, it changed surprisingly. He strode for the Calabonian Road as if his very life depended upon it.

Breaking into the Calabonian Road, he closed in a walk. A large motor-car standing in the gutter caught his eye, and he headed for it. There were two men sitting in front, one of them was the approaching Tag, and again in the driver. The driver started his engine, and the man who had spoken to him leaped out of the car to meet the approaching Tag. The man was Detective-inspector Ellis.

"Listen!" snapped Tag, and his voice was the voice of Garth. "Billy the Leth and a pal will be leaving that house in a minute. Get 'em and get 'em good! I'm going back to you. If you don't know me by my eye, you'll know me by the place. Hey along now, you ain't miss those cars?"

The heavy car jumped forward, and left Garth standing. For a second he stood staring after it, then, passing to light a cigarette, he lided along slowly in its wake. He had almost reached Staining Street again when the car passed him again, bound for Scotland Yard. A shrewd conclusion? on the bare

told him all he wanted to know. Before the door of Number Seventeen he halted, and used a minute in the dull application of a slender piece of steel. The lock clicked back, and he entered. He passed quickly through into the kitchen. There he removed the plates, and then the boots. They were, as was explained—his first were shod in light boots of canvas and leather, not unlike the boots a lower wares.

From a pocket of the tight-fitting jacket that the removal of the shoes had disclosed he drew out a rock and inspected it on. His first move was to examine the stone, but he did not find the expected irregularities. He opened a door and found himself in a small and dirty scullery. In one corner stood a passage, and Garth left softly appeared. In such a shaggy, barely furnished house it was the last thing he expected to see.

It piqued his interest and he fell to examining it. Something about it struck him as odd. For a moment it shocked him, and then he resumed. The stone had never been used. The run across the top still wore their original coat of dust, and inspected it on. He was a clear indication that the stone had been there some time. Garth left puzzled.

He turned on one of the taps, but no hot or cold water came. He tried another, and the result was the same. Obviously the gas was on both, and cooking was not the purpose of the stone. His shrewd gaze strayed across the surface of the stone in probing inquiry. A thought occurred to him; he eyed the two taps he had not tried. Reaching forward, he turned one of them, and knew he had discovered the secret of the stone. A faint click answered the turning of the tap and the whole move began to move slowly upward.

With the stone moved the square of floor on which it stood. Up and up it went, until it was high against the ceiling; there it stopped. From each corner of the square of floor beneath the stone a steel rod descended. Following these downwards Garth discovered they terminated similarly in a square platform that had risen and taken the place of the one above.

Garth realized he was looking at a remarkably concealed lift. As he stood upon it it began to move again, and he was not a few seconds later. For a fraction of a second he hesitated, then with an indifferent shrug of his shoulders he jumped lightly down on to the descending platform.

The downward movement of the lift ceased. For a moment Garth remained where he was, listening. He heard nothing, and, satisfied on his side, he stepped off the platform. He found himself in a tunnel, low, dark, and slimy. He moved off along it, very carefully. After traveling some distance, the tunnel turned sharply to the right, and Garth found himself in a cellar. He swept it with his eyes, and found it bare and empty—more, it seemed the tunnel went no farther.

Garth was conscious of a feeling of disappointment. Disappointed, he went over the wall again, and then he made a discovery. Three of the walls were as those of the tunnel, discovered stone. The fourth was of wood—hard, closely-fitted planks. Set in the

wooden partition—for that was what Garth decided it to be—was a door, small and simply fitting.

From below the bottom of the door came a faint suggestion of light, and a vague murmur of voices. He approached it slowly, and the voices became more clear. Tensed for sudden action, he laid his ear to the woodwork, and his form stiffened. Two voices came to him. One was a man's, and Garth identified it as that of the man he knew as Henry. The other was the girl's—Fay's.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" he heard the girl demand, and he caught a note of love in her voice. Her words were followed by a snacking laugh from the man, and then:

"I can say what I like to you men."

"You too have been drinking?" he heard the accented voice of the woman protest.

"Have I?" returned the man. "And what if I have? I can love you just as easily drunk as sober."

Garth went thither. The man's words provoked in him a sense of rage he felt powerless to restrain. He heard in that voice a warning tone that was elemental in its very primitiveness. It was a brutal force, a godless force, a love that could only be stopped by another as brutal as its own. Garth loved the girl again:

"My uncle will make you pay for this!"

"Your uncle," the man sneered. "It may be who was my love! And let me tell you this—he is no more your uncle than I am."

"What do you mean?" the girl almost whispered.

"What I say," replied Henry, with a harsh laugh. "The chief of the mobsters have been stringing you. They knew your ability with the pen—knew your old man, and they took you to one side for the big scheme. They're to use stringing you all along the line. What about your sister? Poisoned. Is she? She's no more poisoned than I am! All bluff to keep you in hand, that's all. You want to see you've seen the mobsters' jobs? Well, let's go. Let us, a solid dose to keep her sleeping, and you'll see it. You can fall for me now, my dear."

The words were followed by a sudden softening, and a little ray of pain from the girl. Garth opened the handle of the door and swung it open. He was standing in the room before he realized he had opened, and he saw things through a cutting slit of wood.

The furnishings of the room surprised him, but in the heat of the moment he ignored their luxurious completeness. His eyes jumped to the scene in the centre of the room. The man had the girl bent back across the top of the big table that occupied the bulk of the floor space. She was straddling him, and he was leaning forward to kiss her lips.

Garth coughed, and a savage little snarl escaped him. With a bounding of his limbs towards the door, he stepped forward. The man glanced back and looked away, groping for his lip. Garth, his eyes flickering with rage, saw a lunge-making appearance to the man's leg. It was beautifully timed, and it connected to that particular little neuro-centre known as the "point" at the peak of its power. There came a sickening, cracking noise, and the man staggered backward to lie in an inert heap when he fell.

Garth's rage left him as quickly as it had come. When he turned to the girl his eyes were half-blinded, and the stream, large male physical across his lips.

"Sweet lady," he murmured, "were you my next, I cannot possibly remove the delight it occasions me, and I rejoice that I have been able to serve you. I hate personal violence, as a rule, but I'm rather afraid I enjoyed hitting that lightner."

