

there. I asked Wassaquam about the letter to 'Alan Conrad,' and Wassaquam said Corvet had given it to him to post early in the evening. Several hours later, Corvet had sent him out to wait at the mail box for the mail collector to get the letter back. Wassaquam went out to the mail box, and Corvet came out there too, almost at once. The mail collector, when he came, told them, of course, that he could not return the letter; but Corvet himself had taken the letters and looked them through. Corvet seemed very much excited when he discovered the letter was not there; and when the mail man remembered that he had been late on his previous trip and so must have taken up the letter almost at once after it was mailed, Corvet's excitement increased on learning that it was already probably on the train on its way west. He controlled himself later enough at least to reassure Wassaquam; for an hour or so after, when Corvet sent Wassaquam away from the house, Wassaquam had gone without feeling any anxiety about him.

"Then I told Wassaquam over the telephone simply that something was wrong, and hurried to my own home to get the key, which I had, to the Corvet house; but when I came back and let myself into the house, I found it empty and with no sign of anything having happened.

"The next morning, Alan, I went to the safe deposit vaults as soon as they were open. I presented the numbered key and was told that it belonged to a box rented by Corvet, and that Corvet had arranged about three days before for me to have access to the box if I presented the key. I had only to sign my name in their book and open the box. In it, Alan, I found the pictures of you which I showed you yesterday and the very strange communications that I am going to show you now."

SHERRILL opened the long envelope from which several thin, folded papers fell. He picked up the largest of these, which consisted of several sheets fastened together with a clip, and handed it to Alan without comment. Alan, as he looked at it and turned the pages, saw that it contained two columns of typewriting carried from page to page after the manner of an account.

The column to the left was an inventory of property and profits and income by months and years, and the one to the right was a list of losses and expenditures. Beginning at an indefinite day or month in the year 1895, there was set down in a lump sum what was indicated as the total of Benjamin Corvet's holdings at that time. To this, in sometimes undated items, the increase had been added. In the opposite column, beginning, apparently, from the same date in 1895, were the missing man's expenditures. The painstaking exactness of these left no doubt of their correctness; they included items for natural depreciation of perishable properties and, evidently, had been worked over very recently. Upon the last sheet, the second column had been deducted from the first, and an apparently purely arbitrary sum of two hundred thousand dollars had been taken away. From the remainder there had been taken away approximately one hundred and fifty thousand dollars more.

Alan having ascertained that the papers contained only this account, looked up questioningly to Sherrill; but Sherrill, without speaking, merely handed him the second of the papers. . . . This, Alan saw, had evidently been folded to fit a smaller envelope. Alan unfolded it and saw that it was a letter written in the same hand which had written the summons he had received in Blue Rapids and had made the entries in the little memorandum book of the remittances that had been sent to John Welton.

It began simply:

Lawrence,—

This will come to you in the event that I am not able to carry out the plan upon which I am now, at last, determined. You will find with this a list of my possessions which, except for two hundred thousand dollars settled upon my wife which was hers absolutely to dispose of as she desired and a further sum of approximately one hundred and fifty thousand dollars presented in memory of her to the Hospital Service in France, have been transferred to you without legal reservation.

You will find deeds for all real estate executed and complete except for recording of the transfer at the county office; bonds, certificates, and other documents representing my ownership of properties, together with signed

forms for their legal transfer to you, are in this box. These properties, in their entirety, I give to you in trust to hold for the young man now known as Alan Conrad, of Blue Rapids, Kansas, to deliver any part or all over to him or to continue to hold it all in trust for him as you shall consider to be to his greatest advantage.

This for the reasons which I shall have told to you or him—I cannot know which one of you now, nor do I know how I shall tell it. But when you learn, Lawrence, think as well of me as you can and help him to be charitable to me.

With the greatest affection,

Benjamin Corvet.

ALAN, as he finished reading looked up to Sherrill, bewildered.

"What does it mean, Mr. Sherrill?—Does it mean that he has gone away and left everything he had—everything to me?"

"The properties listed here," Sherrill touched the pages Alan first had looked at, "are in the box at the vault with the executed forms of their transfer to me. If Mr. Corvet does not return, and I do not receive any other instructions, I shall take over his estate as he has instructed for your advantage."

"And, Mr. Sherrill, he didn't tell you why? This is all you know?"

"Yes; you have everything now. The

fact that he did not give his reasons for this, either to you or me, made me think at first that he might have made his plan known to some one else, and that he had been opposed—to the extent even of violence done upon him—to prevent his carrying it out. But the more I have considered this, the less likely it has seemed to me. Whatever had happened to Corvet that had so much disturbed and excited him lately, seems rather to have precipitated his plan than deterred him in it. He may have determined after he had written this that his actions and the plain indication of his relationship to you, gave all the explanation he wanted to make. All we can do, Alan, is to search for him in every way we can. There will be others searching for him, too, now; for information of his disappearance has got out. There have been reporters at the office this morning making inquiries, and his disappearance will be in the afternoon papers."

Sherrill put the papers back in their envelope, and the envelope back into the drawer, which he relocked.

"I went over all this with Mr. Spearman this morning," he said. "He is as much at a loss to explain it as I am."

He was silent for a few moments, apparently deep in thought.

"The transfer of Mr. Corvet's properties to me for you," he said,

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