## \* DOUBLOONS

## BY EDEN PHILPOTTS AND



"Sixty-four pounds and sixpence, "Excue me, sixty-five pounds and

dxpence," said Philip. "My fault entirely, sir," said Oxrich. "I should have said sixty-five."
"Don't mention it," Philip smiled. What's your maximum stake on the

"Twenty quid," said Sir Anthony, taking notes from a breast pocket. announced. And Oxwich cut spades.

Philip responded.

said Philip, in a strange voice. The Baronet looked at Oxwich, who faded from the study, "What's up old chap?" Sir Anthony

"Nothing! Look here, I'll give you your revenge. I'll toss you double or

"Done! snapped the baronet, picking up a coin. "Sudden death!" "Tails," said Philip.

It was. Philip sat down. "I'm not quite well" said he

"You ought to be," said the baronet, parting with more notes. "The fact is-" Philip began, hesitated and proceeded: "You remember old sea captain." I put sixpence down, to start with?"

"You did." "It was my last in the world. I was starving when you picked me up this tering room, which was now chiefly morning. Now I'm worth an immense occupied by waiters. The little trio fortune-two hundred and fifty pounds! of two young, fair Anglo-Saxons, one I've never gambled before in my life, dandical, and the dark man who might and I shall never gamble again, Tony. have been any age, and of any nation-

"Well, I'm dashed!" breathed the baronet, softly.

CHAPTER IV.

An Old Sea Captain. They dined together that evening at Sir Anthony's usual table in the Louis his cigar case. Quatorze Restaurant on the first floor of the Devonshire mansion. It was the table between the second and third onyx pillars on the left as you enter by the grand entrance - not the entrance from the suite of the Half Moon Club. They had spent a curious but interesting day. It had rained most of the time. After Philip, in his laconic way, had finished reciting his Odyssey to the young baronet he had announced his intention of going out to get three suits of clothes; three suits and no more-a lounge suit, a trock coat with the latest in trouserings and waistcoats, and a dress suit. Philip meant to be economical, strictly so; but with two hundred and fifty ounds in his pocket he could not deny himself the satisfaction of replacing the dress suit which he had abandoned a few days before to a pawnbroker in Gray's Inn road. Sir Anto the weather, it was absurd to go

Mahomet. The mountain did come; in ing a Mont Blanc of a tailor, and a respectable Ben Nevis of a hosier. Nor was that the only miracle. By the intervention of Oxwich and the baronet Philip had his dress suit within eight hours! After lunch they had both, with one accord, fallen asleep, and slept for

Then there had been tea, cucumber an acquaintance of Sir Anthony's who had a flat in the mansion-Miss Kitty

Sartorius, the renowned star of the Regency Theater. It was Kitty's "day," and half the genius and all the golden youth of London were And then Philip had refused to dine

with Sir Anthony, but had consented to remain and dine in the restaurant if Sir Anthony would be his guest. Philip had explained that all the hospitality could not be on one side. Morover, had he not relieved Sir Anthony of five days' income, And lastly, though he meant to be strictly economical, he did not intend that the era of economy should set in with full the table. severity until the morrow. "Look here," said Tony suddenly,

go for a run in the car tomorrow if it's fine ' "No," answered Philip firmly. "To-

the corner reserved for me by Mr. Hil-

hadn't got three good suits of clothes, and money enough to keep me for a

"Then you abandon me to my fate?"

"Why, I haven't got a friend in the world, except you. I'm not in love. I'm not even in debt. I'm only bored." his coffee. "If Sir Anthony does not Sir Anthony sighed. "You don't fancy object." I'm happy, do you?"

"Not in love! You always used to consciously, "I've had a serious reverse trench episode.

in that-er-department. It's blighted my life, my boy. I shall never be the Philip had related everything he knew "No, I know you won't," Philip of conversation ensued.

emiled-"until the next time. Tell me about it. You've told me nothing Tony asked. "Hadn't he any?" really exciting yet about yourself." The tableau of the gay and irrespons-ible Tony ruined for eternity by a eless passion amused Philip.

I'll only tell you that I had a stall fen had relatives — a brother and a Coroner's Court, a nondescript room daughter. And the highly curious that might have been a creche, a soup-

"It's all very well for you to laugh-Oxwich, fifty-one times one pound five Ha! Mr. Varcoe! You here! Come and have coffee, will you?" Sir Anthony turned quickly to a little, dark, spectacled man, who was

passing the table. Mr. Varcoe stopped and bent the gaze of his spectacles on the baronet. "A charming idea!" said Mr. Var-"With pleasure. I'll be with you in an instant."

