## BRITZ

p: OF HEADQUARTERS:

BY MARCIN BARBER

Supplied Exclusively in Canada by British & Colonial Press, Limite Toronto.

"It looks as if we were now getting to the bottom of the case" the society man commented. He turned, with a frank expression of gratification, to Britz. "I see now why further delay is necessary," he said. "Dr. Fitch appears to furnish the motive for the theft. I never have thought Miss Holcomb capable of it without outside prompting."

An affirmative nod from the detective signified his aquiescence in the other's words. "May Linform Mrs. Missioner of the

contents of the letters?" he asked. You may," agreed Mott. "I guess Sands won't be so anxious

the case," Griswold remarked. "Prudence will temper his sympathy." "This man, Sands," suddenly over led Mott, "seems to be an accepted hand extended in congratulation. litor of Mrs. Missioner, doesn't he?" A wave of red mounted to Gris

wold's forehead. An angry twitch of offered apologetically. the prosecutor had touched a tende: "He seems to divide his time be tween pursuing Mrs. Missioner and

dropping his inherited millions in Wall Street," Griswold replied. Street, and that his fortune is dwint. ling at a rapid rate." "Is that so?" came a meaning quer

from Britz. He exchanged significant glances with Mott. 'Do you happen to know anything of

his financial affairs?" asked the prosecutor. The question threw Griswald into a deep study, out of which he dered the fake Maharanee! came gradually by slow stages of men tal effort.

"I know he's been hard hit." drawled. "And I know also that he' trying to conceal his reduced circumstances from Mrs. Missioner. In fa t I believe he needs money with which to carry his stocks."

thrust, and of the vague insinuation his words carried, Griswold stopped to watch the effect. Britz stared va cantly at the ceiling, as if uncon scious of the hint conveyed by Grs wold. Mott seemed interested. "You don't think it possible le as

"I should regard such a supposition absurd." Griswold declared. "But," he added hastily, "I've had n experience with criminals.' With a sly look at the detective

is implicated in the theft?" he ask d.

"Mott, what do you know of Gris

wold?"

The prosecutor's eyes narrowed significantly on the detective. 'Nothing that could be of any ser vice to you in hunting down the Missioner diamond thief.'

"Perhaps not," the detective his private life it will save me the trouble of hunting it up. elsewhere. "You don't mean you're going to

pry into his private affairs?!' puffed the prosecutor. "Why, it's outrageous! He's no more connected with the crime than my grandfather. I tell you, you're making a horrible mess of this thing."

An anary wave swept Britz's face. but he controlled the impulse to fire a sharp retort. The momentary resentment he felt at having his ability assailed passed without an outburst, and he returned to the discussion of the case entirely unru ed.

"I am not directing my energies exclusively toward Griswold," Britz in- nificance instantly. formed. "I am probing the entire mystery, trying to drag from the tangle of contradictory circumstances something that will point unerringly

hand: therefore, it is essential that I overlook nothing, no matter how remote its bearing on the theft of the fewels."

"I appreciate the care and patience which you are working," Mott said in a more moderate tone "and I'll not hamper you in your work." "Was Griswold born in this city?" suddenly flashed the detective.

"No. he's from somewhere in the the prosecutor replied. least, he told me so in college."

"How long has he been in busin "About ten or fifteen vears I

should say."

"And you have known him intimately all that time? "Not intimately. We met occasionally and, of course, our attitude toward each other has been that of old

college friends." "He's been engaged in various enterprises since leaving college, hasn't Most of the ventures proved

"You seem to know something of his business affairs," Mott fired back. 'At present he's secretary of the Iroquois Trust Company," Brits continued, disregarding the prosecutor's remark. "Do you know what salary

"He gets \$10,000 a year." the at torney informed him. 'So I understood," said Britz.

"Well, what of it?" asked Mott. "Anything significant in that?" No, only his fortune would be Mrs. Missioner."