The girl recovered somewhat at his halting speech. There came confusion, and she cast a frightened glance at the curtained doorway beyond the table.

"You must go!" she burst out. "My thanks will keep. There is danger here, and I am afraid. Please go!"

Garth left strangely thrilled. Her very nervous set his blood racing.

"Fay are afraid?" he queried. "Is it for me you are afraid?"

"Oh," she pleaded. "Be go—about! I—yes— Yes, it is for you I fear. None—None—None!"

Steps sounded from beyond the curtain. Garth jumped for the door through which he'd entered. He was too late. The curtain moved, and a man entered. He saw Garth and snarled. With the smooth speed that characterizes the true gunman, he produced an automatic and took a snap shot. It caught Garth in mid-air, and he landed in a crumpled heap. Across the room of his head a shadow horror gazed blind.

THE GANG OUT.

Garth opened his eyes and blinked about him. The blackness of eternal night encompassed him. The intensity of the darkness seemed to strike him. It was heavy, cold, and wet. He became conscious of the mad thrashing of his head, and he wondered if it was going to burst. He made an effort to extricate his senses, but the throbbing made sustained thought impossible. A wave of goldenness swept him, and he awoke.

His becoming conscious of the cold darkness that enveloped his body. The air about him was clammy, and reeking with the peculiar tang of decayed fungus.

He tried to move, and found he could not. He seemed bound from neck to heels. Then he made another discovery which, in the confusion attending his return to consciousness, had escaped him. He was straddling on his feet, and his back was to a wall—a damp, stone wall.

The awful truth dawned on him. He was tied to the wall, and the position of his body was the effect of the water that was slowly but surely flooding the cellar. He heard a sound, and a yellow, wringing shaft of light moved across the surface of the water towards him. He heard a voice, a laughing, mocking voice. He knew it for the voice of Charley.

"Goodbye!" said the voice. "Goodbye, Mr. Garth. This time there will be no mercy. In less than thirty minutes your eyes will be covered. I—"

The voice broke off suddenly, and Garth heard the struts creak of a scaffold. Then came voices, loud and excited, and he knew Ellis had arrived. The whispering secrets of light vanished. Garth felt his head whirling sickeningly—the reaction had been too

subtle. A heavy Ellis snarl crossed his lips. It fell away, and with a grunt his head snarred forward. He knew no more.

The dim of Garth's broken-room flew open, and Detective-inspector Ellis charged into the room. He was wet of face, and shoddy in a bowing cap. In one hand he clutched a piece of paper. At his sudden and violent entry Garth, who was quietly dozing before the fire, opened his eyes. Ellis halted, a champagne-fizz smile across his mouth, and he moved forward again with some business.

"Sunny, old man," he apologized. "I didn't know you were asleep. I'm feeling rattled."

He extended the piece of paper to be held.

"What is that?" he demanded, with some show of reticence back. "Is it genuine or counterfeited?"

Garth took the piece of paper and scanned it out. He found himself looking at a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds. He fingered the paper thoughtfully, glanced once at the printing, and then up at his companion. A little smile came into being.

"It's counterfeited, liddle, all wrong. The work of our sweet lady. Why do you ask?"

"Huh?" Ellis snorted. "I know it! Told 'em so at headquarters, but the cuss may wouldn't have it. Wanted to tell me it was genuine, and said it was time I bought a pair of foot-stomped!"

Garth laughed.

"Suppose you tell me all about it. Where did you get the note from, anyway? And, remember, I'm still waiting to hear exactly what happened at Bonding Street."

"Yes," said Ellis. "I know that. I'd have been round before, and the doctor said to let you rest. He said, he said you were still in bed, and would have to take it easy for the next few days. And here I had you dressed and sitting up! You ought to obey doctor's orders, you know. The cuss can wait."

"The doctor," Garth drawled, "is a silly man! And this ruse can't wait! Tonight, you and I are off to South Wales!"

Ellis blinked.

As the police boat came alongside the wharf, Garfield saw a figure emerge out of the darkness, and a voice came to him. It was Fay come to lead them into the gang's headquarters!





Before the detectives could reach the recumbent figure of the Professor, a sudden scream from the girl made them stop dead. Then the floor seemed to fall away from them and they were hurled downwards into impenetrable darkness.

"South Wales!" he muttered. "What the story is?"

"To bring this case to a satisfactory termination, I trust," Garth replied. "Tell me your story, miss, one at a time."

"Oh," Ellis began, "I don't know that there's a lot to tell. I simply did as you had instructed. At eight o'clock the following morning I was outside that house with flowers, and when the hour struck we rushed it. We waited some time finding that cursed lift, and when we finally got below, we were just in time to be too late. The whole crowd slipped through a trap-door that led into the tunnel of the Regent Canal. They got away in a boat, and not leaving our ourselves we were done. Then we found you. The water was up to your mouth by the time we got you out. One of my legs seem to you, dried and cut you free, and then toward you back. What led to the promotion, or I'll want to know why."

"After we'd freed you up," Ellis went on, "we searched the place, but didn't find anything that suggested where they might have lopped to. In one of the cellars we found that made I showed you. We found close an two million pounds in counterfeit! Had to get a van down to cut it away. Then headquarters try to tell me it's all genuine stuff. Must think we've been playing about with millstones, or something! Let's leave your yarn now, I can't think out any more lies."

Garth related all that had happened from the time he entered the empty house until he had consciousness in the water. Then he drew from his pocket a folded piece of paper.

"Listen to this!" he went on. "It is a letter I found in the pocket of the stolen I score. How it got there is quite obscure. "Loving to-morrow," Garth read, "to Mrs. Van's Head, South Wales. An awaiting on you to the latter end. Will watch for you."

"That is all," Garth said, re-rolling the letter. "But it's enough. What do you see?"

"But your head," Ellis protested. "You must rest it or you'll be cracking up."

Garth elevated his eyebrows.

"Ellis, old man," he said slowly, "that girl is banking on me. Every minute may be precious. Can I possibly kill her?"

Ellis waved his feeling.

