

denly he hesitated and did not inquire.

Wassaquam brought the mackinaw and cap which Alan had worn on Number 25; he took from the bed the new blankets which had been furnished by Sherrill. They waited until a farmer appeared driving a team hitched to a low, wide-runnered sled. The Indian settled Alan on the sled, and they drove off.

The farmer looked frequently at Alan with curious interest; the sun shone down, dazzling, and felt almost warm in the still air. Wassaquam, with regard for the frostbite from which Alan had been suffering, bundled up the blankets around him; but Alan put them down reassuringly. They traveled south along the shore, rounded into Little Traverse Bay,

and the houses of Harbor Point appeared among their pines. Alan could see plainly that these were snow-weighted and boarded up without sign of occupation; but he saw that the Sherrill house was open; smoke rose from the chimney, and the windows winked with the reflection of a red blaze within. He was so sure that this was their destination that he started to throw off the robes.

"Nobody there now," Wassaquam indicated the house. "At Petoskey."

The sled proceeded across the edge of the bay to the little city; even before leaving the bay ice, Alan saw Constance and her father; they were walking at the water front near to the railway station, and they came out on the ice as they recognized the occupants of the sled.

Alan felt himself alternately weak and roused to strength as he saw her. The sled halted and, as she approached, he stepped down. Their eyes encountered, and hers looked away; a sudden shyness, which sent his heart leaping, had come over her. He wanted to speak to her, to make some recognition to her of what she had done, but he did not dare to trust his voice; and she seemed to understand that. He turned to Sherrill instead. An engine and tender coupled to a single car stood at the railway station.

"We're going to Chicago?" he inquired of Sherrill.

"Not yet, Alan—to St. Ignace. Father Perron—the priest, you know—went to St. Ignace as soon as he recovered from his exposure. He sent

word to me that he wished to see me at my convenience; I told him that we would go to him as soon as you were able."

"He sent no other word than that?"

"Only that he had a very grave communication to make to us."

Alan did not ask more; at mention of Father Perron he had seemed to feel himself once more among the crashing, charging freight cars on the ferry and to see Benjamin Corvet, pinned amid the wreckage and speaking into the ear of the priest.

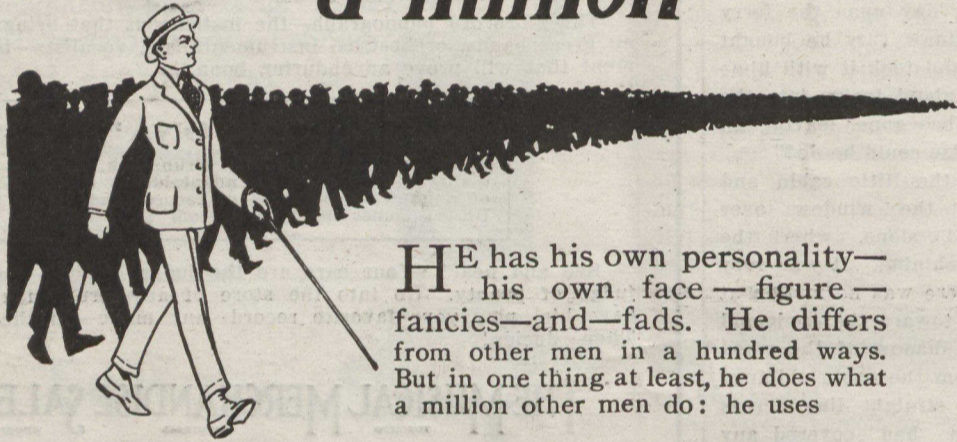
Father Perron, walking up and down the docks close to the railway station at St. Ignace, where the tracks end without bumper or blocking of any kind above the waters of the lake, was watching south directly across the Straits. It was mid-afternoon and the ice-crusher Ste. Marie, which had been expected at St. Ignace about this time, was still some four miles out. During the storm of the week before, the floes had jammed into that narrow neck between the great lakes of Michigan and Huron until, men said, the Straits were ice-filled to the bottom; but the Ste. Marie and the St. Ignace had plied steadily back and forth.

THROUGH a stretch where the ice-crusher now was the floes had changed position, or new ice was blocking the channel; for the Ste. Marie, having stopped, was backing; now her funnels shot forth fresh smoke, and she charged ahead. The priest clenched his hands as the steamer met the shock and her third propeller—the one beneath her bow—sucked the water out from under the floe and left it without support; she met the ice barrier, crashed some of it aside; she broke through, recoiled, halted, charged, climbed up the ice and broke through again. As she drew nearer now in her approach, the priest walked back toward the railway station.

It was not merely a confessional which Father Perron had taken from the lips of the dying man on Number 25; it was an accusation of crime against another man as well; and the confession and accusation both had been made, not only to gain forgiveness from God, but to right terrible wrongs. If the confession left some things unexplained, it did not lack confirmation; the priest had learned enough to be certain that it was no hallucination of madness. He had been charged definitely to repeat what had been told him to the persons he was now going to meet; so he watched expectantly as the Ste. Marie made its landing. A train of freight cars was upon the ferry, but a single passenger coach was among them, and the switching engine brought this off first. A tall, handsome man whom Father Perron thought must be the Mr. Sherrill with whom he had communicated appeared upon the car platform; the young man from Number 25 followed him, and the two helped down a young and beautiful girl.

(Concluded in next issue.)

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The Chess Column has unavoidably been crowded out of this number. It will appear in our next issue.