POOR DOCUMENT

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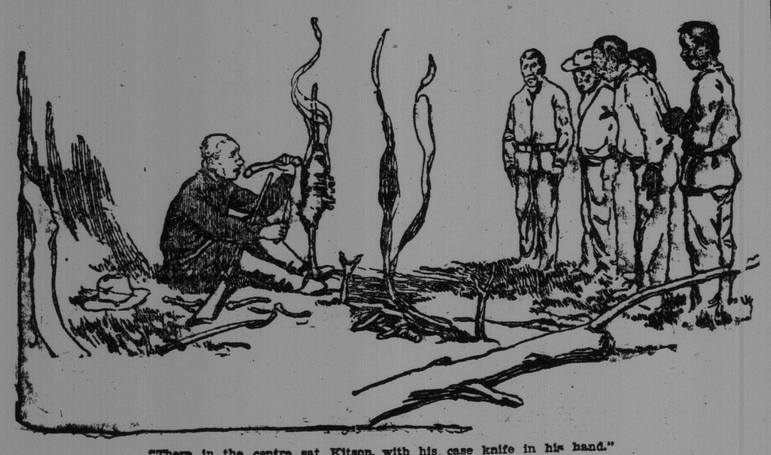
DOGGY KITSON - - By Frederick Walworth



"There in the centre sat Kitson, with his case knife in his hand."

"I tell you," said Sergeant Hook, "a man don't even know what he'll do in a tight hole till the hole begins to squeeze him. Then it's $10,000 to a dead cat he'll surprise himself."

"Sure," said Jarvey. "And them that does a power of thinkin' beforehand are usually a little bit behindhand when things bust loose. And vicy versy the fellow whose head's all bone sometimes'll manage to act to surprise you. Remember Doggy Kitson—him that took it through the lungs down by the lake and was invalided home? Had a face like the side of a house without any windows."

"Sure I remember him an' his face," said the corporal. "Didn't I bust up all my knucles on it? He joined along with me."

"So he did," assented Jarvey. I'd forgot it. Chislett come to me and he says, says 'e 'Jarvey,' says 'e, 'them two. Toplatch and kitson look like the scum o' creation. If they ever get so we can use 'em even for mess orderlies, you'll have to learn 'em. See what you can' do with 'em,' he says."

"You're a born liar, careful bred, Jarvis," said the corporal. "You was nothin' but a buck corporal in them days."

"Well," said Jarvis easily, "I don't remember just his identical words, but it was something like that. Anyhow, if you remember Kitson you know what kind of a half-baked hoptoad he was. He had about as much live get-up-an'-git-ness as a tub o' lard. He didn't know the pit of his stomach from the back of his neck. He'd come on parade with his right shoe on his left foot, and then cross his legs to get 'em straight when the sergeant pointed 'em out. He was the limit, certain."

"Well, what about him?" demanded Eleazar.

"Well, you plug up your gas pipe and I'll tell you. It was while you was in hospital after that little fellow down Samar way got to you with a bolo. Kitson had got so he knew enough to bend his legs when he wanted to sit down, but he showed about as much average, everyday horse sense as a cast-iron stove lid.

"Moren'n all that, he'd made up his mind that he hadn't ought to be a soldier; that he was too scary. I remember once we was sittin' together one evening by the fire, and there came a kind of funny double-barreled cry like, off in the jungle a-ways.. Kitson jerked up like he was stung.

'Hear that, Jarvey?' he says. 'Hear that? That ain't no wild beast,' he says. 'That's one o' them little devil niggers'—that what's he always called 'em, 'little devil niggers.'

"I'm skairt of 'em, Jarvey,' he says. 'I 'low they're goin' to git me one o' these days.'

'I didn't know as much then as I do now, and I kind o' laughed at him. 'What you going to do when they git you, Kitson?' I says.

"'Who, me?" he says. 'I reckon I'll 'bout lay down an' die, Jarvey. But I'll run like h—l before I'll let 'em git me.'

"Well, it wasn't a great while after that 'fore we come up with that little bunch o' Pujalanes and give 'em a good hot dose o' the real goods. You remember it, for that's where you got that swipe in the ribs."

"You bet your future mother-in-law I remember it," said the corporal, "how we got 'em cooped up in that blind alley, an' they come at us like wildcats, tooth an' toe nail. I never let on, Jarvey, but I tell you now I was as near bein' skairt paralyzed that time as I've ever been. Them little scoundrels looked to me like the devil's own breed."

