POOR DOCUMENT

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THE RIDDLE OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Being An Exploit in the Career of Hamilton Cleek, Detective. By MARY E. AND THOMAS W. HANSHEW

(Continued from yesterday) Continued from yesterday)

and nearer.

Gold! what if the men had seen! He glanced back quickly over his shoulder, and then redoubled his pace. For; of a sudden, with the speed of a lighting-finsh every flare in that valley had gone out — zip! — like that. Every voice had dropped to, stillness, and the night was a hideous thing of running footsteps, petting, he knew only too well, up the hillstde after them—those watchers who had seen the secret of the night, and tomorrow might give it forth to an unsuspecting world. Their lives wouldn't be worth much if time crew caught them, that was certain.

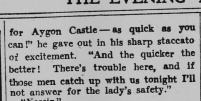
Panting, he reached her side, caught hold of her elbow, and pinning it close in his fingers hurried her forward, every faculty aleit, every nerve a-tremble. Her panting breath was like the breath of a spent runner; she wouldn't last far in those high heels, he knew, it is matter of time now. The hurrying matter of time now. The hurrying the spent of the part he played in the series she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought the whole structure about his care, and the night was only to the time had forgothen the part he played in the exigencies of this distressing situation. He heard her gasp suddenly, send startled eyes up into his face, and then sway against him, and realized his folly—too late. The shock of the time had seen able to save you from the times she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought the whole structure about his care, she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought the whole structure about his care, she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought the whole structure about his care, she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought the whole structure about his care, she could not see his face clearly, but the voice had been — different. He'd brought she doll his care. The part had been able to save you from the Cleek sucked in his breath and, half- and nearer.



against him.

"Fool!" he apostrophized himself.

"Blind fool!" and, stopping instantly, caught her up in his arms just as the lane hove in sight, and throwing her across his shoulder, took the added burden in his best athletic fashion, and demand its return: that you tell nothing of tonight to a living soul. Will



not answer for the lady's safety."

"Yessir,"
Then with a whizz and a whirr the car was off, rocketing down the lane and taking the corners upon two wheels so that Cleek had hardly a breath left in his body, and the rush of air that swept them as they sped away began to revive the unconscious form of Catherine Dowd who lay upon the seat beside him

ing of tonight to a living soul. Will you promise me that?"

He paused a moment and looked dewn at her with frowning brows. Then

"Large as life and twice as her as her with early side o' 'im, an' if yer can't git on the right side o' 'im, an' if yer can't git on the right side git on the wrong side, s' long as yer gits 'im out of 'is seat.' But a couple er bob to a Scotsman is as big as a legacy, sir, an' I puts 'im strite wiv a message from 'is missis. 'Snoop along an' send a wire ter town,' says I, "Comin' later in the day, wait fer me," an' address it ter the Commander-in-Chief of the Generil Post Office, Lunnon.' An' he looks at me an' swallows the gaff like as it were plumduff. I could 'er larfed, sir—strite I could! And I gives 'im the tip ter get a drink, and before I'd finished speakin,' 'e'd gorn!"

"Good lad! good lad!" Cleek's laugh was merry if low-pitched. The London address of the telegraph message tickled his sense of humour immensely. "And what did you do then?"

"Drove dahn the road a little just ter keep me 'and in, and then, when I 'eard you call out ter the lydy, and knew you wuz in danger, sir—why, I slipped in the clutch and come rocketing toward yer as farst as I could."

"Oho! And you were nearer than the lady had arranged, then?"

Dollops drew a long breath before replying; and his voice was solemn.

"That little distance of a quarter of a mile might 'ave done for yer entire—an' I weren't tykin' no risks," he replied heavily. "An' if anyfink was to 'appen to you sir—well, it's me fer the river 'fore you kin wink an eyelash. Dollops ain't a-stayin' ere wiv you on the uvver side of the sky, sir, an' don't you myke no mistake abaht that. Where you goes, I goes, too—if it's to 'eaven or 'ell. An' I'm think-in' I knows the w'y the ayngels'll tyke you."

"Well, they're not taking me yet,

"Well, they're not taking me yet, bear lad, so don't worry your ginger head about it!" returned Cleek, with a little gulp of emotion for so staunch an adherent as this wisp of Cockneydom who stood before him. "But it's friends like you and women like Miss Lorne that keep a man straight and strong and true, and don't let him turn down the wrong path instead of the right. Come, now, there's still more work to be done. Mr Narkom will be waiting, and I told him midnight under the big gate. Slip up the driveway and see if you can see how the coast lies"

lies"

Dollops disappeared forthwith, and it was but a moment or two later that he returned in company with the Superintendent looking a little round-eyed and scared until he saw Cleek standing in the shadow of the big gate, and go in the shadow of the hig gate, and going up to him flung an arm about his shoulders.

"You've frightened me into forty fits and out of 'em again," he cried with a little sigh of relief, "for I'd made up my mind that something had happened, and was on the way down here to see

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later on, when there's more time and less chance of being overheard. Now, then, step softly, you two. If there's any one there, we don't want to let 'em think an army's approaching. You gave Inspector Petrie the word if we needed him? That I'd ring Rliea's bell in case of immediate help required?"

"Of course. And that one toll would mean one man, and two tolls, three; and three tolls, as many as they could spare from the duty of guarding the house and letting no one go out or in."

"And they've already let almost every inmate of the place roam about at their leisure this night—to prove their trustworthiness!" threw in Cleek, with a short laugh, "A fine lot of disciplinarians up in this part of the world, I must say—though of course the country's difficult, and you want about fifty men up here to one in London. I'll have a word with the Inspector before I leave—with your permission, later on, when there's more time and fore I leave _ with your permission

"Certainly. "Certainly."

"We'll get along now, Dollops. You stand here under the gate, and keep watch toward the Castle; Mr. Narkom, you stand here, and guard the roadend, and make the usual signal of a night owl's hoot if you see any one approaching. I'll slip on my rubber sand-shoes to grip with, and shin up in a moment."

a moment."

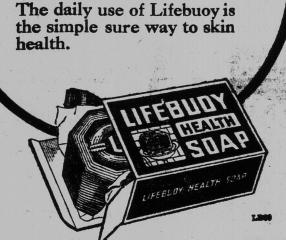
And suiting the action to the word, that was practically what he did do—though the climb up there in the darkness was certainly more than momentary. For with no light and very little moon it was a more difficult task than Cleek had anticipated, and he had to tread carefully to avoid slipping on the narrow shelves of stone and iron that girt it about.

Up, up, up he went, like some dark fly crawling across the face of the night, and to those watching below, their hearts in their mouths at sight of his perilous progress (which at times they could not follow for the pitchy darkness, and knew not if he were safe or

ness, and knew not if he were safe or not), those moments

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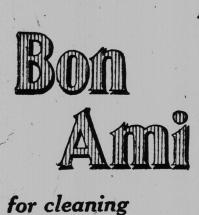
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