"And you believe the theft of her

With characteristic abruptness, he noble purpose that was a new and

"By the way," he suddenly asked, "have you obtained any trace of th truth as to who manufactured the "I have found the manufacturer."

Britz replied calmly, "What!" The prosecutor bounded spring. "And you've withheld the information from me?" "The manufacturer of the stone is

useless as a witness. He's hopelessly insane. "Has he thrown no light on the

"Yes, some light." Britz admitted reluctantly. He was not prepared t disclose his hand yet. In fact, h realized an abundance of work still was necessary before the result of the intrview in the insane asylum could be shaped into tangible evi dence against the man who had or dered the duplicate diamond. "Doesn't he recall who ordered the

duplicate?" the prosecutor asked. 'No," the detective replied. "He in the last stage of dementia. But to go on Miss Holcomb's bond after we searched his effects and found a he learns the latest developments in sketch of the Maharanee drawn on the back of a visiting card." Triumphant beams shot from Mott's

eyes. He faced the detective one "I take back everything I said abou your having botched the case," he "Whateve" the corners of his mouth revealed that the outcome, you certainly are close to the heart of the mystery. was it a man or a woman who or dered the stone?"

The detective's hand slipped int the inner pocket of his coat. It pro duced a long envelope from which h understand he's been hard hit in the took the card passing it over to the prosecutor. Mott looked at the nan engraved on the pasteboard will widening eyes. His lips extended u til the mouth seemed a thin, shap less slit. Suddenly his jaw openand snapped, as if he had come to quick determination

"Sands!" he exclaimed. "So he of George, I now see the importance Griswold's information with regard his financial affairs. Sands is hit har in the market," he continued slow as if viewing the case from a new angle. "He's hard up. Needs cash t cover his margins! Has a dupli a necklace made! Of course, if he had Conscious of the shaft he had the Maharanee counterfeited, he also had the rest of the paste gem manufactured." Mott was talking half to himself, but his words kindl a pleasant light in the detective eyes. "Sands has the motive for the crime, and he has the opportunity t commit it." The prosecutor's hand closed about Britz's palm. "I congratulate you," he finished. "Not yet," the detective

back. "I've only hit the trail. may lead into strange lanes." He said nothing of the kidnapping Griswold arose and left the room. in Central Park nor of the inferences As the door swung behind him Britz he drew from the discovery of the card with the drawing on the back. Mott, however, kept his mind fixed on the important evidence.

"Sands is hard up for money; that's certain-"Not altogether," interrupted the

detective. "Have you seen the afternoon paners?" "No," the prosecutor replied. From the pecket of his coat Britz

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mond robbery?" Mott inquired. "The Committee for the Prevendetective read, "'acknowledges re- perially uncertain heart. ceipt of the following amounts from the following donors." 'He pointed halfway down the column, and emphasising each syllable, he said:

"'Bruxton Sands-\$200,000.'" It was the second largest individu-"He certainly didn't steal the neck-

he certainly couldn't have afforded toward the real thief. I believe that that big check if he needed money the raveling of the case is close a for stock speculation." He turned sharply to Brits. "What do you make of it?" he snapped.

> "It is one of the guide-posts to the diamond theft." Britz pronounced. The look of inquiry which the pro-

> into Manning's presence. "Griswold was down here to see Mott to postpone it for a month?" "That is true," the detective res-

> ponded. "Why?" demanded Manning. "Because I'm reaching out for the "Well, who's the thief?" the Chief

inquired tersely. Britz averted his face to conceal the unwonted agitation that had sudden- He hoped it would reach her while ly sprung up within him. A new light gleamed in his eyes—a light not called up by the excitement of the lover, and that would send a favorable chase. The mere tracking of criminals was part of the routine of his life; he followed the course of his trails unemotionally, like a well-oiled to his desk; habit made him call his machine. But the contemplation of saving a human soul in distress, the consciousness of exercising talents in behalf of a woman who had touched his utmost pity, the knowledge that he alone stood between her and the would help his suit?" the pro- living death that awaited her in State

"If Sands has lost heavily in Wall agreeable excitation. When he had m pursuing all this additional wearth

out of his chair as if released by a commented with a show of impa- an overcoat of fur, but of gossamer

CHAPTER XVII. A Pair of Thieves.