"And who is Mr. Varcoe?" Philip demanded, while the latter was away. "I'll go maximum on spades," Philip Kitty's this afternoon. Didn't you and full of a strange odor, a shabby, Well, if its all the same to you, I should think he must be one of the I'm not going to do anything next," cracks. Doesn't talk about enything

"I suppose that's why you invited "I'll tell you some other time," him to my dinner-party," Philip observed.

"Awfully sorry, old man; I was thinking for the moment it was my party.'

edition of the "Westminister Gazette," seemed to preoccupy him to such an sundry witnesses whose consciences invariably had rather more work than in the floor of the fourth ventric. The extent as to make him nervous. "Anything in the paper?" Philip in-

quired nonchalantly. Mr. Varcose stared hard at Philip, fixing him with those spectacles. "Yes," said he; "the murder of that

"What old sea captain?" Philip asked.

Mr. Varcoe glanced around the glit-On that you may stake your bottom ality, was isolated in a sea of empty white tables.

"Captain Pollexfen," said Mr. Varcoe in a low calm voice. He appeared to wait for the effect

of his words. They had no effect. "And who was Captain Pollexfen?" Sir Anthony idly demanded, opening "He was just a sea captain. That

is almost all that's known." "Where was he murdered? How was he murdered?" Back of his head smashed in."

"But where?" "It isn't ascertained."

"But I suppose they've found the corpse?" said the baronet as he set fire to an R. P. Muria.

"Yes," replied Mr. Varcoe, still in the same low voice. "It was found this morning buried next to a sewer in an open trench near Kingsway." "Philip's heart gave a jump, and the

h of his cigarette fell. "Nice sort of a cemetery," Tony commented before Philip could put a word in. "Any clue?"

"One. There was a scheme to get rid of the regular watchman at the trench, last night, and his place was taken by a young man," said Mr. Varthony had replied that, having regard coe, looking Philip steadily in the face. "The murder was committed out, and that the mountain, summoned; while the young man was in charge. by telephone, would certainly come to The young man behaved very strangely to a policeman who happened to fact, several mountains came, includ- come up just afterwards. He then tried to get to bed at a lodging house exactly opposite to where the corpse was buried, and though he didn't succeed he ingratiated himself with the manager of the lodging house. Old Pollexfen had been staying in the house. This morning, after the gang of laborers had recommended work on the trench the young man was found hovering near the spot, and he actusandwiches, trying-on, and a visit to ally suggested to the foreman that the soil had been disturbed. He then

> "Sort of fatal fascinataion that the corpse has for its murderer, eh?" said the baronet. "Perhaps," Mr. Varcoe admitted.

fled."

Philip half stood up, then sank back. "You're a dectective, Mr. Varcoe!" he blurted out. And Mr. Varcoe calmly said:

"I am." "A detective!" exclaimed Anthony,

"And I've been keeping an eye on you both ever since ten o'clock this morning," added Mr. Varcoe.

Philip, motioning Tony to be silent. during the timbale de macaroni, "we'll "You suspect me? Appearances are against me, is that it?"

"Appearances might have been gay. Tomorrow I begin to look for my captain and the name of Pollexfen. But you did not. Thus my previous notion "Suppose you don't find it? Not so that you are not immediately coneasy, you know. You've been trying nected with the murder is, to a certain extent, confirmed. Appearances, then, "Ah!" said Philip. "But then I are not against you. On the other hand, they are not for you. And though I do not wish you to go with year. That frock coat I've ordered me, I shall esteem it a favor if you will get me a situation pretty nearly will keep me informed of your address. At any rate, your evidence will i be valuable. I would like your ver-

"At once?"

'Why not?" said Mr. Varcoe, sipping

"Better come up to my rooms," Sir Anthony suggested. He was perplexed "The fact is," said the baronet, self- Philip had not mentioned to him the and unnerved by these revelations, for

And up there, in the "den," after to the detective, a rather strange piece

"What about Pollexfen's relatives?" Mr. Varcoe seemed to pierce into Tony's soul with a swift glance. "Do you know," said he, "I was ex-

pecting that question from you." "Why from me?" "Because you are Sir Anthony Did- the afternoon. In the wake of the po- "You searched the body?" asked the jury. "No; I won't talk about it. I can't ring, that's all. Yes, Captain Pollex- liceman Philip crossed the street to the coroner.

