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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. 17



WITH A SYMPATHETIC CRY SHE FLEW TO THE COOLER AND RETURNED WITH A GLASS OF WATER.

Every word was like the slap of an open hand; but J. Wesley had to accept it with as good grace as he could muster.

"Guess you'll be glad to know that I've put over another knock-out, Crowder!" Donaldson went on.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you know?" asked Donaldson innocently. "Miss Houghton has signed up with me. She starts as my sales-manager next Monday!"

J. Wesley swallowed his coffee and ran back to his office. Miss Houghton had been hired by Donaldson! She had gone over to J. Wesley's strongest competitor! She was going to be Donaldson's sales-manager!

J. Wesley Crowder gazed off over the noisy street. Women had ever been an insoluble problem to him. The mere fact that he hired them was one of his idiosyncrasies. When they approached him, he could not refuse them. To his mind they were peculiar, incomprehensible, mysterious. Often he had seen them—and been driven to a near-panic at the sight—burst into tears for no apparent reason. They were not, in his meager estimation, faithful or steady. Their codes of honor were low. Witness this act of wanton selfishness on the part of Helen Houghton.

He had done everything a gentleman should toward her. Never by word or sign had he intimated that their relations were other than strictly businesslike. And now Helen was going to aid his strongest competitor!

He could see Donaldson's smiling face. It angered him beyond words. Taking his right-hand assistant from under his very eyes—stealing her! That's what it amounted to—stealing!

J. Wesley Crowder's fingers had formed themselves into fists. He rapped hard on the desk. Two body-blows from the same man in less than a week! Little lights pulsed before his eyes; his breath became quickened to painful gasps. How his head ached! How his back pained!

"Thief!" he growled hoarsely, rising and pounding the desk.

The excitement was too great, and he flopped back into his chair.

Whether or not it had been the repeated knocking that brought Miss Houghton into the room he knew not. At any rate, she appeared, gazed at him, and then, with a sympathetic cry, was at his side.

"Mr. Crowder—John—you are ill!"

She flew to the cooler and returned with a glass of water.

"Drink it!" she commanded.

He looked at her, astonished at the sympathy in her eyes and the gentle intonation in her voice, as he swallowed the liquid. Her fingers were laving his wrists.

"I'm all right now," said he, after gulping the last drop of water. "I'm tired—that's all!"

She nodded in acquiescence and smiled down at him.

Slowly her first words came back to him. She had called him by his first name—a name that he had not heard for years! It seemed as if he were struggling with some intangible problem. Her fingers lingered; he felt an electric shock course through his veins. He seized her hand. It was so small and soft and velvety!

"Miss Houghton!" J. Wesley Crowder thrilled. She drew back a step, startled at the note in his voice. "Helen!"

Then he stopped, surprised at his temerity. But she did not move from him. The girl's gray eyes were like two stars, and her lips were parted.

"Helen!" he stammered, lost in the new feeling. "Now I know what it was I lacked! It was love. You were here beside me for eight years, and I didn't realize that I loved you. Helen, Donaldson told me—that you had signed with him. I can't believe it. Is it true?"

Helen Houghton turned her head.

He was at her side, his hand resting bashfully on her shoulder.

"I—you can't go—now, Helen. This is too wonderful! Now that you know where your love is, why, your heart wouldn't be in your work!" His voice was exultant. "Why, Helen, your heart is here! You know it—I want you!"

He choked a bit, and his eyes looked at her wildly. She did not reply. The silence frightened him.

"Forgive me," he went on in a wild endeavor to explain himself. "You—Helen, you were right. I was an egotist! I never knew—I never realized it. Oh, how blind I was! But now I see. And"—he waved his arms in wide semicircles and walked toward his desk—"from now on J. Wesley Crowder & Co. is not a one-man concern any more. It is a partnership, and"—he had come close, and his hands once more rested on the shapely shoulders—"and you are the partner, Helen!"

The Wolf of Kahlotus*

A ROMANCE OF THE NORTHWEST

By Maryland Allen

Illustrated by W. B. King

SQUARE BILL TOLLIVER of Kahlotus, a rich landowner in the big timber country of Oregon, has been killed, and his daughter Ettarre, or Torry, appeals to Clinton McKean, the Federal district attorney in Portland, for help in investigating his death. It appears that she found her father's body in the woods, with his throat lacerated as if by some wild animal, and in his hand a torn scrap of dark-green cloth with a coronet worked in gold thread.

There is a local tradition of a great wolf—the Wolf of Kahlotus—whose murderous attacks on white men avenged the wrongs of an old-time Indian chief. There have been rumors that this terrible animal, or some counterpart of it, has reappeared in the big timber, but Torry and McKean cannot explain Tolliver's death so. They feel that some other enemy has been concerned in it; and their belief is strengthened when the girl, in Portland, receives a letter warning her not to return to Kahlotus. It is further confirmed when Torry makes a duplicate of the scrap of green cloth—leaving the original with McKean—and it is stolen from her room at a hotel; again when, on the way to Kahlotus, she and McKean narrowly escape being crushed by a rock that crashes down from a cliff beside the road; and still again when, on reaching Big Cabin, Torry's home, they find the stolen bit of cloth fastened on the gate-post, as if in derision of them.

Big Cabin is a lonely house, Torry's mother being dead and her two brothers in France. She has no other relatives except cousins of her father—Dr. Hundberg, a German professor in Boston, and his nephew, a captain in the German army. There are portraits of these two in the hall at Big Cabin. Torry's chief companion is the housekeeper, Mrs. Barry, whose husband, Black Jack Barry, is foreman of the Tolliver wheat-ranch, and whose son, Dan Barry, is in South America.

There are few neighbors in that wild country. McKean has an unfriendly encounter with one of them—Joe Cotswold, known as the Timber Beast, a rough-spoken fellow who sullenly defies the district attorney; but Torry acquits the man of any connection with her father's death. McKean is depressed by the difficulty of the inquiry—all the more because he had just previously scored a failure with one James Tussy, whom he strongly suspected of being a German agent, but against whom he could find no evidence. Nevertheless, instead of putting some of his men on the Kahlotus case, he resolves to make further investigations in person.

VIII

THE district attorney's thoughts were scattered by the sound of a horse on the trail behind him, and by a voice that called him by name. He turned, hardly knowing what to expect, and saw the Timber Beast mounted upon a small, wiry pinto pony, which looked fresh in spite of the pace at which it was traveling. Evidently the man had not come far.

"I know you're McKean, the Federal attorney," he said composedly, riding up alongside. "What are you here for?"

"Perhaps I'm on a still hunt for slackers," said McKean. "If you know my name, I don't know yours."

"My name is Cotswold, and I am a year

over draft age. Ha!" he exclaimed bitterly. "That doesn't mean anything to you, but you may have heard of the Timber Beast."

"No," returned McKean. "I never heard of any fancy animals in these parts but that Indian wolf you were talking about yesterday afternoon."

Cotswold stared suspiciously, and as if a little nonplused.

"But I'll tell you what I think," went on McKean. "I think that of all the dirty, damnable, infernal, vile crimes in the calendar, to deprive Miss Tolliver and this country of her father is the worst!"

"She hated him," shot back the other hotly. "And besides," he added more calmly, "he misused his power."

*This story began in the February number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

"She hated him?" repeated McKean with a rising inflection. "Now I could swear she never told you that!"

"Well," parried Cotswold, "if she didn't, I have it on very good authority."

"No."

"Young Barry?"

Again Cotswold glared suspiciously, his upper lip slightly raised, showing his sharp, white teeth.



McKEAN STOOD WATCHING HER. HE WANTED TO HELP HER. HE WAS IN LOVE WITH HER!

"For instance?"

"None of your business!"

"Mr. Tolliver, himself, perhaps?"

"No."

"Mrs. Barry?"

"No."

"Her husband?"

"How do you know there is a young Barry?"

"His mother told me."

"Yes, and I suppose she told you where he was, too!"

"Correct! You're a good guesser. She did. She said he was in South America."

A glimmer of derisive mirth flickered in the Timber Beast's eyes and was gone.

"Yes," he replied; "and don't you be afraid he'll not be wise enough to stay there!"

"Nothing will keep him there if he's a good American," said McKean seriously. "If he's not, he'd better stay there—we don't want him here or in France!"

Cotswold gave a short, hard laugh that held no mirth.

"You're a regular stump orator," he sneered.

They had come to a point where a narrow, rough trail struck off from the one to Skedee and wound away through the trees. A tall snag with a graceful little hemlock growing from the top served as a landmark for the entrance to this branching trail. Looking sharply through the trees, McKean could see the white light that denoted a clearing near at hand.

"Some one live there?" he said carelessly.

"That's my place," said Cotswold.

"Oh, Peace Cabin! Is it far from the logging-camp?"

"As far as I could get," replied the other grimly. "That's my place, and when I can't live there I'll die. I'll never move my hand for another rotten capitalist as long as I live!"

"You were hook-tender at Tolliver's Camp Three, weren't you?"

"Well, what of it? Barry told you that, I suppose."

"No—Miss Tolliver."

Cotswold's face hardened, and his eyes glittered.

"She told it to show you what a poor devil I was!"

"On the contrary. She told me you were a very fine fellow until you lost your balance with the I. W. W. She told me her father thought so, too."

"She—he—" Cotswold stammered, and then rode in silence, his fingers aimlessly picking at his horse's mane.

"You've good landmarks in here," said McKean, studying him intently, while trying to keep up a great show of indifference. "I don't believe any one could get lost."

Cotswold seemed to recover, and raked the district attorney with a fierce glare of suspicion.

"There's no other place in the world easier," he said. "You go a hundred paces from this trail without a compass, and you

couldn't get out unless I heard you and chose to answer!"

"Which you would not," said McKean cheerfully.

The other grinned.

"You can't fool me in the big timber," he said; "but I know many that you can."

Oddly enough, McKean felt that Cotswold was thinking of just one man.

"I think I'll try to pay you a visit some day," he said lightly, "right through the timber."

"You'll not!" Cotswold cried. "Do you think I want to be arrested because you're a darned fool? If you come to my place, you'll come by the trail!"

"So that you and your friends can see me coming," retorted McKean. "Good Heavens, what's that?"

A long, low howl, penetrating and indescribably terrifying, swept out through the trees. It filled the air and found a moaning echo deep in the brooding stillness of the big timber. It rose to a high, wailing cry, sank back again to the sustained low note, and died slowly away. It was the cry of the Wolf of Kahlotus, the howl that McKean had heard the night before, that had welcomed him on his way to Big Cabin with Torry.

Cotswold looked at him strangely.

"You can't tell everything about the big timber in a day," said he.

"Yes," rejoined McKean; "but just what do you call that?"

"Well, about here they say it's old Kahlotus's wolf, and it's a sign that some one's still to go."

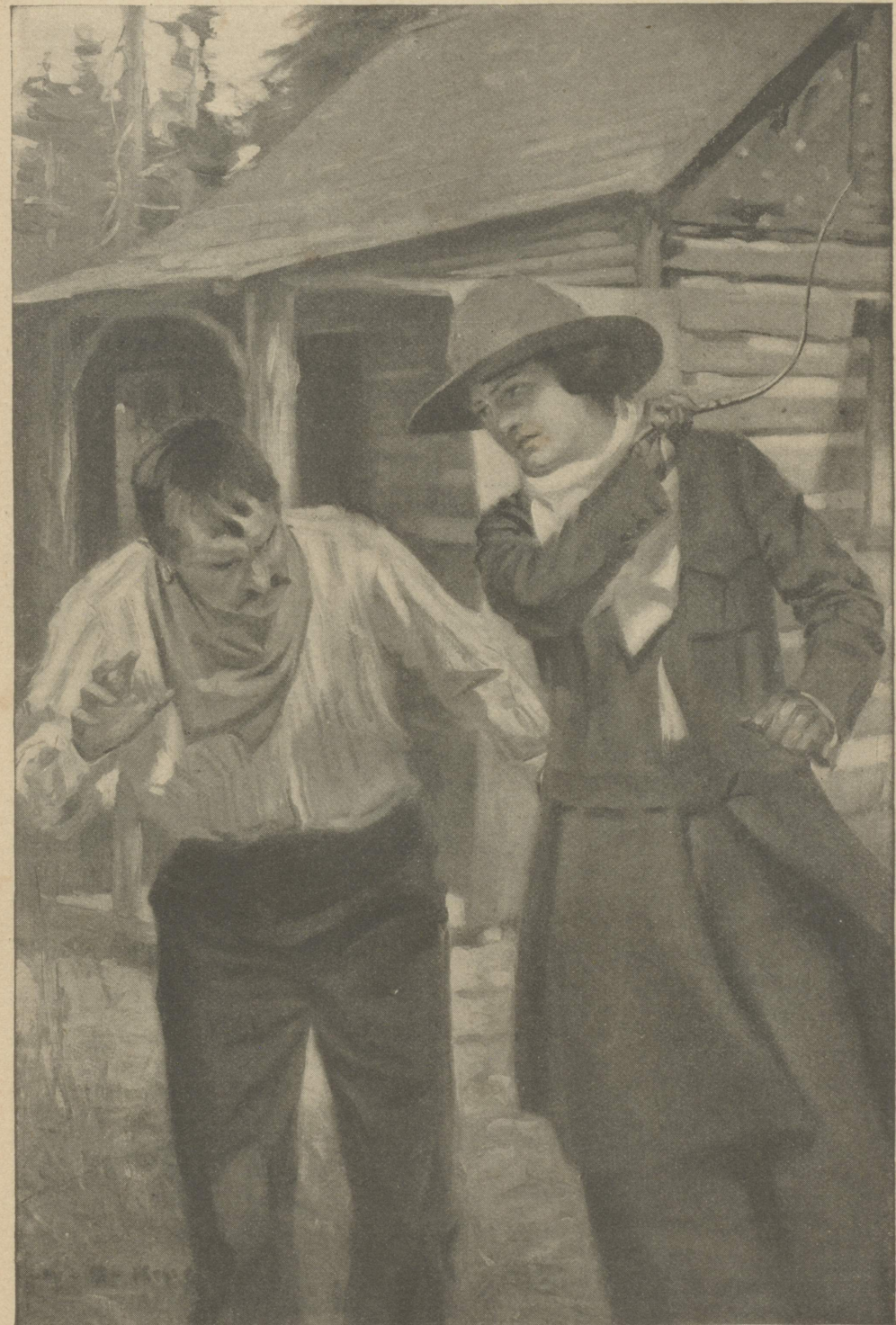
"Look here!" exclaimed McKean abruptly. "You're too smart a man to be caught with such stuff. Just what is it makes that noise?"

"If you were as smart a man as you think you are," returned the other mockingly, "you would not have to ask me that question. I'm going home."

He spurred his horse. It leaped into the rough trail by the snag and darted away through the trees.

McKean sat and stared after him with a mixture of amusement and perplexity. He could only be sure of two things. The man was openly hostile, and the wolf cry had come each time from the same general direction.

No need to ride on to Skedee. There seemed nothing to do but return to Big Cabin and add to his collection of loose



TORRY ADVANCED A STEP AND RAISED HER QUIRT. "SEE HERE, VICENTE!"

ends. He turned and cantered slowly back up the trail.

There came a flutter in the huckleberry brush to the right, and his horse shied violently. A woman with a shawl held closely over her head stepped out into the trail, and held up one hand in a gesture of command. Before McKean could halt, she spoke.

"Go back!" she said imploringly. "Go back to Big Cabin and take her away!"

McKean stared in stupid surprise.

"Just why should I take her away?" he demanded.

"I cannot tell you." Her words were clear-cut and careful, as if English was a little strange to her. Her face, framed in the dark shawl, looked startlingly fair and sad. "But for God's sake do as I say! She cannot stop things now, but there is no reason why her life should be taken, too."

"You mean the Wolf of Kahlotus?" persisted McKean.

"I mean a greater and more powerful wolf than you can cope with!" the woman cried with sudden spirit. "Do as I bid you. You are none of you very clever, but perhaps you can save her when I tell you. Go now, quickly!"

She turned and darted into the green brush, which shook with her passing and was still.

McKean, his soul full of vague fears, his thoughts plagued with surmise, rode hard on the trail to Big Cabin.

IX

TORRY was at the fireplace on the veranda with her chin in her hand and her eyes fixed broodingly on the fire. She did not get up as McKean approached. He thought, as he looked at her, how much of the spirit of the country had gone into the making of the girl—its serenity, quiet strength, and grave charm. The little life of the cities had broken against her and failed to find a chink in the armor of abounding health and strength in which she had been clad by the big timber.

Some one else was searching for that chink now. She had borne the first onslaught bravely, convinced, womanlike, without proof, that the attack was upon her country, not herself. How much more could she stand, though, and how far was he justified in following the trail his instinct declared was the right one?

He sat down beside her and held his hands toward the flames.

"You say you have perfect confidence in Mrs. Barry, Miss Tolliver?"

She turned her eyes on him without moving.

"You asked me that a little while ago. Yes."

"I have not," he replied. "Tell me about that road we came over yesterday," he went on, before she could speak. "When it cuts through the timber, it surely swings in somewhere on the other side of our friend Cotswold's Peace Cabin?"

"It does," she said.

"We've located the range of the wolf."

"Located the range of the wolf?"

"I've been here practically two days and a night," he replied, "and I've heard that brute howl four times—I heard it to-day, while I was riding up toward Skedee—and always from the same direction. It was down in there it got your father, too."

"I know," she interrupted gently. "But when you come to think that the wolf has been called because of us—why, it's natural it should be in the timber nearest the house."

"It is natural," he admitted. "No, I did not go all the way to Skedee. Tell me, Miss Tolliver, did you ever quarrel with your father?"

"Only once." She looked at him with childish honesty. "I wanted to marry Chan before he went abroad, and my father opposed it violently. I wish I had not given in to him! If it was my husband that is in France, and not my betrothed, I would not feel quite so much alone."

Her voice trembled slightly. She bit her lip, and covered her mouth with her fingers, as if to hide its weakness. There was silence for a space; then McKean said:

"I don't know but what you would be safer away from here."

"You mean you want to go back to town!" she exclaimed quickly.

"Indeed, you are mistaken," he replied earnestly. "There is more in this thing than appears to the eye. You knew that before; I know it now. No, no, I propose to stick to you closer than a brother until it is all over," he added with a laugh which he vainly endeavored to keep unconscious.

He was telling himself that he was a fool—that he had never laid his eyes on this girl until the day before, and that she was promised to a man fighting for his country.

"But you must help me," he went on. "Now, to begin with, who is that fair-haired woman who is staying at the Timber Beast's place?"

with some heat. "No one ever stays long at Peace Cabin. Men come there hunting and fishing, and Joe Cotswold has been acting as a guide since he became a syndicalist



BARRY RAISED THE LANTERN HIGH
AND STARED HIM SUSPICIOUSLY
IN THE FACE

and refused to work unless he had a part ownership in the business. I have told you all that—and that's all, too. There is plenty of scandal in the Kahlotus country, as there is wherever there are human beings, but I never heard of a woman at Peace Cabin."

"Well, I have," said McKean doggedly. He told of the woman who had accosted him on the trail. "She was not an American," he concluded. "Her English was like a foreigner's."

"I never saw any woman there, fair-haired or black-haired."

"You never saw—" It was McKean's turn to be surprised and slightly resentful. "See here, Miss Tolliver—"

"I tell you I never did," she interrupted

Torry arose.

"Mr. McKean," she said, "let us start right now and ride all the way to Skedee."

"To Skedee?"

"Yes. We can get back by dark."

"But why to Skedee?"

"Well, the trouble all came on my father's return from Skedee, and—well, I'm sick of all these odds and ends. I want something definite. I went into my father's clothes-closet an hour ago. A riding-suit of his is missing."

"Since when?"

"Well, I know it was there two days before—before he was killed."

"He might have taken it away himself."

"Yes, but only to Skedee, and I am going there to find out. Oh!" she cried in a sudden passionate outburst, "if I don't find out something definite—something I can put my teeth in—I'll go crazy!"

She turned away, biting her lips, clenching and unclenching her hands, fighting hard for self-control. McKean stood watching her. He wanted to help her. He was in love with her!

Suddenly she turned calm again.

"Want to ride to Skedee?"

"You bet I do!" was his hearty reply.

In a quarter of an hour they rode away from Big Cabin, and traveled hard and fast for Skedee. The Basque sheep-herder unlocked Square Bill's room there, and Torry crossed quickly to the closet and threw open the door. It was empty.

"My father told me all his things were at Big Cabin," she said, looking back over her shoulder.

The Basque stood at the door of the shack, eying McKean queerly.

"Has any one been here since my father's death, Vicente?" Torry demanded.

The Basque shook his head and grinned. No, no, all the excitement was over at Skedee before that.

Torry stared into the empty closet and sighed bitterly. Then she slammed the door and came out of the room.

"Let's go!" she said to McKean.

The Basque followed them out to the horses.