"Dashed, no!" he exclaimed. "You're right! You can't! An' she's the finest little woman I've met—ahem!—excuse me, old man—except Mrs. Ellis!"

The two inseparables laughed in hearty tones.

"That's right," Garth agreed gravely. "Carry Mrs. Ellis, of course. You clear off now, and give me a chance to pack. This is the end of the third round, and I think we may claim the honors. The next round, I fancy,

will be the last! Meet me here at seven. Oh, and make arrangements to have about twenty men sent down, if we should happen to need them. Go on now, beg off!"

Grinning, Ellis hopped.

ALL READY!

Garth wandered across to the window and gazed slowly out across the fields. He was standing in the one and only downstairs room that the cottage boasted. It was a small place, room for a cottage, but nevertheless, Garth had considered himself fortunate to have been able to have secured any sort of place at all in this isolated little village. It was situated in an exposed position at the extreme end of the Green Promenade, and its inhabitants were, for the most, hardly fisher-folk. Yet in spite of everything there was something very appealing in its air of old-world peace, its flowered meads, and its tall chimneys. It was the month of May, and Mrs. van Blomley has to be experienced to be appreciated. But Garth found nothing to rejoice at.

Away across the fields he could see the giant promontory of Varn's Head, Yagely. Through the golden haze that marked the evening of the day, he glimpsed the outline of the squat, rambling house that brooded like an evil thing on the levee of the Head. It was his interest in that house that had brought him to Blomley. For the house was the seat of the great of counterfeiters. It was the house of the professor.

His gaze wandered back to the intervening fields. To their rich patchwork of greens and browns, and appearing each from its neighbors, the pale grey lines of the dry-stone limestone walls. Away to the right he saw the slope of the mountain, tinged already with purpling shadows. Below, the golden-brown sweep of Mosser Bay, the blue sea and the low-lying mist of the eternal breakers.

But the beauty of his surroundings was lost to him. His thoughts were preoccupied. He and Ellis had been at the cottage almost a week, and it had been a week varied. Dismantled inquiries had brought them not one iota of useful information. The people of the village, apart from their uncommunicative nature, had been unable to tell them anything about the "Lancashire folks," who lived at Van's Head, as the house was locally known.

The days had drifted away, and nothing had been accomplished. Garth felt not a little worried. Knowing nothing of the house or the number of its inmates, he felt the need of seeing the girl before he acted. To that end he had tramped the mile or so of road that led out to the head with impotent restlessness, only to reluctantly abandon it as hopeless. Yet the intuition shafed him in a way it had never

done before. He determined not to let the grass grow under his feet, and decided that if necessary he would raid the house on his own and chance the result.

A long consultation with Ellis had followed. Finally it had been decided that Ellis should return to Swansea and attempt to procure a motorboat, also to send a certain cash message to Rowland Yard. Not that Garth contemplated immediate action; he didn't, but in the event of an opportunity arising, he did not want it to find him unprepared. Ellis had gone up to Swansea only that very afternoon, and Garth was awaiting his return with an ill-concealed impatience that was quite foreign to his nature.

He moved away from the window in disgust. Coming to a halt alongside the table, he fell to speculating as to the likely time of Ellis's return, and he wondered what luck would attend his search for a serviceable motorboat. A final knock on the door broke his train of thought. There was something in the knock that set his heart thumping. It was, he told himself, the way she would knock. With the opening of the door, however, his spirits sank again to zero. He found himself looking down at a small, blue-eyed boy from the village. The little lad held out his hand, and Garth's hopes soared once more. In the boy's hand was a letter.

Garth took it, almost snatched it, and, shoving a shilling into the astonished boy's hand, closed the door and moved over to the window. On the envelope his name was written, and he recognized the calligraphy at once. He tore the envelope open with-her him—a surprising show of aggressiveness. The note it contained was short, but it brought back to Garth all his old life. He read it through a second time.

"Meet me," he read. "Kitchen Corner Eight o'clock. Important. No time for more.—Van."

His eyes lagged on the last word, and there came into them a strange softness. That a moment fled by, then, with a sudden start he glanced at his watch, snatched up his cap, and fled out of the cottage. It was ten to five, which meant he had to do the mile to Kitchen Corner, and he wouldn't be late for work.

He reached the top of the winding little path that led down to the river with exactly six seconds to spare. Halting for a moment, he gazed slowly at the small, rock-bound, semi-circle of sand, and wondered if the girl was waiting for him. Then he saw her. She was leaning against a large boulder and looking up at him. He waved, and she waved back.

An irrefragable desire to be with her moved him, and he broke into a run. The narrow path wound its tortuous way down the face of eighty feet of sheer cliff, yet Garth, with all the sure-footedness of an fox, negotiated it without a falter, and at speed. As he swung across the firm sands towards her she stood up to greet him and, critical as he was, he gazed at her after beauty. Little more than a yard from her he halted, and wondered if it was unconvincing admiration, and up his face again she blushed. He stepped close and took her hand in his own. Her words were indistinct, and they stood a while in silence. It was the girl who broke it.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said simply. "Your eyes met, and Garth felt a great longing to take her in his arms.

"Violet eyes," he murmured. "As if I could fall for you."

She laughed at his quaint way of addressing her.

"Listen," she said. "My time is short, and I have much to tell you. Your opportunity has arrived. The professor has one weakness, and to-night it is going to be his downfall. He is a confirmed drug-addict. Sometimes he chews bang or hashish, but mostly he favors the pipe. He's quite a connoisseur, and he regards pre- and pro-bank as another man regards his cigars. I suppose it's the colored blood in him. Thought he intended to have quite a dabnash, and has made elaborate arrangements to thoroughly enjoy himself. By midnight he will be as a dead man. I

think it will be a great opportunity, don't you?"

"Yes," Garth said, nodding thoughtfully. "It certainly will! Fortunately I am well prepared. Some time this evening twenty Scotland Yard men will arrive. I heard, of course, Harry said that your sister was only dragged, but it would be wiser to rely on what he said, as I have made arrangements for your sister to be driven straight home here to London. There she will be taken by Sir James Murray, the great prisoner specialist. He promises to give her his entire and immediate attention whenever it was required. Now, then, I want you to answer a few questions, little lady."