"No. Several days ago." CHAPTER V.

In a large chamber of irregular shape, the influence of wine, a chamber all they were without their helmets, doun-"Dashed if I know. Met him at whitewash and cement and concrete, inated the scene. see him? Seemed a very decent, agree-self-conscious crowd of some twenty body rose; and the coroner, the cele-base of the skull." been overlaid by its parents, through a quest on one of the overlaid children third the corpse of an old sea captain had begun.

his subpoena at the door, and he was sently at a chromograph of the Prince doctor, was the first of the witnesses Near him he noticed a negro. The room front of him. was pretty full. A constable was taking the names of the jury who, offiout of a box of bricks and subsequent- British public. Two policemen, who scribed by the last witness?" ly enlarged by a pavement artist under struck the eye unfamiliarly because

able, jolly sort of chap. Awful keen men and three women were wandering brated Mr. Acrefair, known by name Philip counted his winnings—a hunfired and twenty-six pounds six shillings, plus the original sixpence.

Image: Philip counted his winnings—a hunable, jolly sort of onap. Awith Rech
on swimming. Swims all through the
lumpishly about from peep-hole to
peep-hole, spying, crying, grinning,
was a thin, active man of forty-five or
solved at all costs to protect the jury

was a thin, active man of forty-five or
solved at all costs to protect the jury

was a thin, active man of forty-five or
solved at all costs to protect the jury

was a thin, active man of forty-five or
solved at all costs to protect the jury whispering, wedging. And a universal so, dressed like a stock broker, and he from mystification. He had a long gray instinct made them tread as softly as carried a brown bag. In a fraction of beard, and a kind of rivalry was es- of my capital to the concern. I haven't they could on the hard floor. Through time he had doffed his overcoat, ran-tablished. "Will the gentleman kindly had time yet to think of deterioration." one peep-hole was to be seen the corpse sacked his bag, and assumed his seat tell us what compression of the brain at the kneehole desk, which served as is?" by its parents, through a second the corpse of another young child that had Philip could realize the fact the in-

his name was Pollexfen and some one Mr. Acrefair did nothing but hold in that its functions are in any degree in and had been introduced to Philip, he had buried him in a sewer, with the quests, He passed his days in an at-terfered with." mentioned no word of swimming. He back of his head smashed in. This was mosphere of sudden, violent and myheld in his hand a copy of the special the mortuary of a central London dis-sterious death. He was impassionate,

told curtly to sit on a certain bench. of Wales which ornamented the wall in who wept. The respectability of the

side of the court opposite to the wit- a big white nose; his beard was in some undertaking, Mr. Hilgay?" he asked, with glass peep-holes in strange posinesses; at the back were a handful of sort an ideal that he had to live up to. after the preliminary questions. tions, a chamber that looked as if it persons who, being out of a job, were "You have made a post-mortem exahad been originally designed by a child representing the great and enlightened mination of the body of the man de-"Yesterday afternoon."

"What was the cause of death?" "Concussion and compression of the Then there was a movement; every- brain, caused by a violent blow at the

"In the pathological sense?" "In sense."

"Compression of the brain occurs whenever its structuse is so squeezed

"Thank you." said the foreman. "There were punctiform hemortrict. The audience whom the law had disillusioned, undeceivable, and his rhages," continued the doctor, taking and for a few seconds its contents invited to the spectacle consisted of methods were very rapid because he his revenge, "in the pores varolli and

Corner House had been shaken to its Then came a doctor, a portly and very basis by the murder. The coroner pompous man, in a blue melton over- eyed him sharply. clous and timid, sat in two rows on the coat. He had a long gray beard and "Your lodging house is a philanthropic the inside?"

"My boarding house-

"You need not trouble to correct my the kitchen?" phraseology," interrupted the coroner. "I said lodging house."

Mr. Hilgay flushed. "It pays its way." in the back house?" "What do you charge?" "Sixpence or a shilling a night." "And that pays? Rent? Interest on Strange street at right angles, and your "Compression of the brain?" asked capital? Managerial expenses? Deter- house is at the corner?"

> "There is no rent. I am the manager, accept no salary. I make a present ated?" "When you say it pays its way, then you mean that it pays for cleaning and service and that the meals are not served at an actual loss?"