"Missee, missee!" He touched Torry's arm and beckoned her away. "He—he—" he indicated McKean covertly with his thumb—"he not keel me?"

"No! What in the world ever put that idea into your head?"

"Joe, he say it."

"Joe who?"

"Timber Beas'."

"You told me no one had been here!"

"No, no, I meet 'im on de trail wit' dat odder."

"What other?"

The Basque regarded her with an indescribable mixture of fear and cunning in his stupid, good-natured face.

"You know, you know, missee!"

He backed away.

"See here, Vicente!" Torry advanced a step and raised her quirt. Then she halted, laughed helplessly, and dropped her hand. "Oh, what's the use? Yes, Vicente, I know, I know."

She turned to her horse, seized the reins, stuck her toe into the stirrup, and swung into the saddle as the brute darted away.

"More loose ends!" she exclaimed, when McKean rode up beside her. "Well, we shall be late getting home."

"What man can he mean?"

McKean kept beside her, thinking aloud.

"That's for us to find out, I suppose," sighed Torry. "You don't know these people in the big timber, but I do. Still, it's more or less safe to say that it's the man who tried to get back the piece of cloth and followed us here from Portland."

"The man who warned you, I wonder?"

"How do you know it was a man that warned me?" she cried.

"I've taken a leaf out of your own book," replied McKean boldly. "I have a hunch; and my hunch is that it was the Timber Beast."

"The Timber Beast? Why the Timber Beast?"

"Because he loves you," said McKean bluntly.

Their eyes met in a flash that seemed to blind them both; and McKean knew that the girl was at all self-conscious she knew he loved her, too. Her throat and face flushed crimson, and she stared straight ahead.

"He wouldn't dare!" she said, very low.

"Why, you told me that much yourself," returned McKean.

"Yes, but that was when my father was alive."

"Oh, come now!" McKean felt queerly helpless. "You can't expect a man to change his nature because of your father's sudden death."

"I don't mean that," she said. "I know Joe Cotswold. He was a big boy, and his

father was hook-tender at Camp Three when I was a little girl. He is a man of wonderful fine principle and high ideals of what it is honorable for a man to do."

"How do you account for his actions when I caught him yesterday, and for my conversation with him this morning?" demanded McKean, with a fierce twinge of jealousy—for which he cursed himself.

"I think he has been influenced by the I. W. W. propagandists," she replied somewhat unsteadily. "Men like Joe Cotswold, you know, Mr. McKean, must go—up. The men behind this I. W. W. movement have been very clever. They have offered these thousands of striving souls a way to climb. Theirs is not the right way. It leads only to slavery and greater confusion—I am convinced of that; but it's a way, and no one else has pointed out one. That's what's the matter with Joe Cotswold—or, as he vehemently calls himself, the Timber Beast. I don't think he seeks either to injure me or to—love me."

"No!" growled McKean. "He only seeks to get you out of the way because he thinks you may get hurt, and his conscience is too tender for that."

"I tell you the fault does not lie with the Timber Beast!" she retorted angrily. "The master hand in this is an enemy to our country, and his trail leads straight from Germany!"

"You place no credence whatever in the legend, then?" he said, gazing at her shrewdly.

"I have told you that I do not," she replied, returning his stare. "My father was no more than human when you come to that, but he did not harm the Indians. What I do place credence in is the very material existence of the man from whose sleeve my father tore that piece of cloth which I found in his dead hand, and which the same man has since tried to recover. You did not bring it up here with you?"

"No," said McKean, and fell a little behind, as if he felt that further discussion was useless.

The afternoon was almost gone, and the shadows lay thick along the trail. The dusk beneath the trees deepened imperceptibly from green to softest black. Night crept up through the big timber, and the brooding stillness was intensified as the forest world settled down to sleep.

Suddenly McKean felt that there was some one near at hand who had no thought

of sleep, and to whom their voices, raised above the dull trampling of the ponies on the trail, had been distinctly audible. He strove to pierce the strange, subtly deepening dusk, frowning with the effort that he made.

There came a low whine. He jerked up the reins sharply, and his pony reared.

"You, there!" he shouted peremptorily.

Torry looked back over her shoulder and slackened her pace.

"What's the matter?" she demanded.

"There's no one there," she added, looking to right and left.

McKean stared again. He could have sworn to having caught two shadows in that soft, baffling gloom—the shadows of a tall man and a huge, four-footed beast; but they had vanished like an illusion upon his second glance. He rode on to Torry's side, astonished to find that both he and the pony were trembling.

"There was something," he said. "My horse saw it, too, and, by George, we were both scared!"

"A bear, perhaps," said the girl.

"Why not the Wolf of Kahlotus?" demanded McKean sharply.

She would not even look at him, but urged her horse on; and there was no more talk between them until they rode up to the veranda steps at Big Cabin.

X

A MAN was standing there with a lantern. He held it up as they approached, disclosing a thick-set figure and a broad, pleasant face well covered by a heavy black beard.

"It's Black Jack Barry, down from the wheat country!" exclaimed Torry. "*Klahowyah*, Black Jack!" she cried.

The man shouted the word back to her in deep, round tones. Torry dismounted quickly and took him by the hand.

"How's everything, Black Jack? This is Mr. McKean."

"Coming along." Barry held out his hand to the government man. "Glad to see you in Kahlotus, Mr. McKean, and sorry for the business that brought you here."

Torry ran up the steps and into the broad, lighted hall. The men walked off to the stables with the horses, and McKean felt himself the subject of Barry's covert scrutiny. He stood it long enough to let the man get what he deemed a good look at him, and then turned and met his eyes



"WELL?" MCKEAN LOOKED AT HER FORBIDDINGLY. "WHAT OF YOUR SON? WHERE IS HE?"

squarely by the light of the lantern. Black Jack did not glance away.

"It's bad business, Mr. McKean. May I ask if you have any of your men up here?"

"Not yet," began McKean, and stopped, astonished, for he sensed in the man an enormous relief more significant than words. "I am going to have them here, though," he added quickly.

"But not for a day or two, perhaps," said Barry.

He went up the gangway in front of the stalls to the feed-box, and the ponies nickered in comfortable expectancy. Black Jack dumped the grain into their boxes and returned to where McKean was waiting.

"There's something wrong, sure enough," he said, picking up the lantern. "'Twasn't



"OH," TORRY FLASHED, "I HATE YOU! WHAT CAN YOU KNOW OF WHAT A MOTHER SUFFERS?"

any ghost Injun's wolf that murdered Square Bill Tolliver!"

"Ever see the old gentleman Miss Tolliver calls the cousin professor?" McKean demanded.

"Often and often."

"What's he like?"

"A mighty decent, good-hearted old brick. You saw his picture in the hall?"

"All right!" McKean nodded in the darkness. "What about the fine young party on the other wall?"

"Vrang von Kroner?"

"Hold up!" McKean cried. "I thought his name was plain Vrang."

"That's what we called him here in Kahlotus; but I've given you his full name. He's the professor's wife's nephew. He

hasn't been here since early in the summer of 1914. I understood he had gone back to fight for his country. He is, or was, a captain in the German army."

"I see," commented McKean. "And what do you think about the man Miss Tolliver's engaged to? I understand he's in France with her brothers."

"Chandler Chadeanne? He is, and a more worthless blackleg never went to France!"

McKean's heart gave a great thumping leap and stopped short.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Oh, Chadeanne is the son of a rich Easterner," replied Black Jack. "Handsome is no word, and he has a tongue to coax the birds off the trees. He didn't make any headway to speak of with Miss Torry, though, until Square Bill began to roar. Then he added to the story of his love for her that he was persecuted on her account. That turned the trick. The only thing that saved her from marrying him before he went to France was the way Square Bill acted."

"How did he act?"

"He acted just about the ugliest I ever saw, and I've seen men act some ugly."

"And Miss Tolliver?"

"Miss Torry? She acted ugly, too, and dared him to his face, which is a thing mighty few men in Kahlotus had the nerve to do. Then she seemed ashamed, and put it that somebody had to be sane, and it was all right, and she had the grit to wait. The boys sided in with Square Bill."

"She is not a person to nurse a hang-over on a thing like that?"

"No, indeed—not she nor any Tolliver."

"Might some one have called the wolf out of mistaken sympathy for her?"

Barry raised the lantern high and stared him suspiciously in the face.

"You know, Mr. McKean," he said, "there wasn't any mistaken sympathy for Miss Torry. The Kahlotus is a big country, but Chandler Chadeanne is well known in it. As for calling the wolf—well, you don't have to talk like that to me. I saw Square Bill, and I saw what was left of his horse, and if that was the job of any ghost wolf I'll eat my right hand right here!"

He strode on ahead, as if to avoid any further speech. As they ascended the veranda, Torry came to the front door.

"Supper is ready, and it is most awfully late. Hurry along!" she cried.

Supper proved a rather quiet meal. Torry seemed absorbed in her own thoughts, and Barry was most interested in the contents of his plate. McKean seized the opportunity to study Mrs. Barry, who was less watchful behind the shining barrier of the tea equipage than when he had met her before.

She was a heavy, solid person, plainly very limited, intensely respectable, and with the deep-seated, overbearing obstinacy so common to such natures. Watching her, McKean guessed that this was the great emotion of her life. He wondered about Barry, and how much this narrow obstinacy had influenced the man. She would never give up, that woman! She would not yield to life, death, or the law. She was weak—her face showed that; but she was the finished material of which the most perfect domestic tyrants are made. Then he met her eyes, and quickly turned his away, for fear she would read his thoughts in his glance.

They made a quiet party about the fire on the veranda, too. Mrs. Barry immediately took up her gray knitting, and Torry, sitting in a low chair beside her, unrolled a half-finished sock of the same shade.

"It is for the man to whom she is engaged, and who is unworthy of her," thought McKean.

If only Square Bill had not opposed her! The thought made him hot all over. He glanced at Barry, who sat placidly smoking, his eyes on the fire, and yet with a certain controlled watchfulness that seemed directed toward his wife. Then the district attorney knocked out his pipe and rose.

"I think I'll turn in," he said shortly. "Don't go anywhere to-night but from here to your room, Miss Tolliver, please, and lock your door. Good night!"

He went straight through the hall between the two portraits—one, to his excited imagination, seemed to stare at him derisively—up the staircase, two steps at a time, to his room. This time he did not listen at the window, or even look out. He had had enough of broken threads. He went straight to bed and fell asleep, his hands clenched at his sides, his face set in hard lines of determination.

He dreamed that Mr. James Tussy came and laughed at him, holding his sides as if in exhausting enjoyment of a huge joke. He took his finger and traced upon his up-

per lip and cheeks the sign of a Kaiser mustache. Then he thumbed his nose with his left hand, on which the mole showed plainly, at a huge American flag—a flag which, in the dream, seemed to cover half the world. McKean rushed at him and started wide awake.

The whole world was sunk in quiet. The intense, brooding stillness of the big timber had crept into the house. The moon had gone down behind the trees, and the room was in darkness. The illuminated face of McKean's watch on the little table beside the bed showed two o'clock. As he looked, a clock struck somewhere in sweet, solemn tones.

He was about to sink down on his pillow, fuming at the dream that brought back Mr. James Tussy and his excellent alibi, when he heard a stealthy step in the hall. Up he sprang and bent to the keyhole, listening acutely. The step sounded again, farther down the hallway, near the stairs.

Softly he unlocked the door, opened it, and looked out. A black shadow, fantastically long, wavered down the polished floor. It was thrown by Mrs. Barry.

She was in her night-dress, with a dark shawl thrown across her shoulders, her bare feet thrust into gray knit slippers, and she carried a small oil-lamp held high in her hand. She moved slowly and carefully, evidently on the alert for the least sign of an alarm.

She reached the stairway and started down, and her head, haloed by the dim, yellow light, sank from view. McKean came out of his door and followed. At the head of the stairs he could see the light shine faintly from the wide door of the dining-room into the hall. It was steady, as if she had either set it down or was standing motionless.

Step by step McKean crept down the stairs. The light shone palely on the benevolent forehead and mild eyes of the old cousin professor, but the dashing figure of Vrang von Kroner was enveloped in black shadow.

McKean stepped from the last tread and slipped noiselessly across the hall to the dining-room. The swing door to the pantry stood open, and Mrs. Barry was in there. In that instant she came hastily out into the dining-room. She carried a bottle of milk in one hand and a napkin-covered basket in the other.

She stood before the table, half-turned

toward him, her face rigid and strained with listening. Then, with a deep sigh and a quick gesture, as if impatient at her own fears, she pressed past McKean without seeing him, crossed the hall to the front door, and opened it.

"If she closes it now," thought McKean, "do I dare to open it?"

Mrs. Barry put down the basket, set the door back carefully with a bronze cat door-stop, lifted the basket once more, crossed the veranda, and went down the steps. The shadows seemed to move to meet her, and she was swallowed up by the trees.

McKean waited. Twenty minutes later by his watch she returned with a basket of different make, and empty, in her hands. She shut and locked the front door and bestowed the basket in the pantry. A moment she stood by the dining-room table, her face convulsed and wet with weeping. Then she took up the lamp, and McKean crept after her up-stairs.

XI

WHEN McKean awoke after a period of restless, uneasy sleep, the light of a gray day was streaming through the windows. In late fall the sun does not shine long in the big timber. The clock in the hall below struck the half-hour, and he looked at his watch. It was half past five to the minute. He dressed quickly and went down-stairs quietly, but with no appearance of secrecy. He let himself out of the front door and stood at the top of the veranda steps.

Where was it easiest for a woman to go so sure-footedly in the dark? Involuntarily his eye crossed the wooded ground to the entrance of the trail to Skedee. Slowly he strolled down to the ambitious, hard-surfaced beginning of the trail. Even there, a few yards into the brush on either side, and an inexperienced man was as much lost as in a wide, uncharted sea.

He walked a little way along, glancing sharply from left to right. There was nothing to afford a clue, no distinguishing landmark; and rain had obliterated all signs of travel upon the hard surface of the trail.

Perhaps the woman had gone farther on, to the crumbly, volcanic soil of the forest, where the trail began in earnest. McKean consulted his watch and slowly shook his head. She had been gone twenty minutes from the time when she opened the front door. She could only have hurried to the

end of the hard surface and back, with not a moment left to enter the brush. And had she entered it? Twenty minutes of swift walking would have carried her to the end of the hard surface, given time for the exchange of the full basket for the empty one, and brought her back to the house.

McKean quickened his pace. He did not know why he had come so definitely to the conclusion that her errand had not taken her into the brush. There had, of course, been some one waiting for the basket of food. It had passed from hand to hand, and she and her confederate separated as swiftly as they had met. But why had they met, and for whom or what was the basket of food?

He came to the point where the hard surface dropped off into the loose, friable soil of the big timber, and examined it carefully with the uneasy consciousness of being watched all the time. No one had passed since he and Torry had ridden from Skedee the night before.

At last, with an impatient sigh, he turned back. More loose ends! Why did the woman carry food out there into the big timber? Could it be a love intrigue? Was that why she wept aloud at night? And did her earnestly expressed wish to get Torry removed from Big Cabin arise from a desire not to be caught or suspected by the girl?

Black Jack had finished breakfast when McKean reached the house. Torry had just come down, and Mrs. Barry sat behind the coffee-urn, red-eyed and sad, her weak face set in the only lines of strength it knew—those of determined obstinacy. She barely glanced up as McKean entered, but busied herself pouring his coffee.

Torry greeted him with a smile.

"You have been for a walk," she stated.

"I have," acknowledged McKean; "and I'm hungry, and I want to talk to you right after breakfast. No, no sugar, Mrs. Barry, thank you."

Mrs. Barry received the request with a dull movement of her swollen eyelids, and handed him the steaming cup without once lifting her eyes.

Breakfast over, McKean followed Torry to the fireplace on the veranda, and then, while he smoked, he told her all that he had seen. She heard it with a coolness that set him somewhat aback.

"I knew she walked about at night," she said. "She's been doing that for some

time. She's been terribly upset, poor thing, ever since her son went away. I have intended to speak to her, but I know the misery of restlessness you suffer when one you love is gone," she concluded in a low tone.

Her eyes sought the fire, and McKean felt that he and all the problems growing out of her father's tragic death were for the moment forgotten.

"It is quite possible, then," he said abruptly, "that she carries food every night to some person she meets on the Skedee trail?"

The girl started. He felt with an angry wrench that she had come back to him from a distance of thousands of miles.

"Oh—oh, yes, of course, it's possible. I think, under the circumstances, that we should follow her and see what she is up to. What do you think?"

"Exactly what you suggest," he replied. "Follow her, and see just what it's all about. We may find a thread that's not broken to lead us on to other things."

"Good enough!" agreed Torry. "We'll do it together."

McKean thrilled, and called himself a fool.

"She would be more likely to hear the two of us."

"All right, then, we'll have to risk that," she replied, evidently stimulated by the thought of coming adventure, and with no intention of being left behind. "I'll come to your door to-night as soon as she is at the head of the stairs. And now," she added, rising, "if you don't need me any more, I am going to write some letters."

"So am I," said he, and followed her into the hall.

He was almost up to the first landing on the wide staircase when suddenly she called him from the hall below.

"Mr. McKean!"

"Yes?"

He looked down over the banisters into her earnest, upturned eyes.

"Mind telling me where you put that piece of green cloth?"

"No, indeed. It's in a drawer of the safe in my office." He pointed downward to the portrait opposite the cousin professor's. "You know, that young man's uniform looks as if it was made of exactly the same material."

She studied the picture critically.

"You are right," she said at last.

"I understand his full name is Vrang von Kroner."

"Yes. Vrang is only his first name, but that was enough for us here in Kahlotus."

"And he is of the German nobility, and gone to fight for his country! I've seen some one who looks a lot like him, and something keeps telling me that it's important to remember who it is. But hang it," said McKean wryly, "I can't remember faces, only hands, and that fellow's aren't in the picture."

"Oh, he was rotten!" said Torry, with outspoken, boyish frankness. "He's not worth remembering, even if my father did stick up for him."

"I believe he tried to make love to you," smiled McKean.

She flushed and stared up at him, her eyes bright with anger.

"I don't see that that's any of your business," she replied, and flung into the library, slamming the door.

McKean went on to his room thoughtfully. Her father had backed this Herr Captain Vrang von Kroner, and who in thunder did he look like, anyway?

He seated himself by the window to write what notes he could on the whole confused affair. He believed that it persisted in associating itself in his mind with Mr. James Tussy, solely because his failure with that grand gentleman had been followed by the news of the mysterious tragedy in Kahlotus.

He sat there at the table, his chin in his hand, staring out at the great panorama of forest-covered hills and rolling, fertile plain, his keen eyes filmed in thought. Then, suddenly, he came back to the task in hand. If the man whom he planned to put on the job was to profit in the least by the visit McKean was making to Big Cabin, he must write the notes while all was fresh in his mind.

He began to write rapidly, his face set in absorbed concentration. At length he came to a full stop, and, lighting his pipe as an aid to further inspiration, he glanced out of the window once more.

He saw Torry Tolliver walking away from the veranda steps in the direction of the road that wound down to the river. She moved with the smooth, tireless stride that is the heritage of those born in the big timber, and the house soon hid her from view.

McKean pushed back his chair and rose. He was visibly disturbed, and could write

no more. The girl had gone to the river alone, in spite of the warning which he had carefully repeated to her—that she should either stay in the house or go clean away from Kahlotus. Either she was exceedingly foolhardy, or she knew from some satisfactory source that the cause for these warnings existed only in the mind of the warner.

He resumed his seat, then rose resolutely and took his hat. "Afterward" was a word that he despised. The most pitiful acknowledgment of weakness, he was always wont to declare, lay in an investigation to see how the accident had happened. Suppose he found himself forced to admit misfortune and defeat because, from some silly scruple, he had failed in his duty?

He set his teeth, and his eyes glittered at the very thought. He went down the stairs, passed out beneath the dripping trees, and strode away rapidly on the road to the river.

Torry had a start of him, and she was evidently a good walker. The road wound away down the hill, smooth, well-kept, and carefully ditched at the side to prevent flooding. The trees did not grow so densely as on the Skedee trail. Soon McKean came to a wide curve where a flurry of wind had uprooted several huge firs, and they lay crossed upon one another in a tangled mass of ruin. From this opening he could command a view of the country and the road below him; and he saw Torry Tolliver almost at once.

Some distance farther down the road made another sharp turn, and a solid concrete bridge took it across a ravine thickly grown with cottonwoods. The leaves had fallen from the trees, and the bridge was unconcealed. Torry stood upon it, and a man was with her. McKean, with a start and a swift intake of breath, identified him immediately as the Timber Beast.

There was something definite about the attitude of these two which made it clear that the meeting had not been accidental. After a moment they began walking slowly along, absorbed in conversation. Once the girl halted and made the free, earnest gesture that McKean had come to know and love. She was evidently very much taken up with what she said. Cotswold seemed listening no less earnestly, and twice, at different intervals, he shook his head emphatically.