Two men, late on that February afternoon, were hastening eagerly along converging routes to the bachhome of Bruxton Sands. One was Sands himself. The other was Lieutenant Britz, of Headquarters. The millionaire could hardly wait to return to his luxurious suite in the for him that his thoughts required St. Barnabas apartment house, for he marshaling his logic called for adexpected to find upon his arrival a justment, and his analysis demanded note that should decide the whole new setting of the screws to restore future of his heart. Returning to his it to its finer focus. Britz did most spent with Mrs. Missioner, there had come upon him, as never before in his more or less placid wooing of the widow, a realization of what his love for her meant to him. Sands was not given to excess of emotion. English by decent, very Brittish in many ways, educated in one of the great public schools of the United Kingdom, he had been trained from boyhood to believe that the surest proof of gleams of the city's dusk. He had man's estate, for which he was imfeeling. His round head, broad shoulders, and strength of bone and sinew had carried him through school days that would have broken a boy with the smallest degree of temperament. A university course in America and three postgraduate years at Heidelberg had hardened the glaze the English scholastic training had baked upon his inner self. Superimposed on all those had followed the deindividu-

ever actuated the finest squires of dames Mightiest of all his hidden emotions was his love of Doris Missioner. He had been fond of her in her girlhood. He admired her in her glittering triumph as the wife of the multimillionaire. Missioner, and from the days of her early widowhood he had loved her with an ardor that made the devotion of youth to maiden seem pale indeed.

A logical paradox was the result

alizing experience of every man in

the stress of industrial strife, and

this had finished the process. Sands.

as impressionable as a totem pole;

but deep within the man, in the still

reaches where his thoughts threw off

the veneer of civilization, he plunged

into a wilderness of fancy that was

his principal relaxation, and it was

there that there existed sentiments

as chivalrously romantic as any that

so far as externals went, was about

of his tardy recognition of his heart attitude toward her. As often happens in the case of a man who has repressed the romances of his real nature, who has incased himself in armorplate proof against bombardment by whole flotillas of summer girls and flying squadrons of matchmaking mammas. Sands, in his love had adopted in part the viewpoint of the other sex. His love of Doris had become, instead of merely an important incident in his career, the horidrew a newspaper and pointed to the winning of her was the only thing he had not achieved that could take he had not achieved that could take on, in his eyes, the dignity of an that incriminating inscription, "Mr. sparrow's call, A second shadow suppose if we trussed them up with that incriminating inscription, "Mr. sparrow's call, A second shadow suppose if we trussed them up with event. He had everything elsewealth, family, position, health, and "What has that to do with the dia- strong mentality. All these things were of little value unless the possession of them could be crowned by the conquest of the beautiful widow's function of facts he had linked together tion and Cure of Tuberculosis," the conquest of the beautiful widow's im-

Sands long had known his love for her was strong; but until he had seen her in the gloomy reception room of the gray prison shining as the comforter of the wrongfully accused girl to whom she was so loyal, he had not al donation and Mott grasped its sig- known the merciless degree of his love's strength. The thought of Doris in the golden glow of her blond lovelilace to raise money for the cure of ness, royally solacing in the tendertuberculosis," he commented. "And ness of her devotion, the soul of Sands

thrilled with a wild desire of posses and of strangers.

