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"His death is officially expected any day.'

Sedgwick examined his friend's expression with suspicion. "Of-ficially? Then he's very ill."

'No, he isn't ill at all." "Don't you think you overdo

this business of mystification sometimes, Kent?" "Merely a well-meant effort,"

smiled the other, "to divert your mind from your own troublesbefore they get any worse.' With a cheering farewell Kent

stepped out and into his waiting car.

CHAPTER XII

The Unbidden Visitor

One of Kent's Washington friends once criticized the scientist's mode of motoring, as follows: "Kent's a good driver, and a fast one, and careful; but he can never rid himself of the theory that there's a strain of hunter in every well-bred motor-car."

Cross-country travel was, in fact, rather a fad of Kent's, and he had trained his light car to do everything but take a five-barred gate. After departing from the Nook, it rolled along beside Sundavman's Creek sedately enough until it approached the wide bend where it indulged in a bit of pathfinding across the country, and eventually crept into the shade of a clump of bushes and hid. Its occupant emerged, and went forward afoot until he came in view of Hedgerow House. At the turn of the steam he leaped a fence, and made his way to a group of willows beneath which the earth was ridged with little mounds. Professor Chester Kent was trespassing. He was invading the territory of the dead.

From the seclusion of the graveyard amid the willows a fair view was afforded of Hedgerow House. Grim as was the repute given it, it presented to the intruder an aspect of homely hospitable sweetness and quaintness. Tall hollyhocks lifted their flowers to smile in at the old-fashioned windows. Here and there, on the well-kept lawn, peonies glowed, crimson and white. A great, clambering rose tree had thrown its arms around the square porch, softening the uncompromising angles into curves of leafage and bloom. Along the paths pansies laughed at the sun, and mignonette scattered its scented summons to bee and butterfly. The place was a loved place; so much Kent felt with sureness of instinct. No home blooms except by love.

(Continued in March)



"The man with a head for his business keeps ahead of his business."







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