McKean stood there at his lookout on the curve above them, fuming, but uncertain how to act. He was anxious to stand well in the girl's good graces, and he knew he would have small chance if she caught him spying upon her. And yet he had been warned that, so long as she remained in Kahlotus, every moment she was actually outside the house she was in danger. One warning had come from the very man who stood there talking to her now.

If the Timber Beast attacked her, or tried to carry her off, McKean was too far away to save her. But to go down and break in upon a private meeting, evidently agreed upon beforehand, was beyond him.

The two moved along on the sharp curve of the bridge, now partly screened by the slender stems of the bare-branched cottonwoods, now in full view of the watcher on the curve above them. Suddenly McKean started and stared past them, convinced that he was not the only witness to their talk. Where the bridge touched the road on the far side of the ravine there was a movement like a shadow in the brush. Something was creeping through the thick obscurity of the young firs and hemlocks up the bank to the bridge.

Torry turned away from Cotswold with a little movement eloquent of despair. The Timber Beast responded with a gesture as ardent as hers had been hopeless, and seized her in his arms. Catching her too suddenly for a struggle, he strained her close and bent down his face to hers.

There was a quick rush in the growth at the end of the bridge, the young trees and bushes swaying this way and that. Cotswold threw the girl from him with such force that she almost fell. Then, turning, he reached the bushes in a stride, and sprang at that moving something, which the next flash of a second would have brought into full view. There followed a crashing of brush and a sliding of rocks which disappeared in the depths of the ravine.

Torry put out her hands before her as stiffly as a jointed doll. Like a sleep-walker she backed off the bridge in the direction from which she had come, and the ever-green trees hid her from view. It was all over in a second or two, while McKean stood rooted, unable to move or speak. Then the disappearance of the girl released him like a spring, and he darted down the road.

He found Torry standing and staring

across the bridge. Her face was white, her mouth was set in a straight line, her hands were still thrust out in front, as if to ward off some attack.

"Mr. McKean, where did you come from?" she cried.

"I—I—up there," he said incoherently.

He ran past her on the bridge; but there was no one to be seen, either on the road or in the ravine. He turned and walked back to Torry.

"What happened?" he demanded brusquely.

She met his glance squarely, and a faint pink tinged her colorless cheeks.

"Why, that's what I don't know," she replied. "What are you doing down here?" she added, with more spirit.

McKean put his hand on her arm and started walking back up the hill.

"You know you must not go out alone," he said.

She made a quick little sound of distress. He saw that she was on the verge of weeping, and softened instantly.

"Never mind! Let's get back—that's the main thing now."

"But I want to explain," she protested falteringly. "What you said last night about the Timber Beast stuck in my mind. All this baffling mystery, this feeling of things happening all about you that you can't see, is driving me fairly crazy. I thought if I could meet Joe Cotswold, and talk to him, he might clear up anything he knew, and perhaps might help us with the rest. So when you went up-stairs I sent Yip to Peace Cabin with a note, and asked him to meet me down here. Yip came back, and said he'd seen Joe, and Joe would come; so I met him here. But he would only say no, no, and then—" The color scorched her throat and face, and her voice faltered. "He—well, he did try to make love to me, Mr. McKean," she said, with that astonishing honesty of hers, "just as you said. He was trying to kiss me when suddenly—I don't know what it was, but something started to scramble up on the bridge. I—Mr. McKean, I thought it was a wolf!"

"What did Cotswold do?" said McKean, striving to speak collectedly.

"He ran," she replied, "and literally jumped on whatever it was, and they rolled down into the ravine together."

McKean nodded. That much he had seen himself.

"Did Cotswold say anything?"

"He shouted something. I know, because I heard 'call' and 'off.' I could swear to those two words. So there must have been some one there, or at any rate he thought so."

They walked a little way in silence. Then McKean spoke again.

"Did Cotswold say you were safer away from here?"

"He begged me to leave Big Cabin for good. When I refused, he said I must marry him, and he would keep me safe."

They entered the grounds about the house.

"I wouldn't say anything of this to Mrs. Barry," said McKean.

She looked at him steadily, and he returned her gaze.

"No," he said. "I only mean that it's best to get things a little more cleared up before we take too many into our confidence—don't you think so?"

"Yes," she answered, "I do."

She put out her hand, he held it tightly for a moment, and they went into the house together.

That evening, when McKean came in to supper, Mrs. Barry handed him a letter.

"Somebody knows where you are," she commented pleasantly.

He made a little face and laughed.

"My stenographer," he said.

The letter was from Miss Myrtle Point. It began thus:

DEAR MR. MCKEAN:

Last night the office was broken into and the safe blown open. There is something queer about this robbery, and I have asked the newspapers not to notice it at all. All your papers are intact. The only thing taken was the envelope you put in the morning you went away. I mean the one marked "Wolf of Kahlotus, Exhibit A."

There followed a request for instructions in case of his continued absence, and the letter closed. McKean replaced it in its envelope and continued his meal. When they left the dining-room, he slipped it quietly into Torry's hand, and followed to the fireplace on the veranda.

Black Jack immersed himself in a newspaper, grunting his displeasure at the war news on the first and second pages. Torry took her seat in the low chair at Mrs. Barry's side, and the two women knitted busily. McKean moved about, too restless to sit down. At last, pleading letter-writing as an excuse, he went off to his room.

He shut the door and lighted the fire that was laid upon the hearth.

The scrap of green cloth had been stolen! His mysterious, invincible foe had scored again.

He sank into a chair and sighed heavily. The enemy had scored again. The words had a familiar sound. The same thing was happening all over the United States. While he had been planning, listening to warnings, falling in love—yes, he would be honest—and smoking, his tireless enemy had acted and—scored again!

He got up and paced the floor. It was not through lack of equipment that he had failed. The whole secret service of the United States was at his disposal, and yet a dangerous German organizer, badly wanted in Washington, and known to be on the Pacific Coast, had slipped through his fingers while he was foolishly attempting to establish the man's identity with Mr. James Tussy, a bland, innocuous idiot whose most serious ambition was to be able to buy good beefsteak for his dog.

Here again, in this Kahlotus business, he had played the game with so little realization of its serious results that he had allowed himself to fall in love with the girl—which took the keen edge from his efficiency, and left him baffled at every point, while his enemy scored. The valuable evidence of the piece of green cloth was lost for good. The bare fact of its removal showed that there was a great deal to be discovered. McKean wondered that this able foe had taken such trouble to secure it, and felt that his own ability had been heavily overestimated.

Take the business on the bridge that day. The girl might have been killed before his eyes, or dragged away to ignominy, and he would have been left none the wiser as to the causes behind it all. And in the expedition of to-night, by some fool play, all his own, he would probably draw another blank!

So he sat before the fire in wretched meditation, smoking cigarette after cigarette, listening to the chiming of the clock in the hall. As the hours crawled by with incredible slowness, his resistance stiffened. He sat up straighter, with clenched hands, all his senses alert. He would find an opening in to-night's adventure to admit of a blow at his enemy's stronghold!

There came the creak of a step in the passage. He started to his feet, listening,

and heard the softest touch of fingers on his door.

XII

He opened upon such absolute darkness that for a moment he hesitated. Then a hand touched his gropingly, and in the faintest thread of a whisper, Torry said:

"Let's go!"

Very stealthily McKean closed his door, and they stole away to the top of the stairs, just in time to see Mrs. Barry entering the dining-room. They waited to allow her to go on to the pantry, and then began to descend. As they reached the bottom step, she emerged from the dining-room into the hall. Instantly the man and girl crouched down.

"Here is where I have blundered again!" McKean thought.

In the dim yellow light of the lamp on the dining-room table, Mrs. Barry stood, turning her head from side to side and listening uneasily. To the two crouching so near it seemed impossible that she should not see them, or hear the beating of their hearts; but she was too much occupied with her own thoughts, and with what she was doing. Noiselessly she glided to the front door, opened it, and set it back with the bronze cat, as on the night before. Then, crossing the veranda, she slipped silently down the steps.

McKean and Torry followed, letting themselves down carefully, fearful lest a board should creak and so betray their presence. Once on the ground, it was easier. Their eyes soon became accustomed to the darkness, and they followed Mrs. Barry with no great difficulty to the entrance of the Skedee trail. A few yards along, McKean suddenly halted and put a detaining hand upon Torry's arm.

"Some one there!" he breathed.

From straight ahead there came a low whistle, and Mrs. Barry stopped short.

"It's only me," she said guardedly.

Then she moved on again. Torry started to follow, but McKean held her back.

"May have a light," he whispered.

As he spoke, a match sputtered blue, a candle burned faint and steady in the trail before them, and a boyish face looked eagerly over it at the figure of Mrs. Barry advancing against the light as if pushed forward by the enormous, batlike shadow at her back.

"Good eats!" said the man, and smiled.

Mrs. Barry set down the basket. She took the candle from his hand, and, putting her arm about his shoulders, kissed him. Torry Tolliver started violently and clapped her hand to her mouth.

"Who is it?" whispered McKean fiercely. "Who?"

"Dan—Dan Barry," replied the girl, choking.

"Come away!"

McKean took her by the arm, and they crept softly back to the house. He led the way to the dining-room and sat down at the table facing the door. Torry stood opposite him with a white, tragic face.

"What does it mean?" she cried. "Dan's not a coward!"

McKean looked across at her and laughed unpleasantly. Then the ugly look went out of his face, which turned haggard, and he sighed.

"In one way he is. It means," he said, "that we have found a mother who has failed in her duty."

"I don't understand you," interrupted Torry.

"Surely you know she is hiding him there to escape the draft until she can get him out of the country? That talk about South America was a little premature, that's all. She intended to send him there."

"I'm sure his father does not know of this!" cried Torry.

McKean looked down at his slender hands and thought, with an absurd flight of memory, of Mr. James Tussy's brown mole below the knuckle of his index finger on his left hand. Then he lifted his long lashes and shot the girl a keen glance.

"That," he said softly, "is what I propose to find out. Is Mr. Barry in the house to-night?"

"Yes," she gasped. "Shall I—"

McKean nodded.

"Yes. Get him down directly—if you don't mind."

Torry turned out of the room and climbed the stairs slowly and heavily, as if very tired. McKean rose and stood in the doorway. A fine mist was sifting in through the open front door, and the air in the hall was raw and damp.

"I am sorry," he said, "but you will have to move a little more quickly. We must get this business started before Mrs. Barry returns."

The girl paused and looked back at him over her shoulder. Though he could not

see, he felt the chill antagonism of her regard.

"What?" he exclaimed roughly. "You give your two brothers and the man you say you love, and hesitate over a thing like this? Good Heavens, are we Americans with a country to defend against a merciless enemy, or are we—"

She turned and ran swiftly up the staircase, leaving him with the words unfinished on his lips.

McKean walked to the front door and looked out. The fine rain pressed against his face like the touch of cool, soft fingers, and the outside world was dark and very still. Then, almost involuntarily, he turned and looked back into the hall. The lamp from the dining-room lit it with a dim and feeble radiance, blurring the open countenance of the cousin professor, and dimming pleasantly the arrogant haughtiness of Captain von Kroner. A shade crossed McKean's grave face.

"Wish I could see that fellow's hands!" he muttered.

There was a sound of footsteps in the up-stairs hall. He went quickly back to the dining-room and resumed his seat at the table opposite the door, just in time before Black Jack Barry entered.

Barry had hurriedly huddled on a shirt and trousers, and his feet were bare. His dark eyes stared in the white mask of his face, and a big vein stood out like a cord straight down his forehead; but when he spoke his voice was quiet.

"I am here, Mr. McKean."

Torry came in from the hall and stood at his side.

"You know what you are conniving at, Barry," replied McKean sternly. "It's a penitentiary offense. You knew that before you started!"

"I don't know what you are talking about." Black Jack's agitation was so great that he could hardly speak. "You may be the Federal attorney, and all that, but I will ask you by what right you turn decent folk out of their beds in the middle of the night, and then make fool statements that don't mean anything!"

"See here, Barry," said McKean, "I know more than you think I do, so it will save trouble for us all if you tell the truth sooner rather than later. Come, now, speak up! Who is that out there in the timber?"

Black Jack's defiance fell. He looked at his questioner in a queer, pathetic, helpless

way, and wrung his hands together once, hard, as if in the very extremity of grief and doubt.

"You mean at Peace Cabin? How do I know who all Cotswold harbors there?"

"No, I don't mean Peace Cabin, and I haven't mentioned Cotswold at all. You know what I mean. Come!"

Black Jack glanced around the room, striving to pierce the shadows, plainly seeking his wife. His gaze came back to McKean's keen blue eyes and rested there.

"Don't ask me, Mr. McKean," said he. "I beg you as man to man, don't ask me! Before God, it is not my secret, and He knows I have suffered from it, but I cannot tell. If it concerned no one but myself, I would. Tell!" he cried with sudden passion. "My God, it never would have happened—never!"

Torry put her hand on his arm.

"It's no go, dear old Black Jack," she said brokenly. "It is the law."

McKean continued to regard him with a face like stone.

"It is the law," he said briefly. "You know all about it. Your confederate is out there. Come, I'll give you another chance. What is this conspiracy that's going on?"

The man's face became openly defiant. "No," he said sullenly. "It's not my business. I won't tell!"

"Then you are under arrest," remarked McKean.

Barry rubbed his forehead with his palm wearily.

"Very well," he said.

Torry gasped and caught his shoulder.

"Black Jack!" she cried. "Not that! No, oh, no!"

"It means disgrace and imprisonment," McKean went on in the same slow, bored way. "Great Heavens, why didn't George Washington have it mentioned in the Constitution that we were all to be taught what it means to have a country, as well as our A B C's? Miss Tolliver, I'm sorry to deprive you of a trusted man at a time like this, but I must take Barry to jail tomorrow."

"No, no! Not that, not that!"

Mrs. Barry's voice was harsh and strained and broken. She pushed past her husband and fairly clung to the table for support. The empty basket hung upon her arm, her shawl had fallen back, her hair was soaked with mist, and her face wet and marred by weeping.

Barry barely glanced at her. "I have to go, Em'ly," he said. "It's only what I have foreseen. You'd best get me up a few things."

"Oh, Jack, no, no! It's my doing, Mr. McKean, all mine. He's kept quiet because he's the best husband in the world, and that's made me a bad wife and mother!"

"Well?" McKean looked at her forbiddingly. "What of your son? Where is he?"

"Oh," Torry flashed, "I hate you! How easy for you! What can *you* know of what a mother suffers, what makes her a coward and weak, what gives her the courage to be strong?" She put her arms about Mrs. Barry, who looked unlovely, almost ridiculous, in her nightgown and shawl. "Tell it, poor dear," she said soothingly. "Dan is in hiding out there, isn't he?"

She stood like a beautiful, compassionate embodiment of strength beside her two stricken elders, and Mrs. Barry sobbed against her bosom.

"You wanted him to escape the draft, didn't you?"

Mrs. Barry nodded.

"He is your only one, your baby, the only one you ever had. That's all you thought of, isn't it?"

Mrs. Barry nodded again, and began to weep—the deep, terrible weeping of a broken heart.

"And Black Jack didn't want to—"

"No, no!" sobbed Mrs. Barry.

"And neither did Dan," cadenced Torry.

"No, oh, no! Oh!"

The woman shuddered from head to foot, groaning as if in mortal agony.

"But you made them?"

"Yes, God help me, I see it all now!"

Torry moved aside and placed her within her husband's arm.

"Take her away, up-stairs," she said. "It might be good to give her some bromid. It is in the medicine-chest—a teaspoonful is enough. I'm going out to get Dan. We'll see this thing through together. Here!" She lit another lamp and put the little one that Mrs. Barry had carried in Black Jack's free hand.

"Is all this true, Barry?" demanded McKean.

"Yes, Mr. McKean, it is."

"And the boy was to stay in hiding until you could get him to the coast and away to South America?"

Black Jack's lips compressed under his heavy beard. He nodded.

"And Mrs. Barry has been making up a kit for him? And she took Mr. Tolliver's riding-suit?"

"I would have paid for that."

"Oh, Black Jack!" burst out Torry.

She cast a fierce, indignant glance at McKean's impassive face. The government man rose.

"It's all right," he said. "A man must stand by his woman. We are all good Americans here, even if we are a bit in doubt what it means to have a country. Go on to bed, now. I will speak with you again later. I am going with Miss Tolliver after your boy."

XIII

BARRY turned and crossed the hall, with his wife stumbling at his side. Toilsomely and with bowed heads they mounted the stairs. Torry cried out sharply and leaned in the doorway of the dining-room, with her hand pressed hard upon her heart.

"Is that life?" she said. "Is that life? Then I have seen enough. I don't want it, I—can't!"

"That is not what your father would have said," replied McKean sternly. "Do you know where this young Barry is?"

At the mention of her father the girl's face underwent a change.

"You are right," she almost whispered.

"I beg your pardon! Yes, I know where to find him."

"Get your gun, then," said McKean, "and come on."

"A gun? I don't want to take a gun."

"But I want you to," was the decided answer.

They went out together, and McKean shut the door gently. The air was raw and damp, but its heaviness was lightened by the strange, sweet smell of coming day. As they reached the entrance of the trail, rain began to fall with steady, sullen persistency.

"This rain," remarked McKean, "is like the nature of that poor Mrs. Barry—a vast deal of misdirected effort. Great guns, but it's dark!" he went on, in a lighter tone. "What a time for your Injun wolf, Miss Tolliver!"

As if in answer to his word, there sounded suddenly through the vast, brooding spaces of the big timber the long-drawn, wailing howl that he had heard before. It

came up through the night-blackened aisles, long and deep-throated, rising to a scream that echoed and reechoed as it died away. Again and again it sounded, blotting out the vast nocturnal silence of the big timber and filling the air with a fierce, blood-chilling menace.

Torry's shoulder struck McKean violently. He felt that she had squared off and was facing down the trail in the direction of the sound, with the automatic ready in her hand.

"That's it!" she panted. "Where is it? Is it coming, Mr. McKean?"

"I don't know." He stared alertly into the wall of darkness ahead. "That's the direction it always sounds from."

The howling died away with an avalanche of broken echoes, and the listening stillness of the big timber closed over them like the deep, still waters of the sea. Still they stood, their ears strained with listening, but there was no further sound.

"Mr. McKean," said Torry at last, "that cry was much nearer than usual!"

"And still in the same direction," he replied thoughtfully. "Let us go on."

"Wait! Mr. McKean, can there be any truth in this old story? Could it be possible—"

"Why, you have told me again and again that your father was good to the Indians, and I have heard from others that he earned his nickname fairly."

"But I was thinking—of Chan," she faltered. "Even if I *do*—marry him—there were some things—he has not made the best name for himself here in Kahlotus," she finished lamely.

"That's unfortunate!" said McKean dryly.

She was aware, then, of the man's shortcomings!

"The thing that howled is a live beast, and there is a possibility that it is coming this way. Shall we go back?"

"No, no!" she exclaimed indignantly.

"I've come out to save my old playmate, Dan Barry. The idea of turning back is absurd, and you know it. Come on!"

They walked slowly in the darkness until the girl moved over to the side of the trail and struck her hand upon a tree.

"We turn off here," she said. "The path is narrow. You had better let me lead the way."

McKean followed her gropingly. Wet branches whipped against his face. He

stepped too high, and fell forward; he hardly lifted his feet at all, and stumbled over roots and rotting wood. Then Torry stopped, and he struck violently against her.

"The place is just ahead," she whispered. "Give me that electric torch, and stand where you are."

McKean obeyed. The girl went forward swiftly several yards, then halted and flashed the white light of the torch full upon her own uplifted face.

"It's Torry, Dan!" she cried.

The words were lost in the deep silence and there was no reply.

"Dan!" she called. "Dan! Oh, Dan Barry!"

On every side there sounded a broken confusion of shouting until, far away in the big timber, faintly and clearly came back the words:

"Dan Barry!"

Torry ran forward. By the light of the torch McKean could see a rude camp made partly beneath a huge fallen log, beside a small, clear spring. There were some tumbled blankets and the remains of a small fire. The basket Mrs. Barry had carried from the house was missing; and there was no one there.

"He's gone!" cried the girl. "Oh, Dan, Dan, where are you?"

Again the deep stillness resounded with a broken jumble of echoes that died away and away and then came back with weird clearness:

"Are you?"

"Mr. McKean!" Torry turned to him, trembling. "Don't visit this on any of them. We'll find him—he can't get out of the timber. Then we'll smuggle him out and let him come back of his own accord. Say you will, please! Oh, the trouble one woman can make!"

"It's a good plan," he agreed slowly. "Let's go home."

He started to turn back, but she beckoned him on.

"Let us keep down this way," she said. "There is a little clearing down here, and we can cross it and come back into the trail again. It won't be so dark, and the going is better."

