

# The Home Journal

V. 1. 2

TORONTO, JUNE, 1906.

No. 2

## The Quinton Jewels

By ARTHUR COLEMAN

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FEAR OF DEATH.



HE case will probably be very well remembered. Sir Valentine Quinton, before he married, had been as poor as only a man of rank with an old country establishment to keep up can be. His marriage, however, with the daughter of a wealthy financier had changed all that, and now the Quinton establishment was carried on on as lavish a scale as might be, and, indeed, the extravagant habits of Lady Quinton herself rendered it an extremely lucky thing that she had brought a fortune with her.

Among other things her jewels made quite a collection, and chief among them was the great ruby, one of the very few that were sent to this country to be sold (at an average price of somewhere about £20,000 apiece, I believe) by the Burmese King before the annexation of his country. Let but a ruby be of great size and color, and no equally fine diamond can approach its value. Well, this great ruby (which was set in a pendant, by the by), together with a necklace, brooches, bracelets, earrings—indeed, the greater part of Lady Quinton's collection—had been stolen.

On an investigation by London detectives, however, a feature of singularity was brought to light. There had plainly been only one thief at work at Radcot hall, and no other had been inside the grounds.

I was talking of the robbery with Hewitt at lunch and asked him if he had received any commission to hunt for the missing jewels.

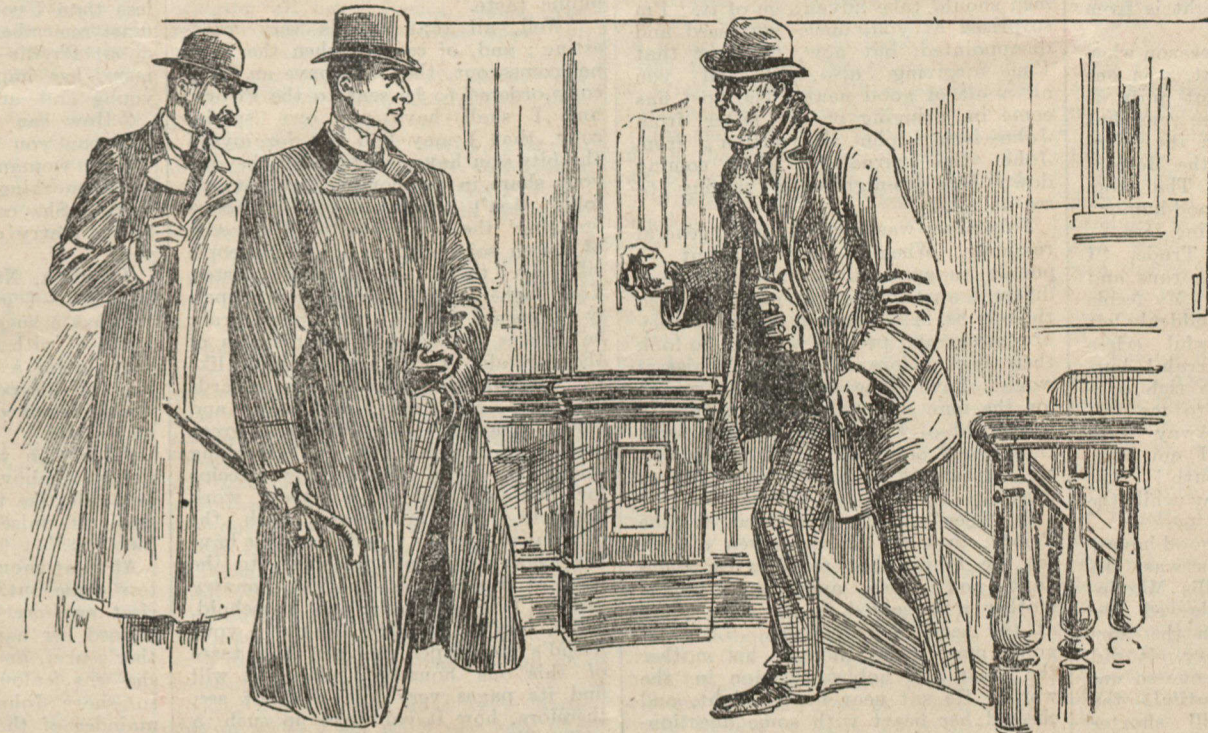
"No," Hewitt replied, "I haven't been commissioned. They are offering an immense reward, however—a very pleasant sum, indeed. I have had a short note from Radcot hall, informing me of the amount, and that's all. Probably they fancy that I may take the case up as a speculation, but this is a great mistake. I'm not a beginner, and I must be commissioned in a regular manner, hit or miss, if I am to deal with the case. I've quite enough commissions going now and no time to waste hunting for a problematical reward."

But we were nearer a clue to the Quinton jewels than we then supposed.