"Yes." "You are new to philanthropy?" "We must all begin," said Mr. Hilgay. think your are alleviating the poverty

of London by your venture?" "Certainly." "Ah! What is your age, Mr. Hilgay?" "I do not see-" were more or less easy and a jury of he could do. In an hour and a quar- whole surface of the brain was intense-

"How old are you, sir?" "Twenty-six." "You have identified the body of the ledge at any time of the evening?" leceased?"

exfen, who took a room in my house ers." bout ten days ago." "The exact date?" "The tenth October, I am nearly of the window"-

"What was his Christian name?" "I do not know."

"Of what ship was the Captain?" "I do not know

"He had retired from service?" "I believe so."

'What were his habits?" "For a week past he had been unwell he was carried out?" and stayed in his room, except occasion-

ally for meals." "Did he strike you as being poor—in house. reduced circumsetances?" "I imagined him to be like most of my boarders-hard put to it, but re-

spectable" "He did not talk much?"

"He didn't talk at all."

"Never chatted with you?" "Never, except about the weather. He to the jury. would usually mention the precise The foreman of the jury, who was a direction of the wind"

"Very little" inces?"

ame to see him sometimes. "In his room?"

rom a voyage?" "When did you last see him?"

"He came into the house and went gan the Coroner. apstairs. His room was on the first "My name, Judge? Massa Coco,

"You said he had not been out for a

he evening after our dinner."

"How do you know that?" "I saw him come in each time." Where were you?" "In my office to the left of the hall.

The door of my office is of glass, and from my desk I can see everyone who comes in or goes out."

"About half an hour?"

"You saw him leave?" "Yes. I went into my office after din- fen tuck me away from dere. sah." er, about seven, and I was either in my office or the hall continuously till four o'clock the next morning-Wed-

nesday." "Did you receive any new lodgers

that day?" "No. The house was full." "And your old lodgers behaved as

msual? "Absolutely" "How many went out after Captain Pollexfen came in at eight o'clock?"

"None" "Now mind what you are saying, Mr. Hilgay. You told us that no one could leave your house without your know- ship sixteen years, Judge. Because I ledge and that you saw no one leave it after the Captain came in. Here he is in the house, presumably in his room, at eight o'clock at night, and yet in Carlisle Bay, Judge." early the next morning his body is

account for that?" "I cannot account for it" "Either he was murdered in your

house-' "Impossible, sir! Impossible!" That would make it that he died on tested Mr. Hilgay.

"Nothing is impossible, sir," said the coroner. "Either he was murdered in boat. sah." your house and his body carried out, or he left your house alive and was mur- you meet him again?" "With what kind of an instrument have crept past your office door unseen Barbadoes, Judge. 'Count of difficulty do you suppose the blow was deliver- by you?" "I think not."

"Where are the stairs?" "They begin just at my office door, and are in line with the hall."

"There are no other stairs in the "There are the back stairs," said Mr. "In September. And I run aft' him like de debbil, judge. He glad to see

is the household staff?" "Five boys and two female cooks." help him." "Where do the back stairs lead to?"

"To the back of the house. The kit-"Have you any questions?" the cor- chen. There is a back yard." "Any door to the back yard?"

Here the policeman, with an air of apology to the Coroner, lighted the mas,

in the new glare.

"So that anyone could open it from

"Could a person go down the back stairs and get out without going through

"Yes." "What time are the lights turned out

"About eleven o'clock."

"Yes.

"The window looks on the alley." "Who occupied the room next to it?"

"And on the other side?" "The other side is an outer wall of the house."

to the back stairs" "You agree now that it would after all have been possible for the Captain out of your house without your know-

"Yes; it is the body of Captain Pol- back stairs are not used by my board-"Doubtless," snapped the Coroner.

"He must have walked down the back stairs after the staff had re-

"But why should he do that?" "I cannot guess. There could be no

able respectability." "Then it appears most probable that "I cannot admit the possibility of

play having occurred in my "How many lodgers have you?"

respectable?" "I use my judgment."

The Coroner puts his lips together. 'Any questions?" he abruptly turned retired chemist, would have given a

The Coroner resumed the contemplation of the chromograph, and then an "Do you know if he had just come old negro, dressed in ample shining broadcloth, with a red necktie, was maneuvered by a policeman into the witness box. He was clearly in a high

"What is your name, my man?" be-

sah." "But your real name?"

"My name Massa Coco, sah; I've "That was the first day he had been been called Massa Coco ebber since I out. He had been out twice. Once in was cook at de Ice-House." He spoke the afternoon about five, and again in in a thin, whining, high-pitched voice -the voice of his race.