When he got to his office Sands, with the swiftness habitual to slow men in some crises, swung from secutor bestowed on the detective redreams to action. He sat down and mained manswered. As if fearful of in terse and glowing phrases wrote having committed some indiscretion, a note to Doris Missioner in which he a hazard. in giving even this meager hint of poured out to her the flood of new his thoughts, Brits rose, hastily and, and greater love that surged toward with a parting hint as to the com- her from his innermost self. It was widow. Britz did not believe the the case, it is possible that even the plexity of the case, swung through the first love-letter he had written clubman was in love with her in the imperturbable Britz would have movthe door and hastened out of the since his salad days—the first he ever building. Unconsciously, his foot had written that breathed reality in was about attributing motives, he reach to a side pocket in his coat. steps took him to Headquarters, and every line. When it was finished he could not credit Griswold with dis For it was about as evil a countenopened two or three of the closely written pages and read again that he me about the case," the Chief inform- had asked Doris Missioner to be his controvertible facts, he was unwilling gallows. In it rapacity, ferocity, "He tells me you induced wife, and had begged her to let their to arraign Sands as either a hypocrite bloodthirstiness, and cruelty of every in dumb misery, evidently in expectamarriage follow acceptance of him as And at the very end, just over the signal millionaire, no matter how large the nearer, those snaky eyes would have nearer, those snaky eyes would have prize. Sands might not be able to seen the man from Mulberry Street watchful and manifestly most wholeof finance and industry around him, real thief," Britz returned with in- he wrote: "Better still, let us forget nee diamond as the wealthy widow, shelter of the protecting strip of creasing satisfaction. I've got him, to ask permission of position—let us for where he counted his fortune in leather. But it did not; and, after

Reading it through thus in warm haste, he called a messenger and sent the note to Mrs. Missioner's home. yet her heart was softened by the sight of Elinor's separation from her reply to his apartment soon enough for him to find it on his return from the office. Then habit took him back secretary, and dictate letters that had awaited his attention since morning; habit made him attend, with a magnificent semblance of interest, a particularly prosy meeting of an exceptionally dry directorate. From first to last, as the afternoon sped on, his

Street we ought to look into it. He had equal opportunity with Griswold to steal the collarette," he said.

"I have no objection," Mott smiled.

"The thinnest of vells is drawn be that in the end it reduced his resolve that in the end it reduced his resolve."

"The thinnest of vells is drawn be that in the end it reduced his resolve." tween the thief and his complete ex-posure. I am not prepared to draw dwindled beyond the vanishing point. the veil aside yet. But it will be torn away shortly—very shortly. And then he'll stand revealed before the world."

Tam not prepared to draw dwindred beyond the vanishing both the vanishing to world."

"As myserious as ever," the Chief ceiver on the hook, thrust himself into "Go ahead in your own way." lightness, seized his hat and stick, and, disdaining all vehicles in his eagerness, strode swiftly up Broadway at a pace that took him to the Parthenon-sculptured entrance of the St. Barnabas apartment house.

Britz walked there too. But it was to think, and not to regain control of his emotions, that he chose normal locomotion in preference to cab or carriage. It had been a busy day even office early in the day, after the time of his thinking on his feet and as he the solution of the Missioner mystery. but that he had made great strides between the rising and the setting of that sun which even now was merging its light with the anticipatory enough, the maker had performed his task in the belief that he was manufacturing, not a false, but a genuine diamond, but that belief was only a detail: it did not affect the value of the detective's conclusion that the man who procured the making of the imitation stone had done so with the single intent of substituting it for the real gem.