We talked of other things and presently arose and left the restaurant, strolling quietly toward home. Some little distance from the Strand, and near our own door, we passed an excited Irishman—without doubt an Irishman, by appearance and talk—who was pouring a torrent of angry complaints in the ears of a policeman. The policeman obviously thought

little of the man's grievances, and with an amused smile appeared to be advising him to go home quietly and think no more about it. We passed on and mounted our stairs. Something interesting in our conversation made me stop for a little while at Hewitt's office door on my way up, and, while I stood there the Irishman we had seen in the street mounted the stairs. He was a poorly dressed but sturdy-looking fellow, apparently a laborer, in a badly worn best suit of clothes. His agitation still held him, and without a pause he immediately burst out:

"Which iv ye jintlemen will be



"IT'S PROTECTION I WANT, SIR! PROTECTION!"

Mister Hewitt, sor?"

"This is Mr. Hewitt," I said. "Do you want him?"

"It's protechshin I want, sor—protechshin! I spake to the pollis an' they laff at me, begob. Foive days have I lived in London, an' 'tis nothin' but battle, murder an' suddhen death for me here all day, an' ivery day! An' the polis say I'm dhrunk!" He gesticulated wildly, and to me it seemed just possible that the police might be right.

"They say I'm dhrunk, sor," he continued, "but, begob, I b'lieve they think I'm mad. An' me being thracked an' folleyed an' dogged an' way-laid an' poisoned an' blandanhered an' kidnapped an' murdered, an' for why I do not know!"

"And who's doing all this?"

"Sthangers, sor—sthangers. 'Tis a sthranger here I am mesilf, an' fwy they do it bates me, onless I do be so like the Prince av Wales or other crowned heads they thry to slaughter me. They're layin' for me in the sthreet now, I misdoubt not, an' fwat they may thry next I can tell no more than the Lord Mayor. An' the polis won't listen to me!"

"But what have these people done?" Hewitt asked, looking rather inter-

ested, although amused. "What actual assaults have they committed, and when? And who told you to come here?"

"Who towld me, is ut? Who but the payler outside—in the sthreet below! 'Well, me frind,' sez he, 'I can't help ye; that's the marvellous an' onaccountable departmint up the stairs ferninst he; Mистер Hewitt, ut is,' sez he, 'that attinds to the onaccountable departmint, him as wint by a minut ago. You go an' bother him.' That's how I was towld, sor."

Hewitt smiled.

"Very good," he said, "Now, what are these extraordinary troubles of yours? Don't declaim," he added, as the Irishman raised his head and opened his mouth, preparatory to another torrent of complaint. "Just say in ten words, if you can, what they've done to you."

but the only expression there was one of surprise.

"Got ut?" said the Irishman. "Got fwat, sor? Is ut you're thinkin' I've got the horrors, as well as the polis?"

Hewitt's gaze relaxed. "Sit down, sit down!" he said. "You've still got your watch and money, I suppose, since you weren't robbed?"

"Oh, that? Glory be, I have ut still! though for how long—or me own head, for that matter—in this state of besiegement I cannot say."

"Now," said Hewitt, "I want a full, true, and particular account of yourself and your doings for the last week. First, your name?"

"Leamy's my name. sor—Michael Leamy."

"Lately from Ireland?"

"Over from Dublin this last blessed Wednesday, and a croll bad pound-erin' ut was in the boat, too—shpakin' av that same."

"Looking for work?"

"That is my purshuit at prisint, sor."

"Did anything noticeable happen before these troubles of yours began—anything here in London or on the journey?"

"Sure," the Irishman smiled. "Part av the way I thravelled first-class by favor av the gyard, an' I got a small job before I lift the train."

"How was that? Why did you travel first-class part of the way?"

"There was a station fhwere we shtopped afther a long run, an' I got down to take the cramp out av me joints, an' take a taste av dhrink. I overshtayed somehow, an' whin I got to the train, begob, it was on the move. There was a first-class carr'ge door opin right forninst me, an' into that the gyard crams me holus-bolus. There

was a juce of a foine jintleman sittin' there, an' he stares at me un-brageous, but I was not discommoded, bein' onbashful by natur'. We travell- ed along a heap av miles more, till we came near London. Afther we had sthopped at a station where they tuk tickets we wint ahead again, and prisintly, as we rips through some udther station up jumps the jintlemen opposite, swearin' hard unther his tongue, an' looks out at the windy. 'I thought this train shtopped here,' sez he."

"Chalk Farm," observed Hewitt, with a nod.

"The name I do not know, sor, but that's fwat he said. Then he looks at me onaisy for a little, an' at last he sez 'Wud ye loike a small job, me good man, well paid?'"

"Faith," sez I, "'tis that will suit me well."

"Then see here, sez he. 'I should have got out at the station, havin' particular business; havin' missed, I must sen' a telegrammer from Euston. Now, here's a bag,' sez he; 'a bag full of important papers for my solicitor—important to me, ye ondershtand, no worth the shine av a brass farden to a sowl else—an' I want 'em tuk on

(Continued on page 5.)