"Yes, sah. In Broad street. Bridgtown, Judge." "Bridgetown-Devonshire?" "No, sah. Bim, sah."

so respectable, Judge. Captain Pollex-"You knew Captain Pollexfen?"

"Oh, yes, sah. I was one of his bes" friends, sah. We was intimate, sah." "And he took you away from the Ice House?'

be cook on his ship-de Cobra, sah." "What line?" "No line, sah. Just a tramp, sah." "Was that long ago?"

"And you stayed with the Captain?" "Yes, sah. I stood by dat 'bominable

like de Captain." "And then you left the shin?" "De ship left us, Judge. Se sank

"Who were her owners?"

know, sah." "And what did you do after that?" "I jus' stopped in Bridgetown, sah,

"That was five years ago. When did

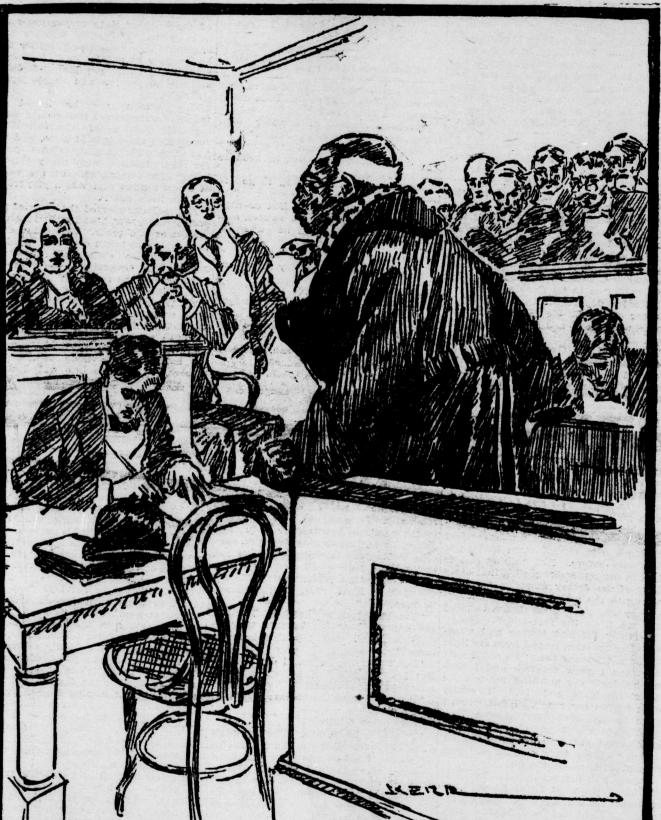
with colored prisoners. I shipped cook on anudder boat, sah, and I came to Southampton, Judge. And there I sees the Captain, sah, on de quay at Southampton."

"There are the back states, sale like de debbil, judge. He glad to see "It would have needed a fall of thir-Hilgay. "Used exclusively by the house-me. He bring me to London, sah. He "Ah! There are the back stairs. What says he going back to Bim, soon, and he takes me, because he want me to

"What with?" "A secret, Judge! Must I tell you. Judge?"

"Certainly." "Treasure, sah! Hidden treasure! Sunk treasure! He tell me and he tell nobody else, Ju e."

"So the captain was going to Bar-(Continued on Page 49



"What was her name?" "Giralda, sah."

A state of high tension existed at small tradesmen and employes wrench-ter he had dealt with the two infants ly congested. There was no external

gray beard that curved outward from listen to such philosophy as life had had then been dead about sixteen hours per lip; the hair was awry. The hands And then Mr. Acrefair, after having Tuesday at midnight." dead; he had the look of having drop-voice: ped off to sleep for a few moments in "The next case is somewhat remark- at most." his bunk. It seemed impossible that able, gentlemen, and will demand your those simple eyes had but recently special attention." glimpsed murder in the eyes of another, and that that existence had survived

thing is that they have both disap-kitchen, a workshop, a school—anything peared."

but temple of justice. He had to show

"You want me to go with you?" said divided between annoyance, self-im- examined altogether seventeen with the eperdermis over a circular area of about five square inches." ed from their work, whose feelings were and censured the parents of one child. lesion; merely a very slight abrasion of nesses, summed up twice to the jury, about five square inches." The three corpses, waste product of and given effect to two verdicts. His "Not five inches square?" asked the one day's history in a single quarter of celebrity, his ingenious economy of coroner.