With the thinning of the trees and the coming of dawn the way grew lighter as they went along. McKean could see that they were walking on a hillside, which commanded a view of several open spaces in the

timber. In one of these a gray rock thrust up, cold and wet, the color of the dreary day that was creeping in so reluctantly over the green hills. And cut sharp against the blackness of the trees McKean saw the figure of a man upon the rock. He stood easily, with a certain confidence in his attitude, looking down into the misty grayness below him, which was rapidly brightening into day.

"Miss Tolliver, look, quick! Is that Barry?"

The girl turned her head as he spoke, and in that flicker of a second he met her eyes. Then they both looked, but the man was gone. The rock stood out more clearly as the light grew, but there was no sign of a man and no movement in the clearing.

"There was a man!" exclaimed McKean, staring. "I tell you there was!"

"Something has happened to him," said Torry, following her own line of thought. "He is not the kind that runs away."

McKean looked at her and nodded.

"Let us go home," he said doggedly, "and start from there again."

XIV

DAY broke on Kahlotus cold and foggy. The rain of the night before had subsided to a dull drizzle, and the house at Big Cabin was banked in clouds of mist, which now and then lifted to the tops of the great trees and showed the muddy river, the dim, shrouded hills, and the distant wheat-lands shining freshly green where the light struck down upon them. Then the fog settled down again, and to step ten yards away from the veranda meant to be lost.

It was melancholy within the house, too. Mrs. Barry lay in bed, utterly broken down by remorse and by the disappearance of her son. Black Jack, after breakfast, offered McKean his hand.

"I'll find him, Mr. McKean. Dan's no coward. He's like me—he humored his mother too much. There's something wrong in his being away. The best way to manage it is the way Miss Torry suggests."

McKean took the proffered hand.

"I am at liberty to use my discretion," he replied; "and we Americans still only faintly know what it is to have a country. Yes, we must find him and—have him home from South America!"

Barry went off, and McKean walked to the fireplace on the veranda, where Torry sat in black reaction after the excitement

of the day and night before. There was a weight on his heart, too—a conscious sense of impending danger, all the more terrible because he was unable to define it, or to say from what direction it would come.

He felt that he had real reason to be depressed. He had only a mass of broken threads and unfinished incidents, meaningless without the connecting link which he had so far failed to supply. But they all pointed to some sinister and evil forces at work—forces which seemed to scorn his feeble efforts to check the machine that moved so smoothly and with such diabolical cleverness.

There was the death of Square Bill Tolliver, the boss of Kahlotus, several times a millionaire, in exact fulfilment of the Indian legend, and in accordance with the report from dwellers in the big timber of the appearance of some strange beast on the trails. It was absurd, incredible, a story to frighten silly children! The ghost of a wolf dead a hundred years that could tear a man's throat open, eat half a horse, and howl in a way to be heard for miles—why, it was surely the wildest nonsense a man was ever called upon to believe!

But facts were facts. He himself had heard the howl of the wolf; and though he would not acknowledge it to himself, and Torry would not speak of it, he believed it was the same animal that the Timber Beast had grappled with in the ravine by the bridge the day before.

Suppose some great wolf had been driven by hunger down into Kahlotus! It was possible, and would go far to explain things. But why had it only attacked Square Bill Tolliver, and left him dead and mangled, with a scrap of gold-embroidered green cloth in his hand that was worth blowing up a safe for?

Where did it get its food? Why did it lie concealed, except under very special conditions? How was it that the brute had decided that Torry Tolliver was to be its next victim, and people knew it and sought to warn her?

There was Cotswold. He was at his place all unharmed. Black Jack Barry had reported seeing him on the trail late yesterday afternoon. He must have known what he was going after, there on the bridge. No, no, the thing would not explain itself that way!

And then, besides the wolf, there was the well-established fact of a human agency

in Portland, as well as at Kahlotus. The letter that warned the girl might have been written by a friend. Mrs. Barry denied having any hand in it, and he believed her. Her only possible reason for desiring to remove Torry was to facilitate her son's escape to the coast.

Who, then, had written that letter of warning? Had he remained in Portland to blow off the door of the safe in the office? Or was he the man who had so theatrically returned the counterfeit scrap at the gate to Big Cabin, and whom they had seen standing on the rock in the dawn? McKean had only glanced at the figure when it disappeared, but there was something which made him feel that he could identify the man if he could only see him again. Indeed, he could not shake off the queer, haunting belief that he had already seen him before.

It was not Dan Barry. Torry, having listened to McKean's description of the man, declared that that was impossible. His figure was too tall and slender for Dan. He had a dashing ease of carriage that just escaped being a swagger, and he did not look like a native of the big timber. He must be a stranger, then, and there for no good purpose.

The mystery concerning Mrs. Barry had been explained. McKean felt that if he could get hold of the man he had seen on the rock, and make him give an account of himself, many of the difficulties that now seemed insuperable might be smoothed away. He determined to lose no time in locating him, if he had to rake the whole of Kahlotus.

His first impulse was to consult Torry. Then he looked at her sitting silent and preoccupied, her chin in her hand, her eyes fixed broodingly on the fire, and he decided to try to work the matter out alone. He turned on his heel and went off to the stables, where he found Black Jack saddling a horse.

"I am going to Skedee," Barry said, when McKean looked in at the door. "They may have heard of Dan there."

"I've a hunch," said McKean slowly, "that you'll have your ride for nothing."

He told Barry of the howling they had heard on the way to Dan's hiding-place. Black Jack's face went so white that McKean broke off in the midst of his recital.

"Oh, see here, man!" he cried impatiently. "That brute is no ghost Injun's

ghost wolf, and you know it. You told me so yourself. Use your brains a little! The creature may have attacked your son, and he had to run for it."

"But—but"—Barry came up close—"why should it attack my boy?"

"You mean it was set on?"

Black Jack nodded.

"That's just what I'd give the world to find out! Barry, isn't it quite possible that he was wearing Mr. Tolliver's clothes?"

"I know he was, sir."

"Well, now, look here!" McKean stammered in his eagerness. "That—that wolf had a go at Tolliver, if he didn't bring him down. The smell of those clothes was what sent him after your boy!"

"Mr. McKean, you don't think—"

McKean stared at him, his keen blue eyes brilliant.

"I think," he said, "that the keeper of your wolf is the man I saw on the rock!"

"You mean the man who keeps the woman at Peace Cabin?"

"What? A fair-haired woman who looks as if she was unhappy?"

Black Jack nodded again.

"How long has she been in here, Barry?"

"Well," was the slow answer, "I saw her first not long before Square Bill's death, and it's my belief she enticed him to it."

"Can't stop there!" cried McKean.

"And I don't mean to," Black Jack returned. "She wrote him a letter, and asked him to come to Peace Cabin to see her—said it was very important."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw the letter. He gave it to me to light my pipe with the day he rode to Skedee, when those fools went on that lemon-extract spree."

"You read it all?"

"Not on your life!" said Black Jack, with a shrug of contempt. "He made it into a twist and lit it. I touched my pipe off, and threw it on the ground. The paper spread open, and I couldn't help seeing the date and a few words. 'I pray you, as you believe in a square deal, come to Peace Cabin to-night,' it said; and it was signed 'Louise S.'"

"Well?"

"Well, the Timber Beast told me the woman's name was Louise Stuff, or Storff, or something like that."

"When did he tell you?"

"Oh, when she first came. Joe is a good boy, all right, only the I. W. W.'s got him

off on the wrong foot. I asked him about the woman."

"What did he say?"

"He said that the people that came to Peace Cabin were none of his business, or mine, so long as they paid."

"There was a man there with her?"

"Well, I judge so. There is a stranger in this neck of the big timber."

"In hiding?"

"I don't know that." Black Jack met McKean's gaze full, and a deep red dyed his bearded face. "Under the circumstances," he said, "I thought I was a poor one to be asking. I let well enough alone, and kept a still tongue; but there's a strange man here, all right."

"You've spoken to him, have you?"

"Not me! I've never come up with him; but I know Square Bill did."

"He did?"

"Oh, yes, and more than once."

"Did the man come here to Big Cabin?"

Black Jack considered a moment.

"Not that I know of," he said at length; "but I am mostly up in the wheat district, so I can't say for sure. I do know that he was the cause of the row between Joe Cotswold and Square Bill. Tolliver was not the one to throw it up to a man because he was an I. W. W.—no, nor because he wanted to marry his daughter, either."

"He quarreled with Cotswold at Big Cabin, did he?"

"Yes, I was right here. Mr. Tolliver rode in from Skedee, and he looked ugly, the way he did when he was all roiled up. Joe was there in the library, waiting for him. What was said, I don't know; but suddenly Square Bill burst out cursing so loud my wife thought he had found out about Dan. He flung the library door back with a bang, called Joe a dirty German spy, and roared never to let him lay eyes on him again. Joe went out with his head up, but he looked like death. And Manuel—him that was shot in the lemon-extract bust-up—told me he had seen the stranger join the boss no distance at all from Skedee."

McKean listened, startled. The story dovetailed with Torry's account of the same happening; only she had not spoken of the stranger in the big timber.

"Why did you not speak of this before, Barry?"

"Well, as I told you, I couldn't very decently, things being the way they were

(To be concluded in the April number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

with us. And then I couldn't see what bearing it could have on the boss's death. Joe Cotswold had no hand in that."

"You think not?"

"Mr. McKean, look here—I know Joe!"

It was what Torry had said when she and McKean were talking about Cotswold.

"Barry," the government man suddenly exclaimed, "don't go to Skedee! Help me to find that stranger. He is the one we need to set our picture-puzzle together!"

"I might as well go there," replied Black Jack. "The only places I have seen him were on the Deep Creek trail near Kingfisher Crossing, and on the way to Skedee."

McKean stared at him, fascinated.

"Have you ever seen the woman with him?"

"Only once, and that at a distance."

"Do you really believe Tolliver went to Peace Cabin the night he was killed?"

"Yes, sir, I do. That accounts for his lateness. He hadn't been killed very long when Miss Torry found him. Well, I'll be back in a little while and report."

He mounted the pony and was about to ride away, but McKean put his hand on the bridle-rein.

"Barry," he said earnestly, "has that man ever been near enough for you to see the color of the clothes he had on?"

Black Jack drew in the impatient pony.

"Whoa! Yes—whoa, be done, will you? Yes."

"Did you ever see him in a suit of rich, dark green?"

"All the time." Black Jack seemed surprised. "All the time," he repeated, and rode away.

McKean hurried away from the stables and up the steps of the veranda two at a time. Torry had gone from the fireplace, and the rain was beginning to fall in great, splashing drops. It whispered in the giant firs and dripped from the broad eaves of the house. Rain-squalls drifted across the soft, green face of the rolling wheat-lands, great billowy clouds hung over the ever-green hills like misty veils.

The shod hoofs of Barry's pony rang out loudly on the hard roadway. With a quick clatter he whirled the animal back again.

"Will you be here when I get back?" he shouted.

McKean shook his head.

"I don't know!" he cried. "I'm on my way to Peace Cabin."

The Golden Scorpion*

AN ORIENTAL MYSTERY

By Sax Rohmer

Author of "The Yellow Claw," "Dr. Fu-Manchu," etc.

DR. KEPPEL STUART, a physician with a humdrum practise in a quiet part of London, is visited by a rather unusual patient—a beautiful girl who gives her name as Mlle. Dorian, and who complains of insomnia. One evening she calls when the doctor is out, and waits for him; but Stuart, coming in unexpectedly, finds her searching his desk. She begs him to forgive her, hinting that she is acting under compulsion, and warning him that he is in danger. Stuart connects her warning with the strange figure of a cowed man, of whom he has caught a glimpse outside his window at night.

Stuart becomes involved in another strange affair when Inspector Dunbar, of the London detective service, consults the doctor about a puzzling case that he is investigating. He shows Stuart a fragment of a broken ornament which has been found in the clothes of a man drowned in the Thames, and which the doctor identifies as the tail of a golden scorpion. He asks if Stuart knows anything of an Oriental sect or cult of scorpion-worshippers. Stuart, who has lived in the East, recalls an incident in a Chinese city, when his rickshaw boy displayed great terror at the sight of a veiled figure whom the boy called "the Scorpion"; but beyond this he can throw no light on the subject.

It appears that some mysterious and highly malignant power is at work, which is suspected of having caused the sudden deaths of a number of eminent men in various countries—among the victims being the Grand Duke Ivan, a famous soldier; Henrik Ericksen, the Norwegian electrician; and Sir Frank Narcombe, a leading English surgeon. A clever French detective, M. Gaston Max, has devoted himself to the investigation of this extraordinary case, and it is on instructions received from Paris that the London police are acting. For this reason it is a shock when Sergeant Sowerby, one of Inspector Dunbar's subordinates, reports that the dead man in whose clothes the golden scorpion's tail was found has been identified as Max. The inspector follows up this disquieting piece of news by warning Dr. Stuart, just as Mlle. Dorian warned him, that he is in danger.

That evening Stuart is sitting in his study, when suddenly a strange ray of blue light flashes into the room, and, narrowly missing the doctor's head, burns off the mouthpiece of his telephone. Then a man comes in and announces that he is Gaston Max, and that one of the unknown enemies has just slipped away after failing to kill Stuart with the burning ray. Max smiles on learning that he is supposed to be dead, and the story is carried on by his narrative of his adventures in the campaign against the Scorpion—whatever that individual or organization may be.

Max has been following the trail of a beautiful Oriental girl, Zâra el Khalâ, who seems to have lured the Grand Duke Ivan to Paris, where he had a fatal seizure in the theater at which she was dancing. When she leaves Paris for London, Max follows. On the Channel boat he recognizes a man whom he believes to be an agent of the enemy, and whom he knows as Le Balafré, the scarred man. He tracks this fellow to the East End of London. Assuming the character of Charles Malet, a taxi-driver, Max watches the man, and frames a plan to entrap him. Meeting Le Balafré in a bar-room, he boasts that he has papers containing information about a mysterious conspiracy that he is unearthing. These documents, he says, he is about to deposit with a friend for safe-keeping. As Max expected, the scarred man concludes that the papers mean danger to his associates, and resolves to get them at any cost. He trails Malet, or Max, to the house of Dr. Stuart—whose acquaintance the supposed taxi-driver has chanced to make—and is watching outside the window when Max gives the doctor a package, which, as a matter of fact, contains only blank paper. It is this that brings Stuart into the danger of which the reader has already heard.

From Stuart's house Max takes his cab to an empty stable not far away, in which he garages the vehicle. As he comes out, he suspects that Le Balafré will be lying in wait for him outside the door. Dropping to the floor, he cautiously peers out of the doorway with his head close to the sill, and sees the scarred man standing there with a sand-bag in his right hand and a pistol in his left.

XVIII

INCH by inch I thrust my pistol forward, the barrel raised sharply. I could not be sure of my aim, of course, nor had I time to judge it carefully. I fired. The bullet was meant for the right wrist of

Le Balafré, but it struck him in the fleshy part of his arm. Uttering a ferocious cry, he leaped back, dropped his pistol, and took the sand-bag in his left hand. Then, perceiving me as I sprang to my feet, he lashed at me fiercely with his noiseless weapon. I raised my left arm to guard my skull, and

* This story began in the January number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

sustained the full force of the blow upon my elbow.

I staggered back against the wall, and my own pistol was knocked from my grasp. My left arm was temporarily useless, but the man with the scar could not use his right arm. I had the advantage!

He hurled himself upon me. His onset was so fierce that he succeeded in grasping me by the throat with his left hand. Flat against the wall he held me, and he began, his teeth bared in that fearful grin, to crush the life from me.

To such an attack there was only one counter. I kicked him savagely, and the death-grip relaxed. I writhed, twisted—and was free! As I regained my freedom I struck up at him, and by great good fortune caught him upon the point of the jaw.

He staggered. I struck him over the heart, and he fell. I pounced upon him, exulting, for he had sought my life, and I knew no pity.

Yet I had not thought so strong a man would choke so easily. For some moments, when my hands had left his throat, I stood looking down at him, believing that he sought to trick me. But it was not so. His affair was finished!

I listened. The situation in which I found myself was full of difficulty. An owl screeched somewhere in the trees, but nothing else stirred. The sound of the shot had not attracted attention, apparently.

I stooped and examined the garments of the man who lay at my feet. He carried a travel coupon to Paris, bearing that day's date, and some other papers; but, although I searched all his pockets, I could find nothing of real interest until in an inside pocket of his coat I felt some hard, irregularly shaped object. I withdrew it, and in the moonlight it lay glittering in my palm—a *golden scorpion*!

The little emblem had apparently been broken in the struggle. The tail was missing, nor could I find it; but I must confess that I did not prolong the search.

Some chance effect produced by the moonlight shadows, and by the presence of that recently purchased ticket, gave me the idea upon which I immediately proceeded to act. Satisfying myself that there was no mark upon any of his garments by which the man could be identified, I unlocked from my wrist an identification disk which I habitually wore there, and locked it upon the wrist of the man with the scar.

Clearly, I argued, he had been detailed to despatch me and then to leave at once for France. I would make it appear that he had succeeded.

Behold me, ten minutes later, driving slowly along a part of the Thames Embankment which I chanced to remember, with a gruesome passenger riding behind me in the cab. As I kept a sharp lookout for a spot which I had noted one day during my travels, I was reflecting how easily one could commit murder in London, when a constable ran out and intercepted me.

Mon Dieu, how my heart leaped!

"I'll trouble you for your name and number, my lad," he said.

"What for?" I asked. Remembering an English idiom, I added: "What's the matter with you?"

"Your lamp's out!" he cried. "That's what's the matter with me!"

"Oh!" said I, climbing from my seat. "Very well, I'm sorry. I didn't know. Here is my license."

I handed him the little booklet and began to light my lamps, cursing myself for a poor artist because I had forgotten to do so.

"All right!" he replied, and handed the license back to me. "But how the devil you've managed to get *all* your lamps out I can't imagine!"

"This is my first job since dusk," I explained, hurrying around to the tail-light.

"And *he* don't say much!" remarked the constable.

I replaced my matches in my pocket and returned to the front of the cab, making a gesture as of one raising a glass to his lips, and jerking my thumb across my shoulder in the direction of my unseen fare.

"Oh, that's it!" said the constable, and moved off.

Never in my whole career have I been so glad to see the back of any man!

I drove on slowly. The point for which I was making was only some three hundred yards farther along, but I had noted that the constable had walked off in the opposite direction. Therefore, arriving at my destination—a vacant wharf open to the road—I pulled up and listened. Only the wash of the tide upon the piles of the wharf was audible.

I opened the door of the cab and dragged out Le Balafré. Right and left I peered, truly like a stage villain, and then hauled my unpleasant burden along the irregularly paved path and onto the little wharf. Out

in midstream a police patrol was passing, and I stood for a moment until the creak of the oars grew dim.

Then there was a dull splash far below—and silence again. Gaston Max had been consigned to a watery grave!

Returning again to the garage, I wondered very much who Le Balafré could have been. Was it possible that he was the Scorpion? I could not tell, but I had hopes of finding out very shortly.

I had settled up my affairs with my landlady, and had removed all papers and other effects from my apartments. In the garage I had placed a good suit of clothes and a few other necessities, and by telephone I had secured a room at a West End hotel.

The cab returned to the stable, I locked the door, and, by the light of one of the lamps, shaved off my beard and mustache. My uniform and cap I hung up on the hook where I usually left them after working hours, and changed into the suit which I had placed there in readiness. I next destroyed all evidences of identity and tidied up the place. I extinguished the lamp, went out, and locked the door behind me. Carrying a traveling-grip and a cane, I set off for my hotel.

Charles Malet had disappeared!

XIX

ON the corner opposite Dr. Stuart's residence stood a house which was "to be let or sold." From the estate-agent whose name appeared upon the sign-board I obtained the keys, and I had a duplicate made of the one that opened the front door. It was a simple matter, and the locksmith returned both keys to me within an hour. I informed the agent that the house would not suit me.

Nevertheless, having bolted the door, in order that prospective purchasers might not surprise me, I camped out in an upper room all day, watching from behind the screen of trees every one who came to the house of Dr. Stuart. Dusk found me still at my post, armed with a pair of good binoculars. Every patient who presented himself I scrutinized carefully.

Finding, as the darkness grew, that it became increasingly difficult to discern the features of visitors, I descended to the front garden, and resumed my watch from the lower branches of a tree which stood some twenty feet from the roadway. At intervals I crept from my post and surveyed the lane

upon which the window of the consulting-room opened, and also the path leading to the tradesmen's entrance, from which one might look across the lawn and in at the open study windows.

It was during one of these tours of inspection, and while I was actually peering through a gap in the hedge, that I heard the telephone-bell. Dr. Stuart was in his study, and I heard him speaking.

I gathered that his services were required immediately at some institution in the neighborhood. I saw him take his hat, stick, and bag from the sofa and go out of the room. Then I returned to the front garden of my vacant house.