That the "fine gentleman" who gave the commission to old Martin was Bruxton Sands frankly astonished him. Britz had followed every line of facts leading to or from the millionaire with the fidelity that he bestowed on every potential clew in the entire case, but he had done so perfunctorily-never with the slightest suspicion that the trail of guilt would giving way to his curiosity beca lead to Sands. Britz even yet was not prepared to say to himself, with candid, just who it was he did susseen them before his visit to the isof an Occidental or an Oriental. If the thief was a man of the former Griswold, for, in his analytical consideration of the case, the Headquarters man had eliminated Sands almost as quickly as he had Elinor Hol- could see the whole inner room: comb. If an Easterner stole the gems it could be none other than Mrs. Missioner's Indian servant, Ali, unlessand Britz did some pretty deep thinking on this point—the crime was done by another East Indian, also in the employ of the mysterious Brahmin priest. Up to that afternoon the issue had seemed squarely joined. Griswold or Blodgett on one hand, Ali or a compatriot on the other-brown man or white, son of yesterday, or

heir of to-morrow. Against the background of the electure as showed Britz it was on a fire estuse them as handcuffs. These gentletric signs beginning to gleam in the cape, or a balcony of some sort. The men are accustomed to silk, and I Great White Way ahead of him, Britz

Bruxton Sands." Lieutenant Britz admitted that that simple line on the little white card with so much skill and patience. If Sands got Martin to make the false Maharanee diamond why did he do so? Why should he have done so, unless with the idea of substituting it for the real diamond? Was there a compact between Sands and Griswold? Did the clubman make the sketches only to have the millionaire give them to the artisan with the order for the manufacture of a fraudu-

ed through the well-known routine of Griswold? What motive could there peered through the parting between have been to despoil the widow whom the curtains into the library where both wished to marry? It seemed the detective stood. impossible that a man of the sub- Britz had not obtained a good view

interested impulses. Open though ance as one could expect to see anyhis mind was to the reception of inwhere, save under the shadows of the
any, the Orientals understood they did or a thief. The very word thief seem- degree spoke loudly. If that savage tion of an ignoble end. They followed closely as her position might permit, ed incongruous in connection with the face had advanced an inch or two had stolen the jewel in the collector's panion. lust of possession. Sands was not a ing of a monomaniac.

this admiration could descend cul-de-sac without convincing himself that there was no outlet save that by which he had entered. For that re son he was bending his steps to ar Sands' apartment in quest of an explanation rather than of evidence. As the two men left their offices of

most to the minute, Britz, man blocks ahead of Sands, had arrived at the St. Baranbas before the mil lionaire turned the Grace Church ben in Broadway. Sands's man, when the detective announced he was there for an important talk with the millionaire admitted Britz readily to Sands's

Britz, sitting in a great leather arm chair in an attitude of sybaritic ea.e. chose a pantela from his pocket ca e and then, with his eyes fixed on th ceiling and his hands clasped at the back of his neck, he gave himself up to as many moments of uninterrupted thought as the non-arrival of the unconscious host would permit. He ha reached a point in his meditations that for an instant seemed to on a way for an explanation, for which he had come to see Sands, when faint rustling in the adjoining room reached his acute ear. He did not move by the breadth of a hair. He did not check his regular breathing knowing full well that a sudden si lence is as often an effective warning as a sudden noise. His hands s.ill locked behind his head, the smoke of pause, he turned his eyes toward the direction of the sounds in the adjoining room whence the rustling came. A ribbon of subdued light between portieres of Moorish leather gave passage to his glance. He saw a

shadow flutter at a far window and in the next instant, rapidly and no selessly, he had slid out of the armchai. until he was on his knees on the rug behind the shelter of a library tab piled high with books. Inch by inch. soundlessly, Britz lifted one knee in til he was close to the portières. Bri was too good a sleuth to make t mistake of looking between the portières to get a glimpse of the inne! room. It was no part of his progra. me to be seen by Sands's other vitor. or visitors. He felt justified it might be as much to the million aire's interests as to his own-t whom he was always punctiliously say nothing of Mrs. Missioner's, and that of the public. In fact, the Headpect. The possibilities, as he had quarters man did not waste much time in such reflections. He wanted to land, were between the East and the see and hear what was going on, and ments in spite of his bulk, flung a pow West. The theft might be the work he took the readiest means of doing erful arm about the throat of the other so. Instead of risking the danger being seen by peeping between the race it might be either Blodgett or parting in th portières, he pierced with his scarf pin a tiny hole in th leather curtain behind which he stood and forced them down upon a couch and applying one eye closely, h was the mililonaire's bedroom, and he commanded everything except the and, more as an order than as a re angle in which was set the window quest, asked the millionaire to bind where he had glimpsed the shadow. A slightly more vigorous twist or two of the pin enlarged the microscopical that detail of the interior. Britz all me in Central Park and Riverside most grunted with satisfaction at Drive last evening. I think it's about what he witnessed in the next few time for me to return the compliment minutes. The shadow man still was with a merry little jest of my own." at the window, fluttering, flitting to Turning his head to the millionaire. But that card! Sand's card! ed outside the window in such a way handkerchiefs to spare, Mr. Sands,