"All right," she replied laughing. "Mr. Professor."

"How many men are on the boat?" Garth asked.

"Twelve constituting the professor."

"But certain of them also have they?"

"Yes—a powerful motor boat with two engines and the regular crew—that's the motor way. You see, the boat is out of the main-head except at low water. At low water we could get out to it by scrambling across the rocks which are then exposed. To make it possible at all states of the tide the professor had a concrete canopy built on across the rocks; but, instead, it is guarded day and night."

For some minutes Garth was absent-mindedly deep in thought. Then he stated again:

"Is there anything about the place that is likely to make a raid difficult—any dogs or kangaroo alarms? And here you say suggestions as to how best the raid could be made?"

"No," Fay replied slowly. "There's the runaway guard, and there's also a man continually patrolling the outside of the house. If you can locate these strictly the rest ought to be easy."

Garth nodded.

"Now tell me," he went on. "Is there anything in that house that will justify the raid largely—any treasure?"

"Yes"—she words came slowly—"there is. In that house all the plates—plates—that I made."

"That is what I thought," Garth acknowledged. "These plates, woodwork, will be taken ashore in a boat. If the boat should happen to capsize—I've dragged his shoulder—that would be unfortunate, but an accident, nevertheless."

"The girl could so reply."

"Is there anything else now?" Garth asked gently.

"No," she replied, smiling through the tears that had filled her eyes. "You are so efficient. You think of everything, don't you?"

"Yes," Garth agreed solemnly. "Even to the boat!"

"License?" she queried. "What—?"

"It depended on how what he was referring to, and the blood swept up her neck and across her face.

"Oh," she exclaimed, recovering herself. "I didn't know you had a dog!"

"They both laughed. The girl glanced at her watch, and with an exclamation of surprise escaped her.

"Gosh! How the time has flown! I must hurry back, or they will be wondering where I have got to. I suggest you make your raid at midnight, the professor will have finished the drug-addict's Syzrama by then. At the corner end of the boat, on the outside, is the hatchway. It has a small pier alongside it. I will meet you there at midnight. I must go now."

Before Garth could answer she reached up and took his hand between her two hands. She drew it down and kissed him lightly on the forehead.

"Good-bye," she said softly. "Thank you for all you have done, and are doing. May Heaven protect you through tonight, for I fear for you—Garfield."

She fled away across the marsh, and Garth knew that she was crying. Not until she vanished from his sight did he move, and then, absorbed in his thoughts, he walked his way back in the direction of the village.

Garth pushed open the cottage door and

entered. He looked up from the paper he was reading and started.

"Hey!" he greeted. "Where th' driver have you been? Ain't we supposed to cut in this place? Here am I so-darned hungry that my stomach shrieks my throat's cut, an' when I got in after an astonishing day in the great city I find th' place deserted, an' not even th' little 'busin'. What, I'm askin', is the great idea?"

Garth hung his cap on to the table, and, pointing at his companion's railway, said something to the effect:

"Eh, old man," he said slowly, "I've seen her at last!"

Ellis dropped his paper and sat up with a jerk.

"Where?" he ejaculated.

"I had a note from her," Garth explained, "asking me to meet her at Kishan Connor. I met her! I'm afraid, old man, you will have to wait awhile. We've come to do, we're making that house at midnight tonight. You want that win to the Ward?"

Ellis, quite bewildered, nodded.

"That was a lucky score," Garth went on, "I did not anticipate meeting the men so soon. When will they be here, and what about the boat?"

"Ought to be here by eleven," Ellis stated. "They're doing the top by car. You needn't worry your wits about th' boat. I've secured a launch. It's a nice craft, fast and maneuverable. She's down off the Meadows now at anchor, got one of the fellows to step aboard her during my absence. But suppose you let me in on things, I'm rather in the dark at the moment!"

Garth then proceeded to detail for his friend the gist of his chat with Fay. There were certain things, of course, that he did not relate. When he reached the end of his story Ellis gave vent to a long-drawn-out whistle of amazement.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "It looks pretty good, doesn't it? Ain't here th' professor's little that your girl like that—th' cunning devil! Here's hope! I have a chance to have a crack at him, anyway!"

"Dear old friend!" Garth answered, "You leave the professor to me. He's in, to get it crandy, my mate—we'll be happy!"

Ellis shot his friend a surprised look. It was quite unusual for Garth to express a desire to fight.

"Huh!" Ellis greeted. "It looks as if somebody's due for a nasty few minutes!"

"Yes," Garth agreed gravely. "Very nasty! Come on, let's go down and have a look at that boat. After, well see about tea, and make our plans for to-morrow. To-morrow, old lad, will see the end of this game." Ellis, they vie, so—had they wasn't men! Let's go."

And, arm in arm, they went.

THE FINAL STAND.

OUT of the darkness came a slight crash. It was lamped greatly against the end of the little concrete pier, and Garth kept lightly ashore. A shape loomed up in the darkness, and a voice came to him. His teeth were relaxed.

"Garfield," called the voice softly, and it was the voice of Fay.

Garth moved forward and took the girl's hand.

"All right, dear," he murmured. "Everything as it should be?"

"Yes," she replied. "The professor is like a dead man. I have secured a key to my sister's room, and also a key to the professor's private entrance. It will mean that you will come at dawn from an unexpected quarter."

Garth indicated a low, flat-roofed building on his right.

"Is that the boat-house?"

"Yes," she replied. "It is visible occasionally by the night guard. The professor's launch is in there, and also the plant that supplies the house with light. What about the man at the runaway?"

Garth caught the anxious note in the girl's voice, and turned the fact that she was keyed up to the highest pitch. The possibility of freedom for herself and her sister after all the

(Continued next page)



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years she had been prisoner was striking her across to places. Bopfull of Ellis and the three plainclothes men was, having scrambled across from the launch, were standing behind him, he took the girl in his arms.

"Little woman," he said, with firm tenderness, "don't let this get you down. In a few minutes I'll have twenty men on this island, apart from Ellis and myself. The professor and his crowd don't stand on ceremony. But all the preliminary moves depend on your guidance. Keep a good grip on yourself, and we'll soon see the end of it."