For some time no one else appeared. A policeman walked slowly up the road and flashed his lantern in at the gate of the house that I had commandeered. His footsteps died away. Then, faintly, I heard the hum of a powerful motor. I held my breath. The approaching car turned into the road at a point above me to the right, came nearer, and stopped before Dr. Stuart's door.

I focused my binoculars upon the chauffeur. It was the brown-skinned man!

Nom d'un nom, a woman was descending from the car! She was enveloped in furs, and I could not see her face. She walked up the steps to the door and was admitted.

The chauffeur backed the car into the lane beside the house.

My heart beating rapidly with excitement, I crept out by the farther gate of the drive, crossed the road at a point fifty yards above the house, and, walking very quietly, came back to the tradesmen's entrance. Into its enveloping darkness I glided, and went on until I could peep across the lawn.

The elegant visitor, as I had hoped, had been shown, not into the ordinary waiting-room, but into the doctor's study. She was seated with her back to the window, talking to a gray-haired old lady—probably the doctor's housekeeper. Impatiently I waited for this old lady to depart. The moment that she did so, the visitor stood up, turned, and—it was Zâra el Khalâ.

It was only with difficulty that I restrained the cry of triumph which arose to my lips. On the instant that the study door closed, Zâra el Khalâ began to try a number of keys, which she took from her hand-bag, upon the drawers of the bureau.

"So!" I said. "They are uncertain of the drawer!"

Suddenly she desisted, looking nervously at the open windows; then, crossing the room, she drew the curtains. I crept out into the road again, and by the same roundabout route came back to the empty house. Feeling my way in the darkness of the shrubbery, I found a motor-bicycle which I had hidden there. I wheeled it down to the farther gate of the drive and waited.

I could see the doctor's door, and I saw him returning along the road. As he appeared, from somewhere—I could not determine from where—there came a strange, uncanny wailing sound, a sound that chilled me like an evil omen.

Even as it died away, and before Dr. Stuart had reached his door, I knew what it portended. Some one, hidden I knew not where, had warned Zâra el Khalâ that the doctor was returning. But stay—perhaps that some one was the dark-skinned chauffeur!

How I congratulated myself upon the precautions which I had taken to escape observation! Evidently the watcher had placed himself at a point where he could command a view of the front door and the road.

Five minutes later the girl came out, the old housekeeper accompanying her to the door, and the car emerged from the lane. Zâra el Khalâ entered it and was driven away. I could see no third person inside the vehicle, and no one was seated beside the chauffeur. I started my machine and leaped in pursuit.

As I had anticipated, the route was eastward, and I found myself traversing familiar ground. From the southwest to the east of London whirled the big car of mystery—and I was ever close behind it. Sometimes, in the crowded streets, I lost sight of my quarry for a time, but always I caught up again, and at last I found myself whirling along Commercial Road not fifty yards behind the car.

Just by the canal bridge a drunken sailor lurched out in front of my wheel. Only by twisting perilously right into a turning called, I believe, Salmon Lane, did I avoid running him down.

Sacré nom, how I cursed him! The lane was too narrow for me to turn, and I was compelled to dismount and to wheel my motor-bicycle back to the highroad. The yellow car had vanished, of course, but I took it for granted that it had followed the main road. At a dangerous speed,

pursued by execrations from the sailor and all his friends, I set off eastward once more, turning to the right down West India Dock Road.

Arriving at the dock, and seeing nothing ahead of me but desolation and ships' masts, I knew that that inebriated pig had spoiled everything. I could have sat down upon the dirty pavement and wept, so mortified was I! For if Zâra el Khalâ had secured the envelope, I had missed my only chance.

However, *pardieu!* I have said that despair is not permitted by the Service de Sûreté. I rode home to my hotel, deep in reflection. Whether the girl had the envelope or not, at least she had escaped detection by the doctor; therefore, if she had failed, she would try again. I might as well sleep in peace until the morrow.

Of the following day, which I spent as I had spent the preceding one, I have nothing to record. At about the same time in the evening the yellow car again rolled into view, and on this occasion I devoted all my attention to the dark-skinned chauffeur, upon whom I directed my glasses.

As the girl alighted and spoke to him for a moment, he raised the goggles that he habitually wore, and I saw his face. A theory which I had formed on the previous night proved to be correct. The chauffeur was the Hindu, Chunda Lal!

As Zâra el Khalâ walked up the steps, he backed the car into the narrow lane, and I watched him constantly. Yet, watch as closely as I might, I could not see where he concealed himself in order to command a view of the road.

On this occasion, as I knew, Dr. Stuart was at home. Nevertheless, the girl stayed for close upon half an hour, and I began to wonder if some new move had been planned.

Suddenly the door opened, and she came out. I crept away through the bushes to my bicycle, and wheeled it to the drive. I saw the car roll away; but fortune was in playful mood, and my own engine refused to start. Ten minutes later, when at last I aroused a spark of life in the torpid machine, I knew that pursuit would be futile.

Since this record is intended for the guidance of those who may take up the quest of the Scorpion, either in cooperation with myself or, in the event of my failure, alone, it would be profitless to record my disasters. Very well, I had one success.

One night I pursued the yellow car from Dr. Stuart's house to the end of Limehouse Causeway without once losing sight of it.

A string of trucks from the dock, drawn by a traction-engine, checked me at the corner for a time, although the yellow car passed; but I raced furiously on, and by great good luck overtook it near the Dock Station. From thence onward, pursuing a strangely tortuous route, I kept it in sight to Canning Town, where it turned into a public garage. I followed—to purchase petrol.

Chunda Lal was talking to the man in charge; he had not yet left his seat. But the car was empty!

At first I was stupid with astonishment. Then I saw that I had really made a great discovery. The street into which I had injudiciously followed Le Balafré lay between Limehouse Causeway and Rope-maker Street, and it was at no great distance from this point that I had lost sight of the yellow car. In that street—which, according to my friend the policeman, was "nearly all Chinese"—Zâra el Khalâ had descended. In that street was the Scorpion's lair!

XX

I COME now to the conclusion of this statement and to the strange occurrence which led to my proclaiming myself. The fear of imminent assassination, which first had prompted me to record what I knew of the Scorpion, had left me since I had ceased to be Charles Malet. I did not doubt that the disappearance of Le Balafré had been accepted by his unknown chief as evidence of his success in removing me. Therefore I breathed more freely—and more freely still when my body was recovered from the river!

Yes, my body was recovered from Hanover Hole. I read of it—a very short paragraph, but it is the short paragraphs that matter—in my morning paper. I knew then that I should very shortly be dead indeed—officially dead. I had counted on this happening before, you understand; for I more than ever suspected that the Scorpion knew me to be in England, and I feared that he would "lie low," as the English say.

However, since a fortunate thing happens better late than never, I saw in this paragraph two things—first, that the enemy would cease to count upon Gaston Max;

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second, that the Scotland Yard commissioner would be authorized to open the first part of this statement, which had been lodged at his office two days after I landed in England—the portion dealing with my inquiries in Paris, with my tracking of Le Balafré to Bow Road Station, and with my observing that he showed a golden scorpion to the chauffeur of the yellow car.

This would happen because Paris would wire that the identification disk found on the dead man was that of Gaston Max. Why would Paris do so? Because my reports had been discontinued since I had ceased to be Charles Malet, and Paris would be on the watch for evidence of my whereabouts. My reports had discontinued because I had learned that I had to do with a criminal organization of whose ramifications I knew practically nothing. Therefore I took no more chances. I died!

I return to the night when Inspector Dunbar, the grim Dunbar of Scotland Yard, came to Dr. Stuart's house. His appearance there puzzled me. I could not fail to recognize him, for as dusk had fully come I had descended from my top window and was posted among the bushes of the empty house, where I commanded a perfect view of the doctor's door. The night was unusually chilly—there had been some rain—and when I crept around to the lane bordering the lawn, hoping to see or hear something of what was taking place in the study, I found that the windows were closed and the blinds drawn.

Luck seemed to have turned against me. That night, at dusk, when I had gone to a local garage where I kept my motor-bicycle, I had found that the back tire was perfectly flat, and had been forced to contain my soul in patience while the man repaired a serious puncture. The result was, of course, that for more than half an hour I had not had Dr. Stuart's house under observation; and a hundred and one things can happen in half an hour.

Had Dr. Stuart sent for the inspector? If so, I feared that the envelope was missing, or at any rate that he had detected Zâra el Khalâ in the act of stealing it, and had determined to place the matter in the hands of the police. It was a maddening reflection!

Again, I shrewdly suspected that I was not the only watcher of Dr. Stuart's house. The frequency with which the big yellow car drew up at the door a few moments

after the doctor had gone out could not be due to accident. Yet I had been unable to detect the presence of any other watcher, nor had I any idea of the spot where the car remained hidden—if my theory was a correct one. Nevertheless, I did not expect to see it come along while the inspector remained at the house—always supposing that Zâra el Khalâ had not yet succeeded.

I wheeled out my machine and rode to a certain tobacconist's shop at which I had sometimes purchased cigarettes. He had a telephone in a room at the rear, which customers were allowed to use on payment of a fee. The shop was closed, but I rang the bell at the side door, and obtained permission to use the telephone upon pleading urgency.

I had assiduously cultivated a natural gift for mimicry, having found it of inestimable service in the practise of my profession. It served me now. I had worked in the past with Inspector Dunbar and his subordinate, Sergeant Sowerby, and I determined to trust to my memory of the latter's mode of speech.

I rang up Dr. Stuart and asked for the inspector, saying that Sergeant Sowerby spoke from Scotland Yard.

"Hello!" cried the inspector. "Is that you, Sowerby?"

"Yes," I replied in Sowerby's voice. "I thought I should find you there. About the body of Max—"

"Eh?" said Dunbar. "What's that—Max?"

I knew immediately that Paris had not yet wired, therefore I told him that Paris had done so, and that the disk numbered 49685 was that of Gaston Max. He was inexpressibly shocked, deploring the rashness of Max in working alone.

"Come to Scotland Yard," I said, anxious to get him away from the house.

He said he would be with me in a few minutes. I was racking my brains for some means of learning what business had taken him to Dr. Stuart, when he gave me the desired information spontaneously.

"Sowerby, listen," said he. "It's the Scorpion case right enough! That bit of gold found on the dead man is not a cactus stem; it's a scorpion's tail!"

So they had found what I had failed to find! It must have been attached, I concluded, to some inner part of Le Balafre's clothing. There had been no mention of Zâra el Khalâ; therefore, as I rode back to

my post, I permitted myself to assume that she would come again, since presumably she had thus far failed. I was right.

Morbleu! Quick as I was, the car was there before me! I had not overlooked this possibility. I dismounted at a good distance from the house, and left the motor-bicycle in some one's front garden. As I turned out of the main road, I saw Dr. Stuart and Inspector Dunbar approaching a rank upon which two or three cabs usually stood.

I watched Zâra el Khalâ enter the house, a beautiful woman most elegantly attired; and then, even before Chunda Lal had backed the car into the lane, I was off to the spot at which I had abandoned my bicycle. In little more than half an hour I had traversed London and was standing in the shadow of that high, blank wall to which I have referred as facing a row of wooden houses in a certain street adjoining Limehouse Causeway.

You perceive my plan? I was practically sure of the street. All I had to learn was which house sheltered the Scorpion.

I had already suspected that this was to be an unlucky night for me. *Nom d'un petit bonhomme*, it was so! Until an hour before dawn I crouched under that wall and saw no living thing except a very old Chinaman, who came out of one of the houses and walked slowly away. The other houses appeared to be empty. No vehicle of any kind passed that way all night.

Turning over in my mind the details of this most perplexing case, it became evident to me that the advantages of working alone were now outweighed by the disadvantages. The affair had reached a stage at which ordinary police methods should be put into operation. I had collected some of the threads; the next thing was for Scotland Yard to weave these together while I sought for more.

I determined to remain dead. It would afford me greater freedom of action. The disappearance of Le Balafre, which must by this time have been noted by his associates, might possibly lead to a suspicion that the dead man was *not* Gaston Max; but if no member of the group obtained access to the body, I failed to see how such a suspicion could be confirmed.

I reviewed my position.

The sealed letter had achieved its purpose in part. Although I had failed to

locate the house from which these people operated, I could draw a circle on the map within which I knew it to be; and I had learned that Zâra el Khalâ and the Hindu were in London. What it all meant—to what end the Scorpion was working—I did not know; but, having learned so much, I did not despair of learning more.

It was now imperative that I should get into touch with Dunbar, and that I should find out exactly what had occurred at Dr. Stuart's house. Accordingly I determined to call upon the inspector at Scotland Yard. I presented myself toward evening of the day following my vigil in Limehouse, sending up the card of a French confrère, for I did not intend to let it be generally known that I was alive.

Presently I was shown up to a bare and shining room, which I remembered having visited in the past. I stood just within the doorway, smiling. Inspector Dunbar rose, as the constable went out, and stood looking across at me.

I had counted on striking him dumb with astonishment. He was Scottishly unmoved.

"Well," he said, coming forward with outstretched hand, "I'm glad to see you. I knew you would have to come to us sooner or later!"

I felt that my eyes sparkled. There was no resentment within my heart. I rejoiced.

"Look," he continued, taking a slip of paper from his note-book. "This is a copy of a note I left with Dr. Stuart some time ago. Read it."

I did so, and this is what I read:

The name of the man who cut out the lid of the cardboard box and sealed it in an envelope—Gaston Max.

The name of the missing cabman—Gaston Max.

The name of the man who rang me up at Dr. Stuart's and told me that Gaston Max was dead—Gaston Max.

I returned the slip to Inspector Dunbar. I bowed.

"It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with you, inspector," I said.

This statement is nearly concluded. I spent the whole evening in the room of the assistant commissioner, discussing the matters herein set forth and comparing notes with Inspector Dunbar. One important thing I learned—that I had abandoned my nightly watches too early; for one morning, just before dawn, some one who was *not* Zâra el Khalâ had paid a visit to the house

of Dr. Stuart. I decided to call upon the doctor.

As it chanced, I was delayed, and did not arrive until so late an hour that I had almost decided not to present myself—when a big yellow car flashed past the taxicab in which I was driving!

Nom d'un nom, I could not mistake that yellow car! This was within a few hundred yards of the house of Dr. Stuart, you will understand.

I instantly dismissed my cabman and proceeded to advance cautiously on foot. I could no longer hear the engine of the car, which had passed ahead of me, but I knew that it could run almost noiselessly. As I crept along in that friendly shadow cast by a high hedge which had served me so well before, I saw the yellow car. It was standing on the opposite side of the road.

I reached the tradesmen's entrance.

Suddenly, from my left, in the direction of the back lawn of the house, there came a singular crackling noise, and I discerned a flash of blue flame resembling faint summer lightning. A series of muffled explosions followed.

Then, in the darkness, I tripped over something that lay along the ground at my feet—a length of cable, it seemed to be. Stumbling, I uttered a slight exclamation—and instantly received a blow on the head that knocked me flat upon the ground!

Everything was swimming around me, but I realized that some one—Chunda Lal, probably—had been hiding in the very passage which I had entered. I heard again that uncanny wailing, close beside me. Vaguely I discerned an incredible figure, like that of a tall, cowed monk, towering over me.

I struggled to retain consciousness. There was a rush of feet, and I heard the throb of a motor. It stimulated me, that sound! I must get to the telephone and cause the yellow car to be intercepted.

I staggered to my feet and groped my way along the hedge to a point where I had observed a tree by means of which one might climb over. I was as dizzy as a drunken man, but I half climbed and half fell over onto the lawn.

The windows were open, and I rushed into Dr. Stuart's study. Pah, it was full of fumes! I looked around me. *Mon Dieu*, I staggered; for I knew that in this fume-laden room a thing more strange and

horrible than anything within my experience had taken place that night.

XXI

THE assistant commissioner lighted a cigarette.

"It would appear, then," he said, "that while some minor difficulties have been smoothed away, we remain face to face with the major problem—who is the Scorpion, and to what end are his activities directed?"

Gaston Max shrugged his shoulders and smiled at Dr. Stuart.

"Let us see," he suggested, "what we really know about this Scorpion. Let us make a brief survey of our position in the matter. Let us take first what we have learned of him—if it is a 'him' with whom we have to deal—from the strange experiences of Dr. Stuart. Without attaching too much importance to that episode five years ago on the Wu-men Bridge in China, we should remember, I think, that for any man to be known—and feared, it would appear—as the Scorpion, is remarkable. Very well. Perhaps the one we seek is the man of the Wu-men Bridge; perhaps he is not. We will talk about this again presently.

"We come to the arrival on the scene of Zâra el Khalâ, also called Mlle. Dorian. She comes because of the story I told to the scarred man from Paris. She comes to get hold of that dangerous information which is to be sent to Scotland Yard. She comes, in a word, from the Scorpion.

"We have two links binding the unfortunate fellow with the scar to the Scorpion—first, his intimacy with Miguel and the others with whom the Scorpion communicated by telephone; second, his possession of the golden ornament which lies there upon the table, and which I took from his pocket.

"What can we gather from the statement made to Dr. Stuart by Mlle. Dorian? Let us study this point for a moment.

"In the first place, we can only accept her words with a certain skepticism. Her story may be nothing but a fabrication. However, it is interesting, because she claims to be the unwilling servant of a dreaded master. She lays stress upon the fact that she is an Oriental and does not enjoy the same freedom as a European woman. That is possible, up to a point. On the other hand, she seems to enjoy not only freedom but every luxury. Therefore

it may equally well be a lie. Some slight color is lent to her story by the extraordinary mode of life that she followed in Paris. In the midst of liberty and Bohemianism she remained as secluded as an odalisk in some garden of Stamboul, whether by her own will or by will of another we do not know. One little point her existence seems to emphasize—that we are dealing with Orientals; for Zâra el Khalâ is partly of Eastern blood, and her follower, Chunda Lal, is a Hindu. *Eh bien!*

"Consider the cowed man whose shadow Dr. Stuart has seen on two occasions—once behind the curtain of his window, and once cast by the moonlight across the lawn of his house. The man himself he has never seen. Now this hooded man cannot have been Le Balafré, for the scarred man was already dead at the time of his first appearance. He may be the Scorpion."

Max paused impressively, looking around at those in the commissioner's room.

"For a moment I return to the man of the Wu-men Bridge. The man of the Wu-men Bridge was veiled, and this one is hooded. The man of the Wu-men Bridge was known as the Scorpion, and this one also is associated with a scorpion. We will return yet again to this point in a moment.

"Is there anything else that we may learn from the experiences of Dr. Stuart? Yes! We learn that the Scorpion suddenly decides that Dr. Stuart is dangerous, either because of his special knowledge—which would be interesting—or because the Scorpion believes that he has become acquainted with the contents of the sealed envelope—which is not so interesting, although equally dangerous for Dr. Stuart. The Scorpion acts. He pays a second visit, again accompanied by Chunda Lal. The Hindu seems to be a kind of watch-dog, who not only guards the person of Zâra el Khalâ, but who also howls when danger threatens the cowed man.

"And what is the weapon which the cowed man, who may be the Scorpion, uses to remove Dr. Stuart? It is a frightful weapon, my friends; it is a novel and a deadly weapon. It is a weapon of which science knows little or nothing—a blue ray of the color produced by a mercury-vapor lamp, according to Dr. Stuart, who has seen it, and producing an odor like that of a blast-furnace, according to myself, who smelled it! It is also possible that this odor might have been caused by the fusing

of the telephone; for the blue ray seems to destroy such things as telephones as easily as it destroys wood and paper. There is even a large round hole burned through the clay at the back of the study grate and through the brick wall behind it! The Scorpion is a scientist, and he is also the greatest menace to the world that we have ever been called upon to deal with. You agree with me?"

Inspector Dunbar heaved a great sigh. Stuart silently accepted a cigarette from the assistant commissioner's box. The assistant commissioner spoke slowly and deliberately.

"I entirely agree with you, M. Max. Respecting this ray, as well as one or two other details, I have made a short note, which we will discuss when you have completed your admirably lucid survey of the case."

Gaston Max bowed and resumed.

"These are the things, then, that we learn from the terrible experiences of Dr. Stuart. Placing these experiences side by side with my own, in Paris and in London—which we have already discussed in detail—we find that we have to deal with some mysterious organization. Its object is unknown, but we have ascertained that it comprises among its members both Europeans—Le Balafré was a Frenchman, I believe—cross-breeds such as Miguel and Zâra el Khalâ"—Stuart winced—"one Algerian, and a Hindu. It is, then, an organization having ramifications throughout Europe, the East, and where not?"

Max took up from the commissioner's table the golden scorpion and the severed fragment of tail.

"This little image or emblem," he continued, "is now definitely recognized by Dr. Stuart, who is familiar with the work of Oriental goldsmiths, to be of Chinese craftsmanship."

"It may possibly be Tibetan," interrupted Stuart; "but it comes to the same thing."