dow and melted into the outlines of cation."

sion that made him feel, as he hasten- dissimilar as these two Sands and only by the thickness of the leather,

stantial worth of Bruxton Sands could of the intruder's face, for it was half entertain a dishonest thought. It hidden by a loose fold of the turban seemed equally as unlikely that Gris upon his head that indicated the wold would waste time in so perilous stranger's nationality. Brits's eyes still were fixed at the hole, and by "Object matrimony," was the key that time the stranger was out of his note to all Griswold's pursuit of the line of vision. Had such not been right sense and, cautious though he ed at least to the extent of a swift buy as many stones like the Mahars who shrank into himself behind the seven figures, she could count hers in a leisurely survey of the interior, the eight or nine. Nor was there the nth Oriental returned to the other end of of it. I want to tell you the way they quantity—the possibility that Sands the inner room and rejoined his com-

Hardly had Britz begun to let the collector; not at any rate, in the air seep out of his lungs, and before sense of being a faddist, to say noth- he had indulged in the luxury of an intake of breath, when he became an Every detail in the millionaire's interested spectator in the gentlemansuite in the St. Baranbas and of his ly art of searching a gentleman's private room in the Bowling Green room. The Central Office man was office was known to Britz even more no Vidocq. It is doubtful if he had minutely than to the owner. That even read Poe's story of "The Missing had been among the early activities Letter," and had he done so, it is by of the sleuth in connection with the no means certain he would have case. He was able to assure himself, adapted the methods of the French therefore, that no matter how much police to metropolitan detective work. Sands might admire the Maharanee Nevertheless, he had flattered himself The detective vouchsafed no reply.

The detective vouchsafed no re

on in the leather portiere should him that he was the veriest tyro in went through the millionaire's furni ture and other possessions with a minuteness that would have made a fine-toothed comb look like a garden rake. There could not have remained anything-any nook or corner, any crack or crevice, not anything larger than a bacillus which they happen d to covet. If an article no bigger tha. a pinhead 'ad been the object of their hunt, their untiring scrutiny would have brought it to light. Yet so defi ly had they searched that, granting them a minute's respite, they could have left the room with-out any trace of their activity. Their search seemed fruitless unt

they arrived at a desk under a hang

ing incandescent lamp, at which Brit

assumed Sands was in the habit of

writing his more personal letters. From one of the pigeon-holes, one of the intruders drew something that crackled slightly as the man stuffe? it into the folds of his tunic. From a neighboring compartment of the desk the second stranger drew another find. which he in turn hastily hid in the same way. With lightning rapidity they went through every part of th desk. In that same instant Britz fe t rather than heard a footstep behind him, and, jerking a glance over hi shoulders, saw Sands advancing upon him angrily. With a quick uplift of his hand, the detective stopped the millionaire in his tracks, and then drew him quietly toward the portiere his cigar curling upward with ut and motioned for him to look through the hole in the leather. Sands bent a little, and then glanced wonderingly mio the bedroom. He raised a race of astonished inquiry to Britz. He wa answered by another silencing gestur from the sleuth. He looked once more through the tiny hole just in time to see the Hindoos straighter themselves from their crouching art tude over the desk and turn toward the window. His hand thrust itself into his coat pocket, he slipped into the opening in the portieres with single stride, and, leveling an auto