The girl reached a quivering hand up to his cheek. There came an apologetic cough from Ellis.

"Excuse me, folks," he said uncomfortably, "but we—well—aren't—yet—sure—how—long—until—this—woman—gets—us—out."

Garth chuckled, and the two broke apart. "Steady, old man," he said. "I sort of forgot. Put two men in that place there. They must hold that, whatever happens. Tell them to shoot first and ask questions after. We'll go and get that reserve guard next."

As a word from Garth the girl led them along a narrow track. The three travelled in silence until the guard-house was reached, and but a few yards from it they halted.

"That is the place," the girl whispered. "Beyond is the doorway. On the left side is a doorway—it has no door, and the guard is inside. He is armed, or he should be. Good luck."

The plainclothes man remained with the girl and Garth and Ellis moved forward in silence. Over their heads, and in a strange whisper Garth outlined his plan of action. At the corner of the building they separated. Garth moved around the back, and Ellis went the other way.

They met again with the wifid of the doorway between them. In one hand Garth held a piece of rock, and with a jerk he flung it out into the darkness. His fall was covered by a noise from the interior of the guard-house and the sound of movement. A man filled the doorway, and in his hand was that deadliest of all weapons—a seven-foot shotgun.

Conceiving him, Ellis made a pre-arranged noise. The man swung, and as he did so Garth straightened up. Travelling with all his strength, a right look revealed behind the man's ear. He slumped, and Ellis caught his gun as it fell.

"Now!" he exclaimed. "That was fielded work. I didn't like the look of that shotgun at all."

Garth lowered his loaded knuckles. "Yes," he agreed, "trust him up. I'd signed the boys' names."

When Ellis came from covering the man the Scotland Yard men were clustering around him. According to the plan Garth had previously outlined to him, he gave them their orders, and they all moved forward in a body. In the hand of each man was an automatic. The girl led them back to the little door of which she held the key. The men waited outside, and Garth and Ellis followed the girl inside. Garth was determined to secure the sister before doing anything else.

The corridor they travelled terminated in a small circular hall, and in its walls were three doors. With the key she held Fay opened a door on her left. The three stared into the room beyond. Against one wall, draped with heavy curtains, was a luxurious couch. Stretched out on the couch was a girl. She was young, and her likeness to Fay was apparent. She was in a deep sleep, and with

the reason lack of her skin she looked as if the spark of life had departed.

"Quickly," Fay urged, the tears streaming down her face.

The two men moved into the room and across to the couch. Ellis bent and authorized the frail form into his arms.

"Come on," he grunted, "let's get her out of this. My intention is to clean this place up. I'll take her down to the launch, you cover me out. I—"

A started cry from the girl interrupted him. The two men spun round, and Ellis came thickly. From behind the door a man stepped forth, carrying a large coil of machinery. He moved towards them with unusual speed, and in silence. Garth moved, and kept to one side. In his eyes was a gleaming flame that Ellis had seen once before. The two men met, and with unexpected suddenness went to the floor. Ellis, who had seen the play of Garth's hand, smiled broadly, and knew that in spite of the nigger's great muscles something nasty was going to happen to him. Garth was fighting now.

Ellis was right. The struggles of the two men suddenly ceased. The hatted bodies tremed, and there was a sense of strain. A woman's hands from the nigger's lips, only to be set aside as suddenly. Then the forms relaxed. Garth got slowly to his feet, the other lay quite still.

"Nasty," Garth commented shortly, "but it had to be done."

They rejoined the girl in silence, and returned along the passage. At the outer entrance Ellis handed the lines from over to the plainclothes man who had been with them from the beginning.

"Take her down to our launch," he said softly. "Put her in one of the bunks, lock the door, and get back as quick as you can. Now, you clean," he addressed the other, "get busy." "Clean up the whole place, and don't let nothing hold you up!"

The men moved off. It was the rest of said they required, plenty of action. When the three were alone again Garth turned to the girl.

"My dear," he said softly, "your part is played. I suggest you go down to the launch now and wait till it is all over."

The girl drew close, looked up into his face, and shook her head.

"No, my dear," she said, "I am staying with you now—the very end."

Garth made no ill reply. He closed his mouth abruptly. They stood then, in silence, and valuable minutes led by. Then he spoke again.

"Very well. The professor is my next man. Let's go."

The girl turned without a word, and strode freely back along the passage. The two men followed in grim silence. In the little hall she indicated another of the doors.

"It's in there," she said in a barely audible voice. "Do, please, be careful. I fear him even as he is."

Ellis rumped his shoulder aggressively, turned towards the door, and went down. In his right hand a heavy automatic gleamed dully. Garth moved after him, and inside the door the two came to a halt. Before them they saw a room, a small, square room. Its walls were hung with heavy, plush curtains of a dark purple hue. The floor was covered by a rich carpet of the same tone, its colour set off by the scattering of deep crimson cushions. From the high ceiling, suspended by a long chain, hung a lamp. Its light was yellow, a dull red glow.

Reaching on a massive couch, immediately beneath the lamp, sat—the professor! The light from the lamp shined down across his face, and only served to accentuate its sinister evil. The lips were wreathed back in a grin, and exposed the long, discoloured teeth. The malignant eyes were covered by their cartilaginous lids, and in one of the lines beneath was a small-boned, long-stemmed pipe. The plant itself, the monstrous, evil brain was inert—helpless!

The two detectives moved into the room. Ellis produced from his pocket a pair of hand-saws. Garth turned and shut him a hard look.

(Continued on next page.)

GUNS AND DEATH!



Both came to the quiet village of Little Kirby with a devastating suddenness that left the countryside gasping in sheer terror at the awful and amazing horrors thrust upon them. It was not surprising that the villagers could not understand why two rival Chicago gangs should choose to shoot out their mutual hatred in this quiet corner of England. Neither did Selby, when he was suddenly thrust into this strange and terrible drama—but he was soon to learn. There was a secret behind the mysterious Mr. Stanton and his servants at The Manse, a secret which was to lead Selby into an adventure in which life and death counted for little. Don't miss reading this powerful yarn—

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FOREWORD.