"Very well!" continued Max. "It is Chinese. We hope very shortly to identify a house situated somewhere within this red-ink circle"—he placed his finger on a map of London which lay open on the table—"which I know to be used as a meeting-place by members of this mysterious group. That circle, my friends, surrounds what is known as Chinatown. For the third time I return to the man of the Wu-men Bridge; for the man of the Wu-men Bridge was ap-

parently a *Chinaman!* Do I make myself clear?"

"Remarkably so," declared the assistant commissioner, taking a fresh cigarette. "Pray continue, M. Max."

"I will do so. One of my most important investigations, in which I had the honor and pleasure to be associated with Inspector Dunbar, led to the discovery of a dangerous group controlled by a certain Mr. King—"

"Ah!" cried Dunbar, his tawny eyes sparkling with excitement. "I was waiting for that!"

"I knew you would be waiting for it, inspector. Your powers of deductive reasoning are earning my respect more and more. You recall that singular case? The elaborate network extending from London to Buenos Aires, from Peking to Petrograd? Ah, a wonderful system! It was an opium syndicate, you understand," Max added, turning again to the assistant commissioner.

"I recall the case," replied the commissioner, "although I did not hold my present appointment at the time. I believe there were unsatisfactory features?"

"There were," agreed Max. "We never solved the mystery of the identity of Mr. King, and although we succeeded in destroying the enterprise, I have since thought that we acted with undue precipitation."

"Yes," said Dunbar rapidly; "but there was that poor girl to be rescued, you will remember? We couldn't waste time."

"I agree entirely, inspector. Our hands were forced. Yet I repeat that I have since thought we acted with undue precipitation. I will tell you why. Do you recall the loss—not explained to this day—of the plans of the Haley torpedo?"

"Perfectly," replied the commissioner; and Dunbar also nodded affirmatively.

"Very well! A similar national loss was sustained about the same time by my own government. I am not at liberty to divulge its exact nature, and the loss never became known to the public. But the only member of the French chamber who had seen this document to which I refer was a certain M. Blank, shall we say? I believe also that I am correct in stating that the late Sir Brian Malpas was a member of the British cabinet at the time when the Haley plans were lost?"

"That is correct," said the assistant commissioner; "but surely the honor of the late Sir Brian was above suspicion?"

"Quite," agreed Max; "so also was that

of M. Blank. But my point is this—both M. Blank and the late Sir Brian were clients of the opium syndicate."

Dunbar nodded again eagerly.

"Hard work I had to hush it up," he said. "It would have finished his political career!"

The assistant commissioner looked politely puzzled.

"It was generally supposed that Sir Brian Malpas was addicted to drugs," he remarked. "I am not surprised to learn that he patronized this syndicate to which you refer; but—" He paused, smiling sardonically. "Ah!" he added. "I see! I see!"

"You perceive the drift of my argument?" cried Max. "You grasp what I mean when I say that we were too hasty? This syndicate existed for a more terrible purpose than the promulgating of a Chinese vice. It had in its clutches men entrusted with national secrets, men of undoubted ability, but slaves of a horrible drug. Under the influence of that drug, my friends, how many of those secrets may they not have divulged?"

His words were received in profound silence.

"What became of those stolen plans?" he continued, speaking now in a very low voice. "In the stress of recent years has the Haley torpedo made its appearance, so that we might learn to which government the plans were taken? No! The same mystery surrounds the fate of the information filched from the drugged brain of M. Blank. In a word—he raised a finger dramatically—"some one is hoarding up those instruments of destruction! Who is it that collects such things, and for what purpose does he collect them?"

There was another tense moment of silence.

"Let us have your own theory, M. Max," said the assistant commissioner.

Gaston Max shrugged his shoulders.

"It is not worthy of the name of a theory," he replied, "the surmise which I have made; but recently I found myself considering the fact that the Scorpion might just conceivably be a Chinaman. Now Mr. King, we believe, was a Chinaman, and Mr. King, as I am now convinced, operated not for a personal object, but for some deeper political purpose. He stole the brains of genius and accumulated that which he had stolen. The Scorpion de-

stroys genius. Is it not possible that these contrary operations may be part of a common plan?"

XXII

"You are not by any chance," suggested Stuart, smiling slightly, "hinting at that defunct bogey the 'yellow peril'?"

"Ah!" cried Max. "Certainly I am not! Do not misunderstand me. This group with which we are dealing is shown to be not of a national but of an international character. The same was the case with the organization of Mr. King; but a Chinaman directed the one, and I begin to suspect that a Chinaman directs the other. No, I speak of no ridiculous yellow peril, my friends. John Chinaman, as I have known him, is no menace to the world; but can you not imagine"—he dropped his voice again in that impressive way which was yet so truly Gallic—"can you not imagine an Oriental society which, like a great, a formidable serpent, might lie hidden somewhere below that deceptive jungle of the East? These are troubled times. It is a wise state to-day that knows its own leaders and understands whither they are leading it. Can you not imagine a dreadful, sudden menace, not of men and guns, but of brains and capital?"

"You mean," said Dunbar slowly, "that the Scorpion may be getting people out of the way who might interfere with this rising, or invasion, or whatever it is?"

"Just as Mr. King accumulated material for it," interjected the assistant commissioner. "It is a bold conception, M. Max. It raises the case out of the ordinary category and invests it with enormous international importance."

All were silent for a time. Stuart, Dunbar, and the commissioner watched the famous Frenchman as he sat there, arrayed in the latest fashion of Savile Row, yet Gallic to his finger-tips and in every gesture. It was almost impossible at times to credit the fact that a Parisian was speaking, for the English of Gaston Max was flawless, although he spoke with a slight American accent. Then, suddenly, a gesture, an expletive, would betray the Frenchman.

Such betrayals never escaped him when, in one of his inimitable disguises, he penetrated to the purlieus of Whitechapel, to the dens of Limehouse. Then he was the perfect Hooligan, as, mingling with the dan-

gerous thieves of Paris, he was the perfect apache. It was an innate gift of mimicry which had made him the greatest investigator of his day. He could have studied Chinese social life for six months, and could thereupon have become a mandarin whom his own servants would never have suspected to be a "foreign barbarian." It was pure genius, as opposed to the brilliant efficiency of Dunbar.

In the heart of the latter, as he studied Gaston Max and realized the gulf that separated them, there was nothing but generous admiration of a master. Yet Dunbar was no novice, for by a fine process of deductive reasoning he had come to the conclusion, as has already appeared, that Gaston Max had been masquerading as a cabman, and that the sealed letter left with Dr. Stuart had been left as a lure. By one of those tricks of fate which sometimes perfect the plans of men, but more often destroy them, the body of Le Balafré had been so disfigured while it was buffeted about in the Thames that it was utterly unrecognizable and indescribable; but even the disk had not deceived Dunbar. He had seen in it another ruse of his brilliant confrère, and his orders to the keeper of the mortuary to admit no one without a written permit had been dictated by the conviction that Max wished the body to be mistaken for his own.

Gaston Max, in turn, had immediately recognized an able colleague in Inspector Dunbar, even as Mrs. McGregor had recognized "a grand figure of a man."

The assistant commissioner broke the silence.

"There have been other cases," he said reflectively, "now that one considers the matter, which seem to point to the existence of such a group or society as you indicate, M. Max. There was one with which, if I remember rightly, Inspector"—he turned his dark eyes toward Dunbar—"Inspector Weymouth, late of this branch, was associated?"

"Quite right, sir. It was his big case, and it got him a fine billet as superintendent in Cairo, if you remember."

"Yes," mused the assistant commissioner. "He transferred to Egypt—a very good appointment, as you say. That, again, was before my term of office; but there were several very ghastly crimes connected with the case, and it was more or less definitely established, I believe, that

some extensive secret society did actually exist throughout the East, governed, I fancy, by a Chinaman."

"And from China," added Dunbar.

"Yes, yes—from China, as you say, inspector." He turned to Gaston Max. "Can it really be, M. Max, that we have to deal with an outcropping of some deep-seated evil which resides in the Far East? Are all these cases, not the work of individual criminals, but manifestations of a more sinister, a darker force?"

Gaston Max met his glance, and Max's mouth grew very grim.

"I honestly believe so," he answered. "I have believed it for nearly two years—ever since the grand duke died. And now I remember that you said you had made a note, the nature of which you would communicate."

"Yes," replied the assistant commissioner; "a small point, but one which may be worthy of attention. This ray, Dr. Stuart, which played such havoc in your study—do you know of anything approaching it in recent scientific devices?"

"Well," said Stuart, "it may be no more than a development of one of several systems, notably that of the late Henrik Ericksen, upon which he was at work at the time of his death."

"Exactly!" The assistant commissioner smiled in his most Mephistophelian manner. "Of the late Henrik Ericksen, as you say."

He said no more for a moment, but sat smoking and looking from face to face.

"That is the subject of my note, gentlemen," he added when he spoke again. "The other details are of no immediate importance."

"*Nom d'un petit bonhomme!*" whispered Gaston Max. "I see! You think that Ericksen had completed his experiments before he died, but that he never lived to give them to the world?"

The assistant commissioner waved one hand in the air, so that the discoloration of his first and second fingers was noticeable.

"It is for you to ascertain these points, M. Max," he said. "I only suggest; but I begin to share your belief that a series of daring and unusual assassinations has been taking place under the eyes of the police authorities of Europe. Poison must have been used—an unknown poison, perhaps. Within a few days we shall probably be empowered to exhume the body of the late

Sir Frank Narcombe. His case puzzles me hopelessly. What obstacle did a surgeon offer to this hypothetical Eastern movement? On the other hand, what can have been filched from him before his death? The death of an inventor, a statesman, a soldier, can be variously explained by your hypothesis, M. Max, but what of the death of a surgeon?"

Gaston Max shrugged, and his mobile mouth softened in a quaint smile.

"We have learned a little," he said, "and guessed a lot. Let us hope to guess more—and learn everything!"

"May I suggest," added Dunbar, "that we hear Sowerby's report, sir?"

"Certainly," agreed the assistant commissioner. "Call Sergeant Sowerby."

A moment later Sergeant Sowerby entered, his face very red and his hair bristling more persistently than usual.

"Anything to report, Sowerby?" asked Dunbar.

"Yes, inspector," replied Sowerby in his police-court manner. "With your permission, sir," he added, turning to face the assistant commissioner.

He took out a note-book, which appeared to be the twin of Dunbar's, and consulted it, assuming an expression of profound reflection.

"In the first place, sir," he began, never raising his eyes from the page, "I have traced the cab sold on the hire-purchase system to a certain Charles Mallet—"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Max breezily. "He calls me a hammer! It is not Mallet, Sergeant Sowerby—you have got too many 'l's' in that name. It is Malet, pronounced as if it came from the Malay States!"

"Oh!" commented Sowerby, glancing up. "Indeed! Very good, sir. The owner claims the balance of the purchase-money."

Every one laughed at that, even the satanic assistant commissioner.

"Pay your debts, M. Max," he said. "You will bring the Service de Sûreté into bad repute! Carry on, sergeant."

"This cab—" continued Sowerby, when Dunbar interrupted him.

"Cut out the part about the cab, Sowerby," he said. "We've found that out from M. Max. Have you anything to report about the yellow car?"

"Yes," replied Sowerby, unperturbed, and turning over to the next page. "It was hired from Messrs. Wickers' garage, at

Canning Town, by the week. The lady who hired it was a Miss Dorian, a French lady. She gave no reference, except that of the Savoy Hotel, where she was stopping. She paid a big deposit, and had her own chauffeur, a colored man of some kind."

"Is it still in use by her?" snapped Dunbar eagerly.

"No, inspector. She claimed her deposit this morning, and said she was leaving London."

"The check?" cried Dunbar.

"Was cashed half an hour later."

"At what bank?"

"London County and Birmingham, Canning Town. Her own account at a Strand bank was closed yesterday. The details all concern milliners, jewelers, hotels, and so forth. There's nothing there. I've been to the Savoy, of course."

"Yes!"

"A lady named Dorian has had rooms there for six weeks. She dined there on several occasions, but was more often away than in the hotel."

"Visitors?"

"Never had any."

"She used to dine alone, then?"

"Always."

"In the public dining-room?"

"No—in her own room."

"*Morbleu!*" muttered Max. "It is she, beyond doubt. I recognize her sociable habits!"

"Has she left now?" asked Dunbar.

"She left a week ago."

Sowerby closed his note-book and returned it to his pocket.

"Is that all you have to report, sergeant?" asked the assistant commissioner.

"That's all, sir."

"Very good!"

Sergeant Sowerby retired.

"Now, sir," said Dunbar, "I've got Inspector Kelly here. He looks after the Chinese quarter. Shall I call him?"

"Yes, inspector."

Presently there entered a burly Irishman, bluff and good-humored, a very typical example of the intelligent superior police officer, looking keenly around him.

"Ah, inspector!" the assistant commissioner greeted him. "We want your assistance in a little matter concerning the Chinese residential quarter. You know this district?"

"Certainly, sir. I know it very well."

"On this map"—the assistant commis-

sioner laid a discolored forefinger upon the map of London—"you will perceive that we have drawn a circle."

Inspector Kelly bent over the table.

"Yes, sir."

"Within that circle, which is no larger in circumference than a shilling, as you observe, lies a house used by a certain group of people. It has been suggested to me that these people may be Chinese, or associates of Chinese."

"Well, sir," said Inspector Kelly, smiling broadly, "considering the patch inside the circle, I think it more than likely. Seventy-five per cent, or it may be eighty per cent, of the rooms and cellars and attics in those three streets are occupied by Chinese."

"For your guidance, inspector, we believe these people to be a dangerous gang of international criminals. Do you know of any particular house, or houses, likely to be used as a meeting-place by such a gang?"

Inspector Kelly scratched his close-cropped head.

"A woman was murdered just there, sir, about a year ago," he said, taking up a pen from the table and touching a point near the corner of Three Colt Street. "We traced the man—a Chinese sailor—to a house just about here." Again he touched the map. "It's a sort of little junk-shop with a ramshackle house attached, all cellars and rabbit-hutches, as you might say, overhanging a disused channel which is filled at high tide. Opium is to be had there, and card-playing goes on, and I won't swear that you couldn't get liquor; but it's comparatively well conducted, as such dives go."

"Why is it not closed?" inquired the assistant commissioner, seizing an opportunity to air his departmental ignorance.

"Well, sir," replied Inspector Kelly, his eyes twinkling, "if we shut up all these places we should never know where to look for some of our regular customers. As I mentioned, we found the wanted Chinaman, three parts drunk, in one of the rooms there."

"It's a sort of lodging-house, then?"

"Exactly. There's a moderately big room just behind the shop, principally used by opium-smokers, and a whole nest of smaller rooms above and below. Mind you, sir, I don't say this is the place you're looking for, but it's the most likely inside your circle."

"Who is the proprietor?"

"A retired Chinese sailor called Ah Fang Fu, but better known as Pidgin. His establishment is called locally the Pidgin House."

"Ah!" The commissioner lighted a cigarette. "And you know of no other house which might be selected for such a purpose as I have mentioned?"

"I can't say I do, sir. I know about all the business affairs of that neighborhood, and none of the houses inside your circle have changed hands during the past twelve months. Between ourselves, sir, nearly all the property in the district belongs to Ah Fang Fu, and he knows anything that goes on in Chinatown."

"Ah, I see! Then in any event he is the man we want to watch?"

"Well, sir, you ought to keep an eye on his visitors, I should say."

"I am obliged to you, inspector," said the courteous assistant commissioner, "for your very exact information. If necessary, I shall communicate with you again. Good day!"

"Good day, sir," replied the inspector. "Good day, gentlemen."

He went out.

Gaston Max, who had diplomatically remained in the background throughout this interview, now spoke.

"*Pardieu*, but I have been thinking!" he said. "Although the Scorpion, as I hope, believes that that troublesome Charles Malet is dead, he may also wonder if Scotland Yard has secured from Dr. Stuart's fire any fragments of the information sealed in the envelope. What does it mean, this releasing the yellow car, closing the bank account, and departing from the Savoy?"

"It means flight!" cried Dunbar, jumping violently to his feet. "By gad, sir"—he turned to the assistant commissioner—"the birds may have flown already!"

The assistant commissioner leaned back in his chair.

"I have sufficient confidence in M. Max," he said, "to believe that, having taken the responsibility of permitting this dangerous group to learn that they were under surveillance, he has good reason to suppose that they have not slipped through our fingers."

Gaston Max bowed.

"It is true," he replied, and from his pocket he took a slip of flimsy paper.

"This code message reached me as I was about to leave my hotel. The quadroom, Miguel, left Paris last night and arrived in London this morning."

"He was followed?" cried Dunbar.

"But certainly. He was followed to Limehouse, and he was definitely seen to enter the establishment described to us by Inspector Kelly."

"Gad!" said Dunbar. "Then *some one* is still there!"

"Some one, as you say, is still there," replied Max; "but everything points to the imminent departure of this *some one*. Will you see to it, inspector, that not a rat—*pardieu*, not a little mouse—is allowed to slip out of our red circle to-day? For tonight we shall pay a friendly visit to the house of Ah Fang Fu, and I should wish all the company to be present."

XXIII

STUART returned to his house in a troubled frame of mind. He had refrained so long from betraying the circumstances of his last meeting with Mlle. Dorian to the police authorities that this meeting now constituted a sort of guilty secret, a link binding him to the beautiful accomplice of the Scorpion—to the dark-eyed servant of the uncanny cowed thing which had sought his life by strange means. He hugged the secret to his breast, and the pain of it afforded him a kind of savage joy.

In his study he found a post-office workman engaged in fitting a new telephone. As Stuart entered, the man turned.

"Good afternoon, sir," he said, taking up the destroyed instrument from the litter of wire, screws, pincers, and screw-drivers lying upon the table. "If it's not a rude question, how on earth did *this* happen?"

Stuart laughed uneasily.

"It got mixed up with an experiment I was conducting," he replied evasively.

The man inspected the headless trunk of the instrument.

"It seems to be fused, as if the top of it had been in a furnace," he continued. "Experiments of that sort are a bit dangerous outside a proper laboratory, I should think."

"They are," agreed Stuart. "But I have no facilities here, you see, and I was—er—compelled to attempt the experiment. I don't intend to repeat it."

"That's lucky," murmured the man, dropping the instrument into a carpetbag.

"If you do, it will cost you a tidy penny for telephones!"

Walking out toward the dispensary, Stuart met Mrs. McGregor.

"A post-office messenger brought this letter for you, Mr. Keppel, just the now," the old housekeeper said, handing Stuart a sealed envelope.

He took it from her hand and turned quickly away. He felt that he had changed color; for the envelope was addressed in the handwriting of Mlle. Dorian!

"Thank you, Mrs. McGregor," he said, and turned into the dining-room.

Mrs. McGregor proceeded about her household duties. As her footsteps receded, Stuart feverishly tore open the envelope. That elusive scent of jasmine crept to his nostrils. In the envelope was a sheet of thick note-paper, with the top cut off, evidently in order to remove a printed address; and upon this the following singular message was written:

Before I go away there is something I want to say to you. You do not trust me. It is not wonderful that you do not. But I swear that I only want to save you from a *great* danger. If you will promise not to tell the police anything of it, I will meet you at six o'clock by the book-stall at Victoria Station—on the Brighton side. If you agree, you will wear something white in your buttonhole. If not, you cannot find me there. Nobody ever sees me again.

There was no signature, but no signature was necessary.

Stuart laid the letter on the table and began to pace up and down the room. His heart was beating ridiculously. His self-contempt was profound; but he could not mistake his sentiments.

His duty was plain enough; but he had failed in it once, and, even as he strode up and down the room, already he knew that he must fail again. He knew that, rightly or wrongly, he was incapable of placing this note in the hands of the police, and he knew that he would be at Victoria Station at six o'clock!

He would never have believed himself capable of becoming accessory to a series of crimes—for that is what his conduct amounted to. He had thought that sentiment no longer held any meaning for him; yet the only excuse that he could find wherewith to solace himself was that this girl had endeavored to save him from assassination. Weighed against the undoubted fact that she was a member of a

dangerous criminal group, what was it worth?

If the supposition of Gaston Max was correct, the Scorpion had at least six cruel murders to his credit, in addition to the attempt upon Stuart's life and that of Le Balafre upon the life of M. Max. It was an accomplice of that nameless horror vaguely known as the Scorpion with whom, at six o'clock, he had a tryst, whom he was protecting from justice, by the suppression of whose messages to himself he was adding difficulties to the already difficult task of the authorities!

Up and down he paced restlessly, every now and again glancing at a clock upon the mantelpiece. He told himself that his behavior was contemptible. Yet, at a quarter to six, he went out—and, seeing a little cluster of daisies growing among the grass bordering the path, he plucked one and set it in his buttonhole.

A few minutes before the hour he entered the station and glanced sharply around at the many groups scattered about in the neighborhood of the book-stall. There was no sign of Mlle. Dorian. He walked around the booking-office without seeing her, and glanced into the waiting-room. Then, looking up at the station clock, he saw that the hour had come.