against you, my dear sir," said Mr. London, dened the scene and the crowd time, his sain in some interest to rob them of their icy and majestic placid and yet remorseless determination to rob them of their icy and majestic placid and yet remorseless determination. London, defied the scene and the crowd time, his skill in getting evidence, his "No," answered Philip firmly. "To-night I sleep at my Corner House in Varcoe, "if you had displayed the least dignity. They reposed there in those tion to have the unexaggerated and uncompartments, with the indestructible minimized truth, his just estimate of proud calm, at once impressive and human nature; his habit of absolute buried?" pathetic that death alone can give authority—these qualities astounded and delighted Philip, who thought how peep-hole of Pollexfen, and Philip be- interesting it would be to catch that died?" held a typical sailor's face, an old man one night in a quiet corner of his "I began the necropsy at four o'clock wrinkled reddish face, with a reddish club and, through a haze of cigar smoke

> were gnarled and pale. It seemed im-signed some papers hurriedly, looked up "The blow might have been delivpossible that Captain Pollexfen was at the jury, and said in a new ton; of ered much earlier than that?"

He apparently knew all about it. the seas of half a century in order to end in a sewer and furnish copy for evening papers. It seemed horrible; it seemed uncanny, it seemed unreal. Philip shivered in his spirit as he thought of himself asleep in the watcher's cabin while, within a few yards of him guide ruthless hands had not have been the seemed uncanny. The first witness was the constable who had been called to assist at the ably a bag of wet sand."

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"The injury could not have been called to assist at the ably a bag of wet sand."

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"The injury could not have been called to assist at the ably a bag of wet sand." er's cabin while, within a few yards of him, quick, ruthless hands had packed the unresisting limbs of the old sailor close to a common drain pipe in a common open street.

"It would have needed a fall of thirhing ty or forty feet, and such a fall would hold staff."

"Ah! The close to it, and with the face towards it. He had afterwards superintended "Was the body well nourished?"

"It would have needed a fall of thirhing ty or forty feet, and such a fall would hold staff."

"Ah! The is the house it. He had afterwards superintended "Fairly well."

The policeman touched his shoulder, the removal to the mortuary. He had The mortuary had emptied; the private view was over; and the inquiry was to been summoned at 7:15 on Tuesday morning. Having stated these facts he begin. It was already half-past two in shut his little note book.

"What did you find?"

"Nothing whatever, sir."

"Was death instantaneous?" "It is impossible to say."

"Yes." "At what time do you estimate he

"Was the man dead before he was

"Not much earlier. Perhaps an hour

"What did it weigh?" "At a guess, perhaps eleven stone." oner demanded of the foreman of the

Prince of Wales.

The coroner wrote, and gazed ab- Mr. Adrain Hilgay, who followed the Girdler's Alley. It is bolted at night."

The coroner finished writing, and re- after having struck two matches sumed his stare at the portrait of the "Yes," Mr. Hilgay answered.

"After dinner-about 7 o'clock." "Bolted on the inside?"

"Yes."

"Little Girdler's Alley runs into

"Where was the Captain's room situ-

"A widow lady named Upottery." "She is here?" "She is ill in bed."

"Then the door of the room is neares "Just so," said the coroner. "You the head of the back stairs than to the head of the front stairs?" Mr, Hilgay mediated, "Yes, Neares

> to have gone, or to have been carried, "Ye-es," said Mr. Hilgay. "Only the

"Still as he didn't probably jump out

reason. He was a man of irreproach-

"About sixty." "You satisfy yourself that all are

"At meals did he join in the conver- guinea to have been able to think of a few shrewd questions to put to Mr. Hilgay. But he could evolve nothing. "And he had no friends, no acquaint- and Mr. Hilgay stepped down, wondering why a philanthropist should re-"There was a negro named Coco, who ceive the treatment of a suspected

"On Tuesday evening about eight state of nervous excitement, and the o'clock." It was at this point Mr. Hil- tears were already starting from his

"The Ice-House?"

"Bim?" "Barbados, sah. You see, sah. Ice-"How long did he remain the second House, big restaurant, sah. I was de head cook, sah. And de odder niggers dey call me Massa Coco because I was

"Yes, sah. He took Massa Coco to

"Long ago, Judge? I should say it was long ago. It was twenty years ago."

"Oh, me good sah, don't you ask me found in the sewer trench. How do you who her owners were, because I don't

> and sold mangoes, sah." "And the Captain?" "He left Bim, sah, in a Royal Mail

The sing-song voice fell a little as "When was that?"

The court smiled.