STARTING as an expert safe-blower, Dion O'Banion was one of Chicago's earliest highjackers and rose to fame under the wing of Johnny Torrio, Al Capone's former boss. But even as a gang-chief, O'Banion's highjacking tendencies got the better of him, and eventually led to his sudden and dramatic demise in his own bowler-shop. With O'Banion out of the way, Capone and Torrio held sway in Chicago until Myrtle Weiss, O'Banion's lieutenant, set out on a campaign of vengeance. So hot did he make things for Torrio that that gentleman found he had had enough, and decided to flee. He handed over the gang leadership and all that accompanied it to Al Capone, and left post haste for Italy. It was not long after this that Weiss died—swifflly—his body full of machine-gun slugs.

In the political affairs Chicago is by no means without its troubles. Big Bill Thompson and his confederate, State Attorney Green, were the principal cause of the chaotic state of affairs which arose in 1928. Though they rose to power with an overwhelming majority over their opponent, William Doran, a certain laming episode in which the homes of Doran and Judge Sweeney were blown up was connected up with the Thompson-Green machine, and from then their fall was rapid. In the meanwhile, the famous twentieth ward was having its election, and the desperate efforts of the better element were making it rather more than lively.

GANGSTERS AND GRIFT.

UNDER pressure of the new power of reformative defendants were indicted for the violence and terrorism of that day. Among them were Morris Elber, the Boss, and his son, Judge Emanuel Elber, of the Criminal Court. As that list closed another prominent somebody involved in the charges was State Senator James B. Leonard, and twelve other defendants from the Twentieth.

It was alleged at the first trial of these men—all except the Elbers, who demanded a separate trial—that Morris Elber had spent the night before election in a large hall at

12211 Blue Island Avenue, where his satellites had visited him and congratulated him, precisely as if the election were over. It was, really. Here it was testified that the Boss had told his men to go to the polls heavily armed because "everything is fixed and there can be no comeback."

It took four weeks to complete the jury, another month to complete the trial, which ended in a disagreement after "complications of evidence, charges and counter charges, perjured testimony and intimidation of witnesses, constant quarrelling by counsel, and repetitions by the court."

State Senator Leonard, charged with kidnaping in person two Bar Association members from the polls, and repeatedly identified, asserted that he had arrived at the polls after the kidnaping, and had discussed it with Police-Detective Philip Carroll. The policeman said he had not seen the State Senator nor said a word to him on that day.

This trial was held in November, 1928, and one of the principal witnesses was John Freeman. He testified that under different names he had voted at five places on that day. Another important witness was Islam Jones, a negro streetwalker, who reported as aatcher and was sent rearing from the polling place by revolver shots.

In April, 1929, a second trial of the case was held. Mr. Jones, called to the stand and asked to identify one of his associates, pointed to a juror, No. 4 in the jury box. Freeman was called, declared that he had voted from West Fourteenth Street, although he lived on the South Side.

"Did you vote more than once?" asked Prosecutor Baber.

Freeman said he had not.

Mr. Baber then produced the testimony of the first trial showing that Freeman had testified that he voted repeatedly on the direction of an Elber henchman.

"In that trial I answered as I was told to," said the witness. "I said just what Mr. Baber and Police-man Mike told me to say. They said they wanted to get the Elbers."

Mr. Baber continued to read the answers made by Freeman at the first trial.

"Every question I was asked, I was told

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the answers by you," said the witness bluntly.

"Did I tell you the names of the five polling places where you said you voted?" demanded the prosecutor, glowering at the witness.

"Yes," answered Freeman, "you mentioned twenty-two. You kept me two hours doing it."

"Well, you only named five places," roared the prosecutor.

"And I wouldn't have named them, only you told me you'd make me the biggest man in the West Side and that you'd protect my home (a disorderly house) without interference."

"Why, your place was raided last fall," said the prosecutor.

"Yes, and I went to you, and you called the police captain for me," said the witness.

Under cross-examination by his attorney the witness admitted that he had given some false testimony in the second trial. He was promptly put under arrest for perjury.

At the first trial of the Elber defendants Samuel Bennett and Robert Corwin had testified regarding the kidnaping of the latter's brother on primary day morning as he left his home. He had been taken to the election day "prison" at 1322, Peoria Street, where workers against the Elbers were held all day—many of them being beaten.

At the second trial these men could not recognize a single one of the defendants previously identified. At the first trial they had stated that they had known the defendants for years, but at the second trial they said that they had known them slightly by sight, but could not connect them with the kidnaping. Both were guided for perjury by Judge Frank Conover, obviously prejudiced at the situation affecting the witnesses.

Before the beginning of the second trial of the Elber henchmen the two leading figures of the Twentieth Ward—Morris Elber and his son—the judge forced the assignment of their case for trial, West Assistant Frank J. Lynch, newly appointed to his post under a reform administration, and one of the most active factors in the

campaign to rid Chicago of gang-rats, provoked against this assignment, asserting that the prosecution would not undertake the trial of the Ellers, father and son, until forced to do so by law. The reason for this was that two of the chief witnesses for the State had fled from Chicago, and the third major witness, Edwin Johnson, had recanted all testimony affecting the Ellers, and to avoid testifying, willingly took a year in jail for contempt. Thus the State, confronted with this necessity for action, hadn't a witness left, except one glad to be silent in the protection of a goal.

Let us also inspect an example of court procedure in Chicago previous to the election of Judge Swanson as State Attorney. Not so long ago the prosecutor's office began a search to find out what had become of two well-known criminal names, three years old, against Polish Joe Salta, South Side beer runner and active politician.

During the three years Salta continued delivering loot except for such interruptions as were caused by his killing of John Hitters Foley, the murder of Frank "Lefty" Kozal, his accomplice in the Foley murder, and a three months' period in hiding to avoid a gun-running charge.

Salta had supervised the election of Douglas Oberlin as ward committeeman of the Thirteenth Ward, and to say that Salta had not personally elected Oberlin is to fail to give credit where due for a lot of high-class, high-pressure shugging and violence.

