

in a bellow thick with fear and horror; he seemed to choke with terror. There was nothing in his look akin to mere surprise or alarm at realizing that another was there and had been seeing and overhearing him. The light which he still gripped swayed back and forth and showed him Alan again, and he raised his arm before his face as he recoiled.

The consternation of the man was so complete that it checked Alan's rush toward him; he halted, then advanced silently and watchfully. As he went forward, and the light shone upon his face again, the big man cried out hoarsely:

"Damn you—damn you, with the hole above your eye! The bullet got you! And now you've got Ben! But you can't get me! Go back to Hell! You can't get me! I'll get you—I'll get you! You — can't save the Miwaka!"

He drew back his arm and with all his might hurled the flashlight at Alan. It missed and crashed somewhere behind him, but did not go out; the beam of light shot back and wavered and flickered over both of them, as the torch rolled on the floor. Alan rushed forward and, thrusting through the dark, his hand struck the man's chest and seized his coat.

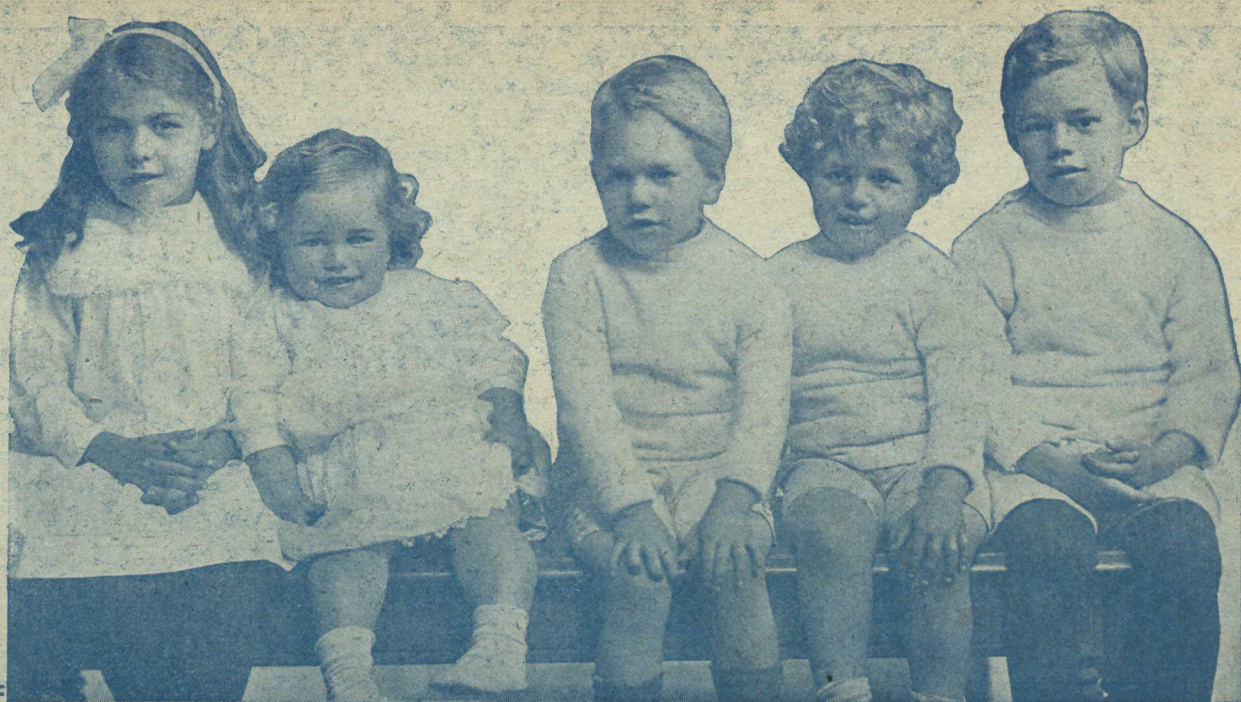
THE man caught at Alan's arm; he seemed to feel of it and assure himself of its reality.

"Flesh! Flesh!" he roared in relief; and his big arms grappled Alan. As they struggled, they stumbled and fell to the floor, the big man underneath. His hand shifted its hold and caught Alan's throat; Alan got an arm free and, with all his force, struck the man's face. The man struck back—a heavy blow on the side of Alan's head which dizzied him, but left him strength to strike again, and his knuckles reached the man's face once more, but he got another heavy blow in return. The man was grappling no longer; he swung Alan to one side and off him, and rolled himself away. He scrambled to his feet and dashed out through the library, across the hall, and into the service room. Alan heard his feet clattering down the stairway to the floor beneath. Alan got to his feet; dizzied and not yet familiar with the house, he blundered against a wall and had to feel his way along it to the service room; as he slipped and stumbled down the stairway, a door closed loudly at the end of the corridor he had seen at the foot of the stairs. He ran along the corridor to the door; it had closed with a spring lock, and seconds passed while he felt in the dark for the catch; he found it and tore the door open, and came out suddenly into the cold air of the night in a paved passageway beside the house which led in one direction to the street and in the other to a gate opening on the alley. He ran forward to the street and looked up and down, but found it empty; then he ran back to the alley. At the end of the alley, where it intersected the cross street, the figure of the man running away appeared suddenly out of the shadows, then disappeared; Alan, following as far as the street, could see nothing more of him; this street too was empty.

(To be Continued.)

Red-nosed Tramp—Lady, kin I cut your grass for a meal? I'm a first-class lawn mower.

Lady—Go away! You look more like an old rake.



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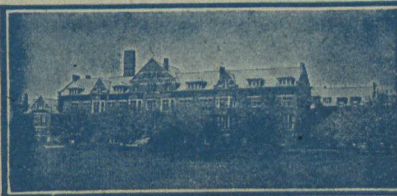
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