

with a green shade hung from the ceiling. Returning to the entrance, and closing the door, I joined my host, who was expressing his surprise in loud interjections.

"Well Mr. Steel, you have been marvellously right in your suspicions from the first, for I now see you suspected my uncle of having this hobby, from the questions you asked and the way you have gone to work over the matter. Hark! what's that?"

"The door opening," said I, at the same time drawing him into a recess.

Someone struck a match, ignited a lantern, and then proceeded towards us.

"It's Stephen," said my companion.

The old butler approached carrying the lantern in one hand and a tin in the other. Going up to the front of the cage he rattled the tin. Getting no response he commenced to call "Grippe." Still getting no response he threw the contents of the tin into the cage and proceeded to stoke the fire.

"Now Captain, you should demand an explanation."

My host advanced towards the old man, whose face bore the expression of absolute terror. "Good morning, Stephen," he said "this is a peculiar place to find you, and in this suspicious position. Only a truthful and clear statement will save you from being handed over to the police. I shall now ask Mr. Steel to question you, and I warn you to be careful of what you say, for upon your answers depends how I deal with you."

Starting, I questioned him as to what lived in the cage.

"A gorilla, sir," he answered.

"Where is it now?"

"I don't know sir."

"How is that?"

"Well, you see, sir, he tore down the back of his cage some time ago and made his escape, and he only returns here at times to sleep and to be fed."

"Did he escape before or after Hugh Campbell's body was found? Be careful how you answer."

"Before, sir."

"How long?"

"Three nights, I think."

"Have you seen the missing head of the deceased?"

"No, sir."

"Who owns the brute?"

"My late master did, sir."

"Were you or your late master able to enter the cage when the beast was in it?"

"No, sir."

"Have you the key of the lock?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I'll take it. Thank you."

"Now Captain I'm going to trace where this aperture at the back of the cage leads to. Will you accompany me?"

"Certainly."

"Don't attempt to, sir, if you value

your life," cried Stephen. "Grippe is sure to be somewhere about."

"All right, Stephen, I'll take care of him," said my host, and we both left the old man, and forced our way through the hole. Finding ourselves in a dark tunnel we wended our way along it by the aid of the light from Stephen's lantern. Examining all round us as we proceeded, we came to within fifty yards of the mouth of the cave when a very offensive smell reached us, to me it was acceptable, as my hopes of finding the missing head which had now got to a low ebb began to revive.

"Do you get that smell, Mr. Steel?" "Yes," I replied, "the origin of which I am down here to discover."

"What do you mean?" said my companion. "Did you expect this?"

"Most certainly; we have every cause to believe the gorilla killed the gillie, and what more likely place would it have hidden the head than where we are."

"By Jove, Mr. Steel, you do make things simple."

"Hold the light down here a moment, Captain." Getting down on my hands and knees, I stretched my arm into a recess from where the smell came strongest, and touched a clammy thing. Grasping it, and holding it up to the lantern I could not suppress exclaiming, "Eureka!"

"Well done," said my companion, "this clears up the whole mystery."

"Not yet, Captain, those hands you saw on fire still remains unsolved."

"Oh, don't bother about that," said he, "we won't be troubled with them again, I am sure."

"Oh, but I must, just for my own satisfaction. Will you please call the butler, who, I think, can throw light on the subject."

"Very well if you will come with me we will, but there he is. Stephen, Mr. Steel wishes to speak to you."

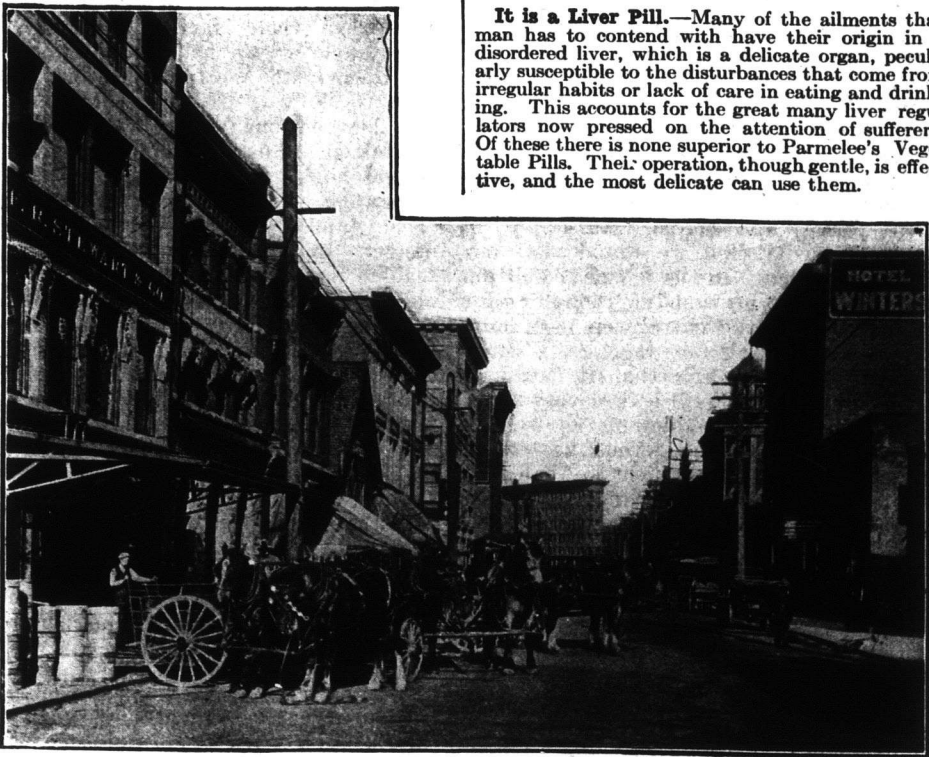
"Yes, Stephen, only a few words, I want you to tell your master as to the appearance of those hands he saw, and I would strongly advise you to make a clear breast of the whole business, or you may get into serious trouble."

"Well, Sir, I was afraid that the Captain as a new comer might not care to keep me on here, so taking advantage of the scare over the death of the gillie, I thought that I would make it be believed that there were supernatural influences at work, so that no changes would be made. To assist in this I arranged so that the shadow of my hands were seen by Captain MacWilliam."

"This is the truth sir, and I trust you will let me go."

"Now that the affair is cleared up," said I, "there is no good in making more gossip, so I would advise you, Captain, to let him go, though he really deserves punishment."

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