After all of these incidents and a two months' search for the old cases, it was found that by some trickery they had been deftly placed in a vault in the City Hall supposed to contain only cases completely disposed of.

For four years my copy shows the case were of no importance, here is Deputy Commissioner of Police Stigo's description of the raid which brought about the changes—and also Salta's point of view about the burial of the cases.

"Late in 1935 we hopped on to one of Salta's beer-holding plants at 2128, West Fifty-fifth Street. We got them as quick they couldn't reach for a gun. Here's what we found: Eight vans loaded with loot, a basket of revolvers containing eleven, 1,500 rounds of ammunition, and ten sticks of dynamite.

"A long time later, when we grabbed Salta for killing Foley, I had a talk with him about the two charges. I asked him what happened to them. He said: "Nothing to it. Stigo, it cost me twenty grand, but these papers are hot, and they're gonna stay hot."

When Judge John Lyle, who has inherited the repute of gangland by imposing bail in huge amounts, had Salta before him on this occasion immediately after the raid, Salta was fined a thousand dollars on each count of having dynamite in his possession and violating the prohibition statute. In discussing the scene in court, Judge Lyle said:

"I was sitting at the Maxwell Street court at the time, and Stigo and Chief Collins came in with Salta and his hoodlums—also Marzopka, the gun, automatic, and dynamite. I instructed my clerk to swear the witnesses. The State's witnesses were sworn, examined by the defense counsel. Then I asked the defense attorney to state their defenses. Their first move was to suppress the evidence on the ground of a technicality. I overruled the motion. Other similar motions were made for a period of an hour and a half or more.

"At this stage the defense asked for a jury trial. I ruled that it was too late, that the motion should have been made

before the State showed its hand and had its witnesses testify. When I refused to allow this motion the gangsters' attorneys refused to let them testify.

"There was nothing for me to do but to find the defendants guilty and impose sentence. I did this, imposing the fines on both charges and sentencing Salta to sixty days in the workhouse branch. I passed fine and sentences in the cases of the other lesser hangers in the case.

"All afternoon embassies from politicians and political hoodlums and lawyers bothered me to turn these hoodlums out on

SATURDAY IS THRILLER DAY

their own recognizance. When I emphatically refused, they wanted me to set bonds for them. In the afternoon four Municipal Court bailiffs showed up and told me a Criminal Court Judge was waiting in his chambers with the gangsters' lawyers, to fire the entire group on writs of habeas corpus. They told me the Judge hadn't issued the writs, but had telephoned the bailiffs, chief and they had been rushed over by the chief deputy bailiff, to get the prisoners. I told them to go back where they had come from. This day later service for those gangsters left me entirely out of justice.

"The telephone kept ringing constantly, messages were coming back and forth from the bailiff's office and that of the Chief Deputy Clerk of the Municipal Court. My clerks were instructed to leave off handling my court cases and make out capias immediately for Salta and his gangsters.

"I told them to proceed with their work and let that gang at least take the regular fare. Then I personally got a call from the Chief Clerk asking me why my men hadn't made out capias for Salta's gang. I wanted to know, and I was genuinely indignant, why these hoodlums aroused such interest and sympathetic effort. There followed a bitter and disturbing argument which I finally ended by telling the Chief Clerk to stop any interference with my court work.

"After all of that I had to fine one of the clerks next day for contempt of court. He had made out the capias after I had ordered the court his unopposed."

THE HAND REACHED EAST.

When Frank Dale, better known as Yule, was killed early in 1938 in Brooklyn, the car which smashed his into the curb, and from which the bullets that brought his death were sprayed, bore an Illinois license.

Yule, racketeer and gangster, was the head of the United Sicilians in the United States. Fate had put him in a tough spot, from which there was no escaping. He was called upon to make a decision regarding his organization's leadership in Chicago, and, whatever his decision might have been, the result would have been the same to him. He realized that, and had

stalled for months until racketeers made the decision for him.

"Then Mike Meris, head of the United Sicilians in Chicago, died in 1938, Dale turned over the Chicago leadership of the United Sicilians to Johnny Ferris. When Ferris, induced by gun fire, turned over his boss and gang mantle to Capone, he had no power to give him the leadership of the United. That matter was up to Frankie Dale.

Immediately Capone proposed Tony Lombardi, an associate of his group, for the Chicago position. Immediately, too, Joe Jiclin, an alcohol hound with a powerful gang and at times associated with the Bugs Moran group, made an emphatic bid for the place. There was such contention and such danger in the situation that Dale, intent upon his own lucrative operations in the East, compromised with both sides. At this juncture Jiclin had the edge in the matter, and Capone was insistent that Lombardi should have the flat support and approval of Dale.

At the time of the Starkey-Dempsey fight in New York both sides were in the East putting pressure upon Dale. Dale decided upon a middle course, telling the representatives of Jiclin and Lombardi that there was ample field in Chicago, and that the men should return with his order that both money and profits be split by Joe Jiclin and Tony Lombardi. He insisted upon peace of mind.

Within two weeks the Capone group planted a machine-gun nest across from Lombardi's home. Immediate communication was made to Dale, showing that the Jiclin had broken the peace pact. The trick did not work. Dale was not deceived by the ruse. Within two weeks the Illinois car smashed into Dale's limousine and launched the driver of death in him.

In Chicago Tony Lombardi, with the Capone backing, immediately swaggered with self-assured power and went about the affairs of the United Sicilians as if he were monarch of the existence of the Jiclin. On September 7th, members of the Moran-Jiclin group sought out Lombardi, with his bodyguards, Marco Lombardi and Joseph Ferrero, in broad daylight, at one of Chicago's busiest corners, killing Lombardi and fatally wounding Ferrero. Three months later Lombardi was killed in his own home.

This operation was far from the usual methods of the Jiclin outfit, but typical of the bold and swaggering methods of their Bugs Moran ally. It was subsequently clear that all of the Jiclin strength and interests had been thrown into the Moran group, making a formidable and concentrated menace to the Capone power. Until this definite alignment, the South Side gang had but all contact with Sicilia controlled vice and racketeer operations in the city. With the combination of the Jiclin information and connections and the Moran ruthlessness and indifference to danger, the Capone organization had much to fear.