As he stood there, staring upward, he felt a timid touch upon his shoulder. He turned—and she was standing by his side!

She was Parisian from head to foot, simply but perfectly gowned. A veil hung from her hat, half concealing her face, but it could not hide her wonderful eyes or disguise the delightful curves of her red lips.

Stuart automatically raised his hat. Even as he did so, he wondered what he would have said and done had he suddenly found Gaston Max standing at his elbow! He laughed shortly.

"You are angry with me," said Mlle. Dorian. Stuart thought that her quaint accent was adorable. "Or are you angry with yourself for seeing me?"

"I am angry with myself," he replied, "for being so weak."

"Is it so weak," she said rather tremulously, "not to judge a woman by what she seems to be, and not to condemn her before you hear what she has to say? If that is weak, I am glad! I think it is how a man should be."

Her trembling voice and her appealing eyes completed the spell, and Stuart re-

signed himself without another struggle to this insane infatuation.

"We cannot very well talk here," he said. "Suppose we go into the hotel and have late tea, Mlle. Dorian?"

"Yes. Very well. But please do not call me that. It is not my name."

"Zâra el Khalâ, then," Stuart was on the point of saying, but he checked himself in the nick of time. He might hold communication with the enemy, but at least he would give away no information.

"I am called Miska," she added. "Will you please call me Miska?"

"Of course, if you wish," said Stuart.

Looking down at her as she walked by his side, he wondered what he would do when he had to stand up in court, look at Miska in the felon's dock, and speak words which would help to condemn her—perhaps to death, at least to penal servitude! He shuddered.

"Have I said something that displeases you?" she asked, resting a little white-gloved hand on his arm. "I am sorry!"

"No, no," he assured her. "But I was thinking—I cannot help thinking—"

"How wicked I am?" she whispered.

"How lovely you are," he said hotly, "and how maddening it is to remember that you are an accomplice of criminals!"

"Oh!" she said, and removed her hand, but not before he had felt how it trembled. They were about to enter the tea-room when she added: "Please don't say that until I have told you why I do what I do."

Obedying a sudden impulse, he took her hand and drew it close under his arm.

"No," he said, "I won't. I was a brute, Miska! Miska means 'musk,' does it not?"

"Yes." She glanced up at him timidly.

"Do you think it a pretty name?"

"Very!" he said, laughing.

Underlying the Western veneer was the fascinating naïveté of the Eastern woman. Miska also had all the suave grace which belongs to the women of the Orient, so that many admiring glances followed her charming figure as she crossed the room to a vacant table.

XXIV

"Now, what do you want to tell me?" said Stuart, when he had given an order to the waiter. "Whatever it may be, I am all anxiety to hear it. I promise that I will act upon anything you may tell me only in

the event of my life, or that of another, being palpably endangered by my silence."

"Very well. I want to tell you," replied Miska, "why I stay with Fo Hi."

"Who is Fo Hi?"

"I do not know!"

"What?" said Stuart. "I am afraid I don't understand you."

"If I speak in French, will you be able to follow what I say?"

"Certainly. Are you more at ease with French?"

"Yes," replied Miska, beginning to speak in the latter language. "My mother was French, you see, and although I can speak in English fairly well I cannot yet *think* in English. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Perfectly; so perhaps you will now explain to whom you refer when you speak of Fo Hi."

Miska glanced apprehensively around her, bending further forward over the table.

"Let me tell you from the beginning," she said in a low voice, "and then you will understand. It must not take me long. You see me as I am to-day because of a dreadful misfortune that befell me when I was fifteen years old. My father was vali of Aleppo, and my mother, his third wife, was a Frenchwoman, a member of a theatrical company which had come to Cairo, where he had first seen her. She must have loved him, for she gave up the world, embraced Islam, and entered his harem in the great house on the outskirts of Aleppo. Perhaps it was because he, too, was half French that they were mutually attracted. My father's mother was a Frenchwoman also, you understand."

"Until I was fifteen years of age I never left the harem, but my mother taught me French and also a little English; and she prevailed upon my father not to give me in marriage so early as is usual in the East. She taught me to understand the ways of European women, and we used to have Paris journals and many books sent to us regularly. Then an awful pestilence visited Aleppo. People were dying in the mosques and in the streets, and my father decided to send my mother and myself and some others of the harem to his brother's house in Damascus."

"Perhaps you will think that such things do not happen in these days, and particularly to members of the household of a chief magistrate, but I can only tell you what is

true. On the second night of our journey a band of Arabs swept down upon the caravan, overpowered the guards, killing them all, and carried off everything of value which we had. Me, also, they carried off—me and one other, a little Syrian girl, my cousin. Oh"—she shuddered violently—"even now I can sometimes hear my mother's shrieks, and how her cries suddenly ceased!"

Stuart looked up with a start, to find a Swiss waiter placing tea upon the table. He felt like rubbing his eyes. He had been dragged rudely back from the Syrian desert to the prosaic realities of a London hotel.

"Perhaps," continued Miska, "you will think that we were ill-treated, but it was not so. No one molested us. We had every comfort that desert life can provide—servants to wait upon us, and plenty of good food. After several weeks' journeying we came to a large city, having many minarets and domes glimmering in the moonlight; for we entered at night. Indeed, we always traveled at night. At the time I had no idea of the name of the city, but I learned afterward that it was Mecca."

"As we proceeded through the streets, the Syrian girl and I peeped out through the little windows of the *shibriyeh*—which is a kind of tent on the back of a camel—in which we traveled, hoping to see some familiar face, or some one to whom we could appeal. But there seemed to be scarcely any one visible in the streets, although lights shone out from many windows, and the few men whom we saw seemed to be anxious to avoid us. In fact, several ran down side turnings as the camels approached them."

"We stopped before the gate of a large house, which was presently opened, and the camels entered the courtyard. We descended, and I saw that a number of small apartments surrounded the courtyard, in the manner of a caravansary. Then, suddenly I saw something else, and I knew why we had been treated with such consideration on the journey. I knew into what hands I had fallen. I knew that I was in the house of a *slave-dealer*!"

"Good Heavens!" muttered Stuart. "This is almost incredible!"

"I knew you would doubt what I had to tell you," declared Miska plaintively; "but I solemnly swear that it is the truth. Yes, I was in the house of a slave-dealer; and

on the very next day, because I was proficient in languages, in music, and in dancing, and also because—according to their Eastern ideas—I was pretty, the dealer, Mohammed Abd el Bâli, offered me for sale."

She stopped, lowering her eyes and flushing hotly.

"In a small room, which I can never forget," she continued with hesitancy, "I was offered the only indignity which I had been called upon to suffer since my abduction. I was *exhibited* to prospective purchasers."

As she spoke the words, Miska's eyes flashed passionately and her hand, which lay on the table, trembled. Stuart silently reached across and rested his own upon it.

"There were all kinds of girls in the adjoining rooms," Miska continued; "black and brown and white, and some of them were singing and some dancing, while others wept. Four different visitors inspected me critically, two of them being agents for royal harems, and the other two—how shall I say it?—wealthy connoisseurs. But the price asked by Mohammed Abd el Bâli was beyond the purses of all except one of the agents. He had indeed settled the bargain, when the singing and dancing and shouting—every sound, it seemed—ceased about me, and into the little room, in which I crouched among perfumed cushions at the feet of the two men, walked Fo Hi."

"Of course, I did not know at the time that this was his name; I only knew that a tall Chinaman had entered the room, and that his face was entirely covered by a green veil."

Stuart started, but did not interrupt Miska's story.

"This veil gave him in some way a frightfully malign and repellent appearance. As he stood in the doorway, I seemed to feel his gaze passing over me like a flame, although, of course, I could not see his eyes. Much as his presence affected me, its effect upon the slave-dealer and my purchaser was extraordinary. They seemed to be stricken dumb. Suddenly the Chinaman spoke in perfect Arabic."

"Her price?" he said.

"Mohammed Abd el Bâli, standing trembling before him, replied:

"Miska is already sold, lord, but—"

"Her price?" repeated the Chinaman in the same hard, metallic voice and without the slightest change of intonation.

"The agent who had brought me now said, his voice shaking so that the words were barely audible:

"I give her up, Mohammed—I give her up. Who am I to dispute with the Mandarin Fo Hi?"

"Performing an abject obeisance, he backed out of the room. At the same moment Mohammed, whose knees were trembling so that they seemed no longer capable of supporting him, addressed the green-veiled Chinaman."

"Accept the maiden as an unworthy gift," he began.

"Her price?" repeated Fo Hi.

"Mohammed, whose teeth had begun to chatter, asked him twice as much as he had agreed to accept from the other. Fo Hi clapped his hands, and a fierce-eyed Hindu entered the room. Fo Hi addressed him in a language which I did not understand, although I have learned since that it was Hindustani; and the Indian, from a purse which he carried, counted out the amount demanded by the dealer and placed the money upon a little inlaid table which stood in the room. Fo Hi gave him some brief order, turned, and walked out of the room. I did not see my purchaser again for four years—that is to say, until my nineteenth birthday."

"I know that you are wondering about many things, and I will try to make some of them clear to you. You are wondering, no doubt, how such a trade as I have described is carried on in the East to-day, almost under the eyes of European governments. Now I shall surprise you. When I was taken from the house of the slave-dealer, in charge of Chunda Lal—that was the name of the Hindu—do you know where I was carried to? I will tell you—to *Cairo*!"

"Cairo!" cried Stuart; then, perceiving that he had attracted attention by speaking so loudly, he lowered his voice. "Do you mean to tell me that you were taken as a *slave* to Cairo?"

Miska smiled—and her smile was the taunting smile of the East, which is at once a caress and an invitation.

"You think, no doubt, that there are no slaves in Cairo," she said. "So do most people, and so did I—once. I learned better. There are palaces in Cairo, I assure you, in which there are many slaves. I myself lived in such a palace for four years, and I was not the only slave there. What

do British or French residents know of the inner domestic life of their Oriental neighbors? Are they ever admitted to the harem? And the slaves—are they ever allowed outside the walls of the palace? Sometimes, yes, but never alone.

"By slow stages, following the ancient caravan routes, and accompanied by an extensive retinue of servants in charge of Chunda Lal, we came to Cairo. Approaching the city from the northeast, and entering at night by the Bâb en Nasr, I was taken to the old palace which was to be my prison for four years. How I passed those four years has no bearing upon the matters which I have to tell you, but I lived the useless, luxurious life of an Arabian princess, my lightest wish anticipated and gratified. Nothing was denied me except freedom. Then, one day—it was actually my nineteenth birthday—Chunda Lal presented himself and told me that I was to have an interview with Fo Hi. Hearing those words, I nearly swooned, for a hundred times during the years of my strange, luxurious captivity I had awakened trembling in the night, thinking that the figure of the awful veiled Chinaman had entered the room.

"You must understand that having spent my childhood in a harem, the mode of life which I was compelled to follow in Cairo was not so insufferable as it must have been for a European woman. Neither was my captivity made unduly irksome. I often drove through the European quarters, always accompanied by Chunda Lal, and closely veiled, and I regularly went shopping in the bazaars—but never alone. The death of my mother, and later that of my father, of which Chunda Lal had told me, were griefs that time had dulled; but the horror of Fo Hi was one that lived with me day and night.

"To a wing of the palace which was kept closely locked, and which I had never seen opened, I was conducted by Chunda Lal. There, in a room of a kind with which I have since become painfully familiar, a room which was part library and part office, part museum and part laboratory, I found the veiled man seated at a great table littered with papers. As I stood trembling before him, he raised a long, yellow hand and waved to Chunda Lal to depart. When the Hindu obeyed, and I heard the door close, I could scarcely repress a shriek of terror.

"For what seemed an interminable time Fo Hi sat watching me. I dared not look at him, but again I *felt* his gaze passing over me like a flame. Then he began to speak in French, which he spoke without a trace of accent. He told me briefly that my life of idleness had ended, and that a new career of activity in many parts of the world was about to commence. His manner was quite unemotional, neither harsh nor kindly, and his metallic voice conveyed no more than the bare meaning of the words which he uttered. When he ceased speaking, he struck a gong that hung from a corner of the huge table, and Chunda Lal entered. Fo Hi addressed a brief order to him in Hindustani, and a few moments later a second Chinaman walked slowly into the room."

Miska paused, as if to collect her ideas, but continued almost immediately:

"He wore a plain yellow robe, and had a little black cap on his head. His face, his wonderful, evil face, I can never forget, and his eyes—I fear you will think I exaggerate, but his eyes were as green as emeralds! He fixed them upon me.

"This," said Fo Hi, "is Miska."

"The other Chinaman continued to regard me with those dreadful eyes.

"You have chosen well," he said, turned, and slowly went out again.

"I thank God that I have never seen him since, for his dreadful face haunted my dreams for long afterward; but I have heard of him, and I know that next to Fo Hi he is the most dangerous being in the known world. He has invented horrible things—poisons and instruments, which I cannot describe because I have never seen them; but I have seen some of their effects."

She paused, overcome with the horror of her memories.

"What is the name of this other man?" asked Stuart eagerly.

"Oh, do not ask me questions, please!" Miska pleaded. "I will tell you all I can, all I dare. What I do not tell you I cannot tell you—and this is one of the things I dare not tell. He is a Chinese scientist. I have heard that he is the greatest genius in the whole world, but I can say no more—yet."

"Is he still alive, this man?"

"I do not know that. If he is alive, he is in China, at some secret palace in the province of Honan which is the headquar-

ters of what is called the Sublime Order. I have never been there, but there are European men and women there, as well as Orientals."

"What? Europeans in the employ of these fiends?"

"It is useless to ask me. Indeed I would tell you if I could, but I cannot. Let me go on from the time when I saw Fo Hi in Cairo. He told me that I was a member of an organization dating back to remote antiquity, which was destined to rule all the races of mankind—the Celestial Age, he called their coming triumph. Something which they had lacked in order to achieve success had been supplied by the dreadful man who had entered the room and expressed his approval of me. For many years they had been secretly at work in Europe, as well as in the East. I understood that they had acquired a quantity of valuable information of some kind by means of a system of opium-houses situated in the principal capitals of the world and directed by Fo Hi and a number of Chinese assistants. Fo Hi had remained in China most of the time, but had paid occasional visits to Europe. The other man—the monster with the black skull-cap—had been responsible for the conduct of the European enterprises."

"Throughout this interview," interrupted Stuart, forgetful of the fact that Miska had warned him of the futility of asking questions, "and during others which you must have had with Fo Hi, did you never obtain a glimpse of his face?"

"Never! I do not think that any one has ever seen his face. I know that his eyes are of a brilliant and unnatural yellow color, but otherwise I should not know him if I saw him unveiled to-morrow—except," she added, "by a sense of loathing which his presence inspires in me. But I must hurry. If you interrupt me, I shall not have time.

"From that day in Cairo—oh, how can I tell you?—I began the life of an adventurer. I do not deny it. I came here to confess it to you. I went to New York, to London, to Paris, to Petrograd; I went all over the world. I had beautiful dresses, jewels, admiration—all that women live for; and in the midst of it all, mine was the life of the cloister; no nun could be more secluded. I see the question in your eyes—why did I do it? Why did I lure men into the clutches of Fo Hi? For this

is what I did; and when I failed I was punished."

Stuart shrank from her.

"You confess," he said hoarsely, "that you knowingly lured men to death?"

"Ah, no!" she whispered, looking about her fearfully. "Never, never! I swear it—never!"

"Then"—he stared at her blankly—"I do not understand you."

"I dare not make it clearer—now. I dare not—dare not! But *believe* me! Oh, please, please," she pleaded, her soft voice dropping to a whisper, "believe me! If you knew what I risked to tell you so much, you would be more merciful. A horror which cannot be described"—again she shuddered—"will fall upon me if *he* ever suspects. You think me young and full of life, with all the world before me. You do not know. I am, literally, *already dead*! Oh, I have followed a strange career. I have danced in a Paris theater, and I have sold flowers in Rome. I have had my box at the opera, and I have filled opium-pipes in a den in San Francisco; but never, never have I lured a man to his death. And through it all, from first to last, no man has so much as kissed the tips of my fingers.

"At a word, at a sign, I have been compelled to go from Monte Carlo to Buenos Aires; at another sign from there to Tokyo. Chunda Lal has guarded me as only the women of the East are guarded; yet, in his fierce way, he has always tried to befriend me, he has always been faithful. Ah, I shrink from him many times, in horror, because I know what he is; but I may not tell you. Look! Chunda Lal has never been out of sound of this whistle"—she drew a little silver whistle from her dress—"for a moment since that day when he came into the house of the slave-dealer in Mecca, except—"

Suddenly a wave of glorious color flooded her beautiful face, and swiftly she lowered her eyes, replacing the little whistle. Stuart's rebellious heart leaped madly, for whatever he might think of her almost incredible story, that sweet blush was no subterfuge, no product of acting.

"You almost drive me mad!" he said in a low voice. "You tell me so much, but you withhold so much that I am more bewildered than ever. I can understand your helplessness in an Eastern household, but why should you obey the behests of

this veiled monster in London, in New York, in Paris?"

She did not raise her eyes.

"I dare not tell you; but I dare not disobey him!"

"Who is he?"

"No one knows, because no one has ever seen his face. Ah, you are laughing, but I swear before Heaven I speak the truth! Indoors he wears a Chinese robe and a green veil. In passing from place to place, which he always does at night, he is attired in a kind of cowl which only exposes his eyes—"

"But how *can* such a fantastic being travel?"

"By road, on land, and in a steam-yacht, at sea. Why should you doubt my honesty?" She suddenly raised her glance to Stuart's face, and he saw that she had grown pale. "I have risked what I cannot tell you—risked it more than once—for you! I tried to call you on the telephone on the night when he set out from the house near Hampton Court to kill you, but I could get no reply, and—"

"Stop!" said Stuart, too much excited to note, at the time, that she had betrayed a secret. "It was *you* who rang up that night?"

"Yes. Why did you not answer?"

"Never mind! Your call saved my life. I shall not forget." He looked searchingly into her eyes. "But tell me what it all means! What or who is the Scorpion?"

(To be continued in the April number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

WILD GEESE

FLYING above us far on high,
Specks in the gray of the winter sky,
Floats down to earth their raucous cry.

Their leader—so is the legend told—
Is Judas, he who his Master sold
For thirty pieces of silvered gold.

Trailing behind him, his flock is seen—
The accursed souls of the vile and mean,
Who stoned and spat at the Nazarene!

Doomed to wander forever so,
Round and round the world they go;
No rest their weary wings may know.

But to us, who listen at night and hear,
Their harsh cry brings its message clear—
When the geese fly north, then spring is near!

Mazie V. Caruthers

She flinched.

"The Scorpion is a passport. See!"

From a little pocket in the coat of her costume she drew out a golden scorpion.

"I have one." She replaced it hurriedly.

"I dare not, dare not tell you more; but this much I had to tell you, because I shall never see you again!"

"What?"

"A French detective, a very clever man, learned a lot about the Scorpion, and he followed one of the members to England. This man killed him. Oh, I know I belong to a horrible organization!" she cried bitterly. "But I tell you I am helpless, and I have never aided in such a thing. You should know that! But all that the French detective found out he left with you—and I do not know if I succeeded in destroying it. I do not ask you. I do not care; but I leave England to-night. Good-by!"

She suddenly stood up. Stuart rose also. He was about to speak when Miska's expression changed. A look of terror crept over her face, and, hastily lowering her veil, she walked rapidly away from the table and out of the room.

Many curious glances followed the elegant figure to the door. Then those glances were directed upon Stuart.

Flushing with embarrassment, he settled the bill as quickly as possible, and hurried out of the hotel. Gaining the street, he looked eagerly right and left; but Miska had disappeared.



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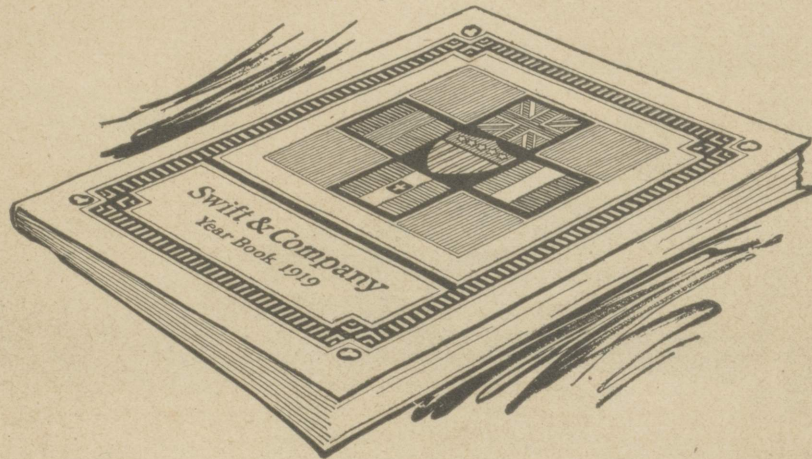
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No one step in advance, since the original invention, is of greater importance, perhaps, than that which has provided the multiplex system by which five telephone conversations are carried on today simultaneously over one toll line circuit or, by which forty telegraphic messages can be sent over the one pair of wires. As in a composite photograph the pictures are combined, so the several voice waves mingle on the circuit to be again separated for their various destinations.