> block of steel than anything else. cried: "Hands up!" The men did not turn; instead, the leaned for the window, followed b Britz and Sands. Quick as they wer they were not quick enough for the Headquarters man. Launching h wiry form as a tiger springs, pistol hand, hurled himself between th foremost Indian and the open window e d seized him in his strong grasp Sands, almost as rapid in his move intruder, and with his other hand closed the window with a crash. Britz and Sands dragged their pri

matic pistol that looked more like

soners to the other side of the room Then the sleuth, slipping his pistol back into his pocket, seized the Indian Sands was holding by the throat "I think I recognize you, my dea young friends." he said. "You are two

aperture so that he could see even of the dark jugglers who had fun with and fro, rising and falling. It crouch. he said again: "If you have any silk rustling sound increased, and it was would not like to use anything cheap fluttered from a point above the win- cotton or hemp, they'd die of mortifi-

the first. Then came a slightly rasp. The detective's sarcasm was lost ing sound, and the lower sash, Britz on Sands until he thought to recount noticed, trembled. By well-nigh im- in a few brief words his abduction in perceptible degrees the sash was lif- the park and the struggle for life that ted. The next instant two men noise had followed it. It was evident that, lessly lowered themselves to the floor in spite of the detective's coolness, and glanced hasitly about the room. he had some feeling on the subject. Reassured by the swift look they tip- In fact; his manner toward the now toed along the walls from right to cowering Hindoos was more or less left; one of them stopped at the chif- revengeful. Sands fell in with the fonier, the other continued his little humor of the situation, and in a few journey of investigation until he ar minutes the Easterners were bound rived at the portieres. Then it was with silk handkerchiefs as soft, yet that Britz held his breath. He held strong, as any scarf they could have lent gem? How could there well be it for seconds that seemed tedious produced in the bazaars of Calcutta a league between men as antipodally as hours, while the nearer of the or Cawnpore. When the task was strange visitors, separated from him done, and it was done pretty neatly.

Britz relaxed his hold on the halfstruggling men's throats and pushed them against the back of the sofa until they half sat, half lay there, head to head. Then he stepped back, rested his hands on his hips, and eyed them mockingly.

"You are not very clever," he said, "but anyway, you're a fine-looking body of men. What do you think of yourselves, anyhow? Think you'll cut out this 'second-story' game? Or will you content yourselves with the safer occupation of dips? My private advice to you is to try hencoops for a while. Cut out the big circuit, and go and get a reputation.'

not indicate. They only gazed at him | Sands?" asked the detective. Britz with their joint gaze as he paced somely afraid.

"You saw part of what these chaps were doing, Mr. Sands," said Britz, "but what you saw was only the last went through this room was amazing. I hope you didn't lose many valua-

Sands, in his slow way, assured the detective that it was not likely the searchers had found anything he would miss very greatly; but the Headquarters man was not satisfied. The mystery of the proceedings, he was inclined to think, did not begin and end with the Orientals. It was possible, of course, they had searched Sands's room simply as a matter of routine in the same way that at the first opportunity they probably would search the home of everyone who might be connected in any way with the Missioner jewel robbery. something stirred uneasily in Britz's

aind as he reflected on the possibility that the coming of the Orientals held a deeper significance. What if they What if they had reason to believe they would surely find what they sought in that room? If Sands did not know there was justification for the search, why did he take it so calmly? It did not seem natural for a man to keep his temper whost apartments had been invaded so thoroughly. If the millionaire had expressed any indignation he, Britz, would have felt better satisfled. Besides, what was it the Hindoos had taken from Sands's desk? Sands had not seen them take any thing, as they were ending their search when he got the first glimpse of them. Britz watched Sands close ly to see if the millionaire's eyes uld turn anxiously toward that part of his furniture. He almost started when the first move Sands made, after finishing his task of binding the prisoners, was to saunter with a careless air across the room and, in passing, glance swiftly and questioningly into the pigeon-holes whence the thieves had abstracted the mysterious articles that so actively engaged Britz's always active curiosity. "It's about up to us to do a little

searching now, isn't it?" asked Britz. These bright young men have had their innings, and I believe it's our turn at bat. What do you say, Mr Sands?"