Capone's most frequently reiterated motto was: "We don't want any trouble." Between the Sicilian groups usually develops slowly, and is handled subtly and skilfully. There is no open defiance or bragging. Some Sicilian rival, deftly and as secretly as possible, intrudes upon a fellow crime-boss's preserve. He doesn't boldly announce that he will do so; he subtly does it, trade with a shrug to someone, when trouble comes, that he did not know he was doing anything wrong.

Usually he is told with a smile containing daggers that it would be better for him if he refrains from this and that. If he does not he is sure they found him.

The Moran-Weiss-O'Banion method has ever been previously different. "To hell with the Strainers" was an O'Banion statement just a month before his death. Moran is known to have called up Capone twice and again at his steel-sharpened headquarters with its ten telephones in Cicero, just to cause and haul him out and tell him what was going to happen to him.

After all, in booze and other rackets there is something to be done in a business way. All the days' time cannot be devoted to killing or plans for killing. There is no money in that. Killing is incidental. The customary, "beans, breaks and color" ("killing" of the North Side gang have for years disturbed and annoyed the stout legs in the Capone group. They are not of the temperament to calmly sit alone without action, especially when the abuse and beating has been peddled and passed through all gangland by the North Side without.

In the back of Capone's mind there is always the fact that he and Torrio started this business and showed the way. He has viewed with scant tolerance the grubbing of the North Side out of the original Capone territory through the deflection of O'Banion. He regards those who have since come into power and money in the North Side gang as a lot of headless apocryphs featuring too much noise for the good of their own or his business.

It can readily be realized, then, what a pressure of hate developed when the Moran gang, through their connections with the Berlin, actually intruded into the affairs of the Uncles Strainers. And the further determination which gripped the Capone gang when their candidate for the leadership of the Chicago branch of that organization—practically accepted as leader after death came to Yale—was shot down in the human manner typical of the Mosaicite and diametrically opposed to the methods of the Berlin.

Incidentally, in the shooting of sniper "Big Shot" in Chicago gangland there has never been an identification of another top leader in the actual attack except in the case of George Moran, who was identified as an actual participant in the shooting of Johnny Torrio. The reason by which that identification was brought about will make clear to the reader why newspaper photographers' concerns are frequently kindred to pirates at gangster functions and funerals, and why Hyacinth Weiss, implacable hater and headcut leader, showed threats at every photographer who approached him when under temporary police detention.

"I'll kill you if you do it," Hyacinth would scream at photographers, struggling frantically to hide his face, despite the desire of police officers to have him photographed. Such photographs, published widely, are a grosser aid in the police.

In the case of Moran a photograph taken at the O'Banion funeral, at which he was a pall-bearer, led to his identification when Torrio was killed.

The only witnesses to the Torrio shooting were Bob Barton, Torrio's chauffeur, Torrio and his wife, and a boy, Peter Yeaman, son of a justice in the vicinity of the Torrio home. None of the Torrio party had anything to impart, but the boy, who saw the shooting without seeing whom and who proved just as fearless later, was an ideal witness.

The O'Banion funeral picture was shown to the boy, and he promptly picked out Moran in the group of pallbearers as one of the Torrio assistants. Later out of an adjacent line of men he twice identified Moran.

"You never saw me," growled Moran at the boy. "You never saw me in your life."

"Yep," said the congruous kid, "he's the one."

Within a week, however, all of this good was washed.

Judge William J. Lindsay, before whom Moran was assigned, told him in 3,000 dollars bond, which is the equivalent of a nickel in gangland in a real emergency. The police set about establishing a case against him, and they may still be at it. Nothing happened.

But another probable element of Capone's hate for the North Side group, and for Bugs Moran in particular, may be noted here. When Torrio was in the hospital Capone, with the standards of the gang, granted the indulgence. Capone, for the first and last time recorded, gave way to un-restricted weeping.

As this is often Jack McGurn, of the Capone group, is under indictment for the massacre of Bugs Moran's North Side gang, to be described in a succeeding chapter. In addition, the police are seeking Louis Gangogio, William Brenne, and John Moore also involved. This quartet, according to both Chicago and Brooklyn police, were the occupants of the car which rolled up to Frankie Yale before his death.

WHAT HAPPENED TO GAMBLING.

Capone's change for the worse—or to the worst—was exactly coincidental with the beginning of prohibition.

For more than twenty years the city had an national reputation for being so health stout for those looking for trouble, and no cynic doll for those whose tastes were attained to the quiet life. Chicago—like all great cities—has had its organized vice and gambling intermittently disturbed, however slightly, by aroused public opinion or occasionally, if unattended, police activity.

But with prohibition came the gangster with money and power, good appearance, and the financial conviction—not absolutely erroneous—that money can substitute for almost anything. With the booze supply put on a fairly efficient routine, with the beer business fully developed and gas protected, and with the established rackets divided among gangs or individuals on the basis of political, financial, or machine-gun power, the gangsters simply reached out and plucked the tremendous gambling system prevalent in Chicago, as an incident to its more remunerative activities.

This branch of accepted lawlessness had for a score of years been the principal objective of those who certain their interest in life solely by campaigning against evil. For years the campaigns were noisy but ineffective. Gambling continued, and its scope grew in Chicago. Police officials were discharged, every law enforcement factor was wiped out, yet finally Chicago was the centre of race track gambling in the nation. Each year it was better organized and more remunerative, but the largest single factor in the field, Monte Tenno, at the top of his career had an income of less than a million. To the gangsters that was almost chicken-feed, but one must have change, as they took gambling away from the best organized group of law-breakers in Chicago. Let's get a cross section of the gambling stories of that town.

"Give the Chief of Police a present:— 'I'll stop gambling in Chicago or I will run every known gambler out of this city. Show me or my men a gambling resort and we will wreck it and arrest those who conduct it. Gambling in this city is doomed; it will not be tolerated an instant."

(Don't recall's follow-up of this brilliant aerial is one of the best yet. It's packed with startling facts and amazing revelations of the Chicago gang-civil—on indictment how simply mean? wise. Look out for it!)

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