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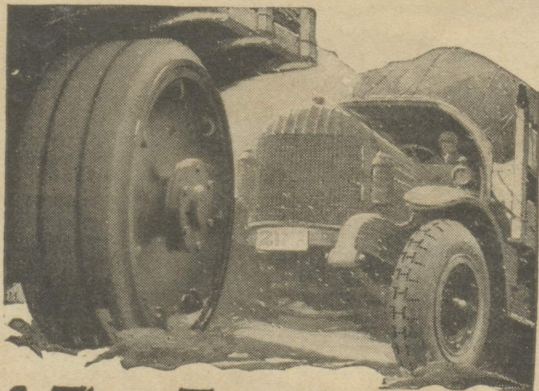
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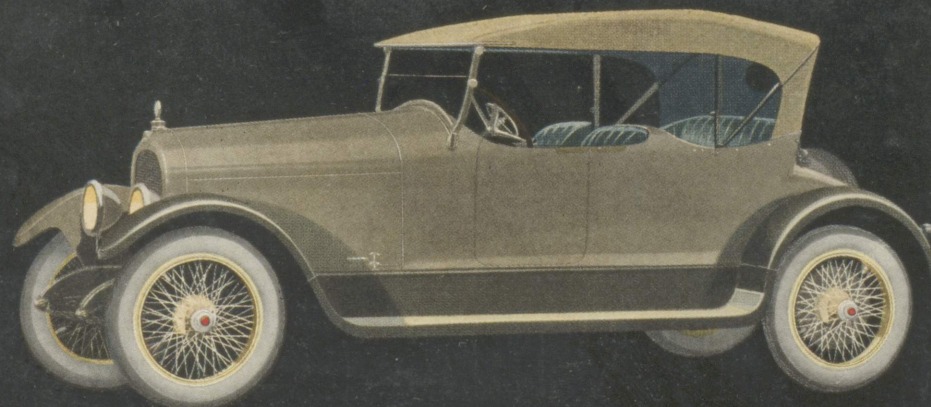
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Rauch & Lang Electric

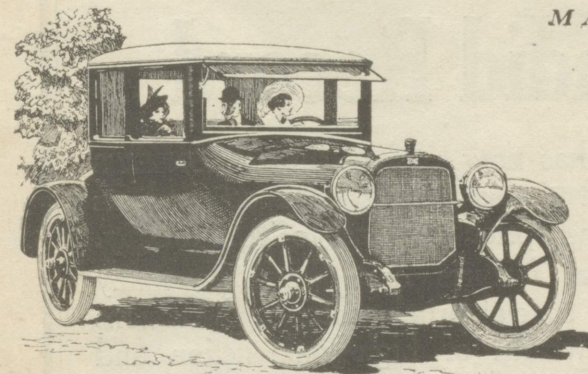
WHATEVER your ideas today, you are certain to come to the conclusion, sooner or later, that an enclosed automobile, like the Rauch & Lang Electric, combines all the desirable features and eliminates all the well-known annoyances and much of the expense incident to gasoline cars.

Today's Rauch & Lang Electric has more mileage, more speed, maximum economy. An illustrated catalog sent upon request.

The Baker R & L Company, Cleveland.
Builders of Custom Coach Bodies of Quality

CHANDLER SIX

FAMOUS FOR ITS
MARVELOUS MOTOR



The Handsome Chandler Coupe Now Only \$2395

The whole motor car market offers no more beautiful coupe than this four-passenger convertible Chandler, and no other on a really fine chassis at such a moderate price.

Most graceful in the lines of its design, handsomely finished, richly cushioned and upholstered, the Chandler Coupe appeals keenly to persons of discriminating tastes. Enclosed, it offers snug protection against the cold or rain or snow. On pleasant days, with the windows lowered away, it is open to the sunshine and soft air.

For those wishing larger seating capacity the Chandler seven-passenger four-door Sedan provides the same quality as the coupe.

Six Splendid Body Types Choose Your Chandler Now

Seven-Passenger Touring Car, \$1795 Four-Passenger Roadster, \$1795

Four-Passenger Dispatch Car, \$1875

Convertible Sedan, \$2495 Convertible Coupe, \$2395 Limousine, \$3095

All prices f. o. b. Cleveland

Dealers in all Principal Cities and Hundreds of Towns

CHANDLER MOTOR CAR COMPANY

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Export Department: 1790 Broadway, New York

Cable Address: "CHANMOTOR"

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

A Splendid Record

A year has now passed since MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE was greatly enlarged and its news-stand price doubled to 20c. a copy. Its special features have been its many pages of special articles, serious discussions and its wealth of high-grade fiction and profuse illustrations.

During this period the cash display advertising has shown big and steady gains, running as high as 70%, and showing for the year a total

27% Gain

This record beats that of all other magazines for the same period—war conditions being largely responsible for losses instead of gains in most cases.

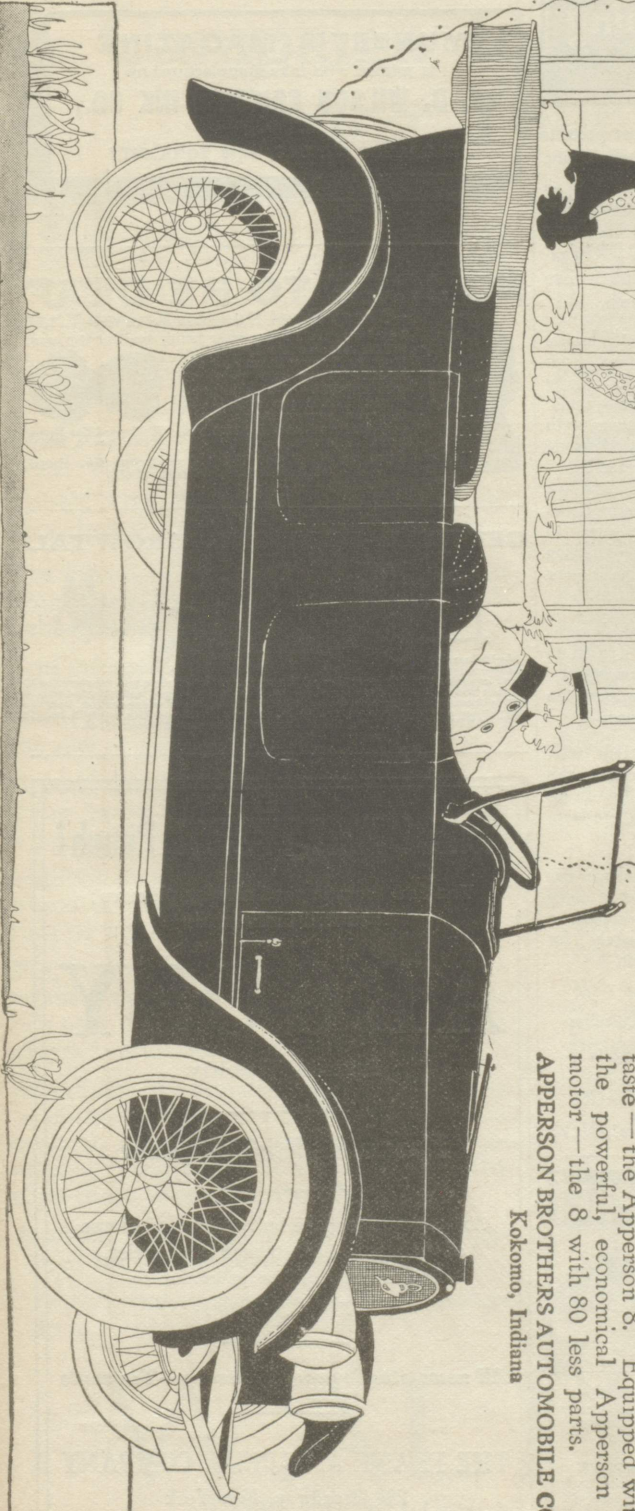
In space the gain amounted to an

Increase of 13,363 Lines

Among the advertisers were many new and old faces, and this increased volume indicates an increased appreciation for

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.



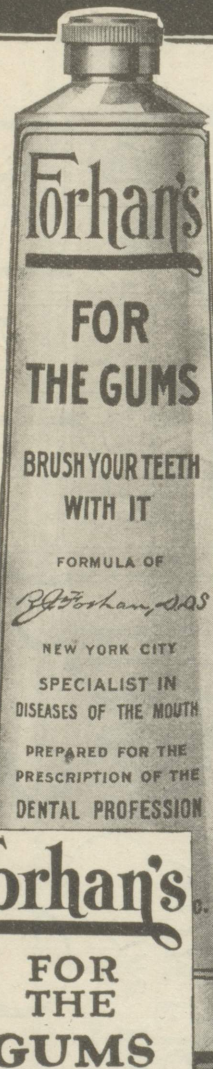
A P P E R S O N 8

The FIGHT
WITH EIGHTY
LESS PARTS

FOR the owner who considers his car something more than a mere conveyance, who demands that in color, line and appointments it reflect a patrician taste—the Apperson 8. Equipped with the powerful, economical Apperson 8 motor—the 8 with 80 less parts.

APPERSON BROTHERS AUTOMOBILE CO.
Kokomo, Indiana

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

Tender gums—a warning

COAST defense protects the life of a nation, gum defense the life of a tooth. On the gum line danger lies. If it shrinks through Pyorrhea (Riggs' Disease) decay strikes into the heart of the tooth.

Beware of gum tenderness that warns of Pyorrhea. Four out of five people over forty have Pyorrhea—many under forty also. Loosening teeth indicate Pyorrhea. Bleeding gums, too. Remember—these inflamed, bleeding gums act as so many doorways for disease germs to enter the system—infecting the joints or tonsils—or causing other ailments.

Forhan's positively prevents Pyorrhea, if used in time and used consistently. As it hardens the gums the teeth become firmer.

Brush your teeth with Forhan's. It cleans the teeth scientifically—keeps them white and free from tartar.

If gum shrinkage has already set in, start using Forhan's and consult a dentist immediately for special treatment.

30c and 60c tubes
All Druggists

FORHAN CO.
200 6th Ave., N. Y.

Ruptured People Can Get Relief

Our Akron Sponge Rubber Pad (patented) brings instant relief and produces thousands of cures. It is sanitary, extremely comfortable, cannot slip, allows free blood circulation, and continually massages and strengthens the muscles.

SCROTAL PAD NEEDS NO LEG STRAP
Our New Akron Sponge Rubber Scrotal Pad holds 8 out of 10 cases of scrotal hernia perfectly without strap between the legs.

FREE SAMPLE PAD AND CONSULTATION
A Sample Akron Sponge Rubber Pad will be sent absolutely FREE to every ruptured person. Advice and recommendation of our experienced fitting experts also FREE. Letters and printed matter mailed in plain envelopes.

ABSOLUTE \$500 MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE
Every Akron Truss sold under above guarantee. Your money back if wanted any time within 30 days. Ask your dealer or write us NOW for Sample Pad, copy of \$500 Money-Back Guarantee and booklet, "Relief to Truss Users," all absolutely FREE.

DETROIT FITTING PARLORS, 328 WOODWARD AVE.
THE AKRON TRUSS CO., 1343 TRUSS BLDG., AKRON, OHIO

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE
is printed with inks manufactured by
W. D. WILSON PRINTING INK CO., LTD.,
17 SPRUCE STREET, NEW YORK CITY

NO JOKE TO BE DEAF

—Every Deaf Person Knows That



I make myself hear, after being deaf for 25 years, with these Artificial Ear Drums. I wear them day and night. They are perfectly comfortable. No one sees them. Write me and I will tell you a true story, how I got deaf and how I make you hear. Address



GEO. P. WAY, Artificial Ear Drum Co. (Inc.)
31 Adelaide St., Detroit, Mich.

GET WELL—BE YOUNG—GROW TALL



This University discovery is the most important health invention of the century. It remakes and rejuvenates the Human Body. It produces normal spines. It frees impinged and irritated nerves, corrects contracted muscles, shortens ligaments, eliminates congestion, improves circulation and drainage of the body. It will increase the body's length.
THE PANDICATOR CO., 1515 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, O.

Action! Fun! Novelty! Punch!

You find them in good moving pictures;
you find them in the

ARGOSY

Issued Weekly

Pioneer all-fiction magazine

ARGOSY stories make bully films, and scores of them have been turned into movies.

Buy a copy of the magazine today and see why.

All news-stands every Thursday—Ten cents

THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY

280 Broadway, New York

A Campaign to Protect You in Buying Your Watch

RALPH WALDO EMERSON, speaking in one of his essays of a distinguished man, said: "He is put together like a Waltham Watch."

This remarkable tribute to Waltham greatness is the result of the genius of men whose inventive faculties have been concentrated for nearly three-quarters of a century to make it the wonderful time-keeping device it is.

The buying of a watch is an investment in time-keeping. And time is the most valuable possession of man.

You purchase a watch for one thing—to keep correct time for you—to tell it to you with dependability at any moment of the day or night.

A good watch, therefore, must have something more than good looks—it must have good "works."

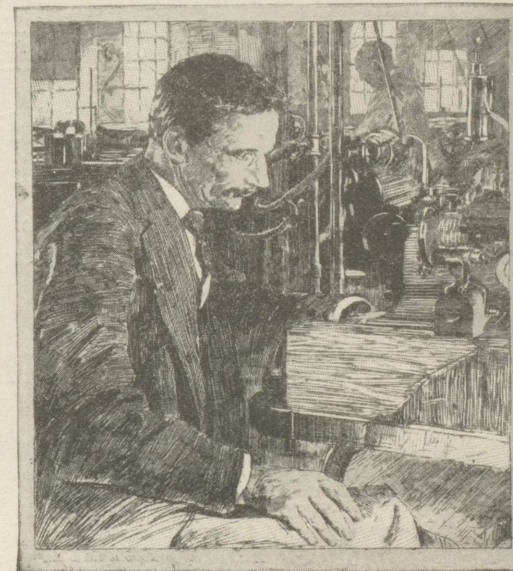
Millions of people imagine that the "best" watch is made abroad—or, at any rate, that its works are imported from there.

Yet, in competitive horological tests at the world's great Expositions, Waltham has not only defeated these watches of foreign origin, but all other watches as well.

In a series of advertisements we are going to show Americans that there is a watch built in the United States whose time-keeping mechanism is more trustworthy than those of foreign make,—

A watch that is easily and reasonably repaired because its parts are standardized,—

A watch that represents American leadership in mechanical skill,—



Duane H. Church, famous inventor who filed the great shops at Waltham, Massachusetts, with exclusive watch-making machinery that performs miracles of accurate and delicate work which the human hand could never equal.

A watch that has revolutionized the art of watch making and assured accurate and dependable time-keeping.

We are going to take you through the "works" of a Waltham—lay bare those hidden superiorities which have led the horological experts of the greatest nations to choose Waltham as the watch for the use of their government railroads.

When you have finished reading these advertisements, which will appear regularly in the leading magazines, you will walk up to your jeweler's counter and demand the watch you want—because you will know how it is built and why it is superior to the foreign watch.

WALTHAM

THE WORLD'S WATCH OVER TIME

All-Story Weekly

WINS GREAT HONORS

Edward J. O'Brien, leading American authority on Short Fiction, includes in

THE ROLL OF HONOR

The Best Short Stories of 1918

- "A SIMPLE ACT OF PIETY" . . . By Achmed Abdullah
 "ASHES OF ROSES" By George Gilbert
 "SIR GALAHAD" By Elizabeth Patterson
 "THE GALLOWSMITH" AND . . . By Irvin S. Cobb

ALL FOUR PUBLISHED IN THE

ALL-STORY WEEKLY

10 Cents a Copy

AT ALL NEWS-STANDS

The ALL-STORY WEEKLY during 1918 published fifteen serial stories which have been republished in book form by America's leading book publishers.

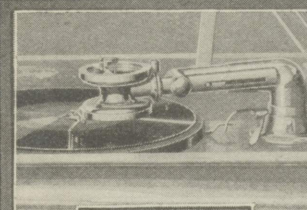
Readers of this magazine paid ten cents a copy, and read in advance these fifteen serial stories, and scores of other good serials, novelettes and short stories as well.

These fifteen books would have cost the subscribers \$20.45.

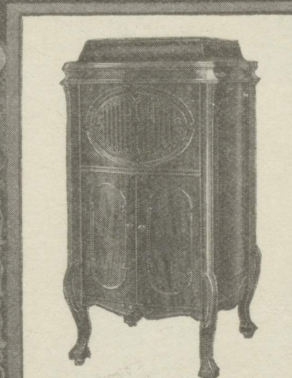
The Frank A. Munsey Company
 280 Broadway, New York

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

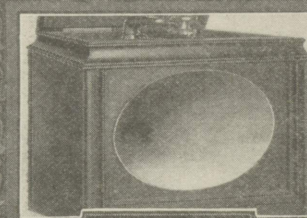
The BRUNSWICK Method of Reproduction



The Ultona



The Brunswick



The Amplifier

Two New Ideas Which Won Millions of Friends

WHEN the now famous Brunswick was announced, most people believed that the utmost had already been attained in the phonographic art.

Hence they expected, and rightly so, that The Brunswick would have to bring out overwhelming betterments in order to win a place among the leaders.

And this great expectation was realized. The Brunswick created a memorable sensation. It commanded instant respect and admiration.

The Pioneer

Of the major instruments, The Brunswick was the first to play *all* records with faithful regard for different requirements. This feature alone created thousands of admirers. For it meant that a Brunswick owner could buy and play *any* record, whatever make.

Since different makes offer different artists, and no one make offers them all, music lovers saw in The Brunswick the

opportunity to select their own library of records, without restriction.

The other outstanding Brunswick betterment was in tone production. By a more scientific amplification of tone waves, The Brunswick overcame many old time crudities and brought out lovely tones hitherto lost. Today the Brunswick Method of Reproduction is a recognized triumph. It means perfected reproduction to all who know it. And the news is spreading fast.

Two Famous Ideas

The Brunswick Method of Reproduction includes the Ultona, an all-record player. This master invention can be obtained on no other phonograph. The Ultona presents to each make of record, the proper needle and diaphragm. All at a turn of the hand. It is a unique reproducer, not an attachment nor makeshift.

The Brunswick Method also includes The Brunswick Amplifier, an all-wood sound chamber built with scientific regard for acoustic laws. No metal is used because it muffles sound vibrations.

Before you decide *which* phonograph for your home, hear The Brunswick. Compare its tone. Note the Ultona. A Brunswick Dealer will gladly assist you in making a tone test.

Branch Houses in
Principal Cities of
United States, Mexico
and Canada

The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co.
General Offices: CHICAGO and NEW YORK

Canadian Distributors,
Musical Merchandise
Sales Co.,
Excelsior Life Bldg.,
Toronto

In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.



YOU might try all sorts of things for softening the skin but it's **HINDS CREAM** that softens without making the skin greasy, oily or sticky; softens so it will not chap, even tho exposed to chilling winds; softens the hands roughened and soiled by arduous Red Cross and hospital work, household, store, and office duties.

HINDS CREAM keeps cheeks and neck fresh, fair and exquisitely soft.—Added charm awaits the woman who selects these daintily-packaged requisites made by Hinds: Facial Creams, Soap, Talcum and Face Powder.

SAMPLES: Be sure to enclose stamps with your request. Hinds Honey and Almond Cream 2c. Both Cold and Disappearing Cream 4c. Talcum 2c. Trial cake Soap 8c. Sample Face Powder 2c., Trial Size 15c. Attractive Week-end Box 50c.

Hinds Cream Toilet Necessities are selling everywhere, or will be mailed, postpaid in U. S. A., from Laboratory.

A. S. HINDS 272 West Street Portland, Maine



In answering this advertisement it is desirable that you mention MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

Columbia Grafonola

**They Won't Go Home
Until Morning!**

Why should they, when such dashing music sets the swift and joyous dancing pace? Go home? When you've found the perfect partner and the newest music, perfectly played! That's the best of this jolly, melodious Grafonola—an ever-ready source of laughter, fun and music that will make any party a success.

ANY Columbia Grafonola brings you the best of the newest dance music. And the Grafonola will sit up all night to give you music—and then play the sun up in the east, still fresh as a daisy, tireless, happy, full of dancing mirth and joy. The perfect music for the perfect partner!

Columbia Grafonolas—Standard Models up to \$300—Period Designs up to \$2100.

To make a good record great, play it on the Columbia Grafonola

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO., New York
London Office: 102 Clerkenwell Road, E. C.