Sands said nothing. He nodded his head in assent, however, and Britz be gan a search of the Orientals fully as exhaustive as that they had per formed on the room. Before he had gone far in his quest, Sands volun teered assistance, and each explored the folds of the Hindoos' raiment with the clumsiness that might be expected of men not accustomed to that sort of work.

Britz. working more swiftly than the millionaire, made his first find. It was a sheet of notepaper of fashionable size and tint, on which had been written a few lines in a feminine hand Britz had not the slightest compune tion of conscience about reading it Chivalry was all very well in its way but it played no part in detective work, especially when the lady most concerned was not present to make a protest. He moved to the centre of the room, and in the light of a cluster of incandescent lamps read aloud to Sands the following enigmatical mis-

"Curtis Dear:-When are you coming up to the hotel? If you do not come or send me a cheque quickly. shall have to sell some of the jewels -Millicent.'

That was all. Whether that "all" was much or little, Britz, offhand, was not prepared to say. The use of Griswold's given name at the beginning of the note apparently meant a good deal. But who was Millicent In the course of his probing of the Missioner diamond mystery, Britz had canvassed the complete visiting list of everyone who was in the opera box on the night when the falsity of the Maharanee diamond was discovered He had had compiled a social register of everyone interested in the case everyone that Mrs. Missioner, Sands, Griswold, Miss Holcomb, Miss March, and the Swami knew. In all that long roster there was no one named "Millicent." Neither, for that matter, was there a "Mildred." There the signature was, too clear to admit of any mistake. The writing was excellent, and while it did not go to the extreme of the current fashion chirography, it was what Britz called in his vivid vernacular "classy."

"Ever seen that fist before?" asked the detective as he handed the note

The millionaire shook his head While it was true, Britz reflected, that the big man was known as "Silent" Sands in Wall Street society, he was certainly more economical of words than anyone he had ever known in his life. Aloud, he continued:

"Are you sure you have never seen

any writing at all like that before?" Another shake of the head was Sands's only concession to the detective's right to question him. He gave the note back to the Headquar ters man, who returned to the circle of light under the incandescent lamp and studied it again. Meanwhile, Sands went on with his search of the second Oriental. He was not as clever in his movements as Britz and when he tried to conceal something. he signally failed. For the detective though his eyes seemingly were fastened on the note addressed to Griswold, saw the millionaire take something out of the Oriental's tunic and then slip it into his waistcoat pocket. "Something else, eh?" asked Britz. Sands nodded.

"Mind letting me see what it is?" Sands shook his head slowly, decisively. "What's the objection?"

"It is not anything that can possibly

interest you," returned the million "How do you know that, Mr. "I do know it," said Sands empha-

tically. "Well, I don't know about that," Britz returned. "I think I'm the best judge of what interests me: and, as I have played a pretty active part in this little incident, it seems to me the least you can do is to gratify my curiosity.

"Well, I will not," was Sands's defiant answer. "And, while we are on the subject, Lieutenant Britz, let me say I should like to understand the purpose of your visit to my rooms." "Oh, you would, would you?" snapped Britz.

"I certainly should," Sands reuplied. "I come home to find you peeping through a hole in my portiere, and two Easterners, with whom apparently you have had nothing to do, going through my desk and other belong ings. I rather think I am entitled to Jw the why and the wherefore.

(To be continued.)

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