"Well, we dished 'em up proper," went on Jarvey. "There wasn't more'n a dozen of 'em got away, and most o' them had the U. S. brand on 'em, one place or another. Chislett was crazy, though, because we let any of 'em git through us. Kitson missed that scrap, bein' off with a detachment bringin' up supplies."

"They used to detail him for that because the only time he'd work like a horse was when it came to bringin' in victuals. Remember how he used to eat. Never got enough. Always hungry. Ate like four men and a boy, and within an hour was cinchin' up his belt and claimin' he was weak with starvation."

"Well, Chislett was madder'n a scalped Injun to think we hadn't rounded up that whole bunch, and he was only waitin' till the detachment joined to start off red hot after that dozen or so that sliced their way through us. It was a case o' cleanin' up the province if we got out that outfit, and Chislett promised us all kinds o' meanness if we let 'em run over us again.

"We didn't think we'd done so bad. Several of the boys had got cut up and we'd finished off the bulk o' the gang; but Kola, the chief, and that cutthroat dozen had given us the slip and Chislett was a long way from satisfied. It was up to us, and he let us understand he'd keep us on the jump over those godforsaken hills till we got 'em.

"That was gorgeous country, certain. It was built on a perpendicular bias. You crawled on your belly up one side of the landscape and wore out the seat of your trousers slidin' down the other. About the time we got to the place we aimed at the guides changed their minds and we backtracked, cussin', to the place we started from.

"The guides was the worst in creation.. A deaf and dumb man with sore eyes could 'a' beaten 'em to a froth.

"Well, it came along one night in the dark o' the moon. We'd fell over and gone to sleep soon as we'd had our pipes, for we were about done. Didn't seem to me I'd slept a minute when a sergeant woke me up by shakin' me and told me not to make any noise. We got up and grabbed our krags in a hurry, for we weren't anxious to be rushed by them Indians while we were asleep.

"It turned out to be nothin' but the guides again, though, and in fifteen minutes we were stringin' off up the trail single file through black dark. Couldn't see the man in front of you, and we had orders to go quite as we could.

"Well, Kitson fell in down toward the tail end of the file. I got him to tell me all about it afterward. Somehow or other he didn't keep up very close to his file man, and directly he came to a place where the trail forked. He didn't know it, though, and hurryin' ahead to catch up, he took the wrong branch without ever suspicionin' there was another, in the lark. Directly he begun to think it was funny he didn't hear the men in front. He stopped and still he couldn't hear 'em. Then he lost his head and started running back down the trail to meet the balance of the company.

"He didn't dare yell. I guess he was skairt almost to death. He kept on running till he stumbled over a root or something and pitched on his face. He made so much noise goin' down that he just lay right still where he fell, afraid to move for fear he'd bring the 'little devil niggers' down on him.

"Meantime the rest o' the company had gone on up the right fork o' the trail, and by noon the next day them guides had snaked us twenty miles across country without raisin' a sign of an insurrecto. 'Course we missed Kitson when mornin' came, and some of us that knew how he felt about it more'n half suspicioned he'd just naturally backed out of' the ruction. He'd talked about it till he'd made us believe he was skairt.

"Well, you know Kitson always was a fool about eatin'. I guess he lay there on the ground and did nothin' but eat all night. Anyway he'd et up all the rations he had on him when mornin' come, an' he went hungry that day. He was city raised, Kitson was, and out o' the gutter at that, and when daylight come and he got a look around, he was lost as complete as a fly in a barrel o' molasses.

"Along in the evenin' of the first day he found some berries and ate 'em by the handful for about two minutes. Then he was took sick, violent and sudden, and when he got over it he was too weak to go further, so he spent the night in the brush near the trail.

"When mornin' come he was crazy with hunger. He had sense enough to leave the berries alone, but he started out with just one idea, and that was somethin' to eat. He wasn't starvin' yet—couldn't 'a' been, after eatin' two days' rations the day before—but he had such a never-quittin' appetite it seemed to him he was dyin'. He'd got over his weak feelin', and that shows he wasn't starved.

"Anyway he went off down that trail like a wild man, huntin' for eatables with his mouth open, and he hadn't gone more'n half a mile 'fore he smelled roast pork. That brought him up all standin' like he'd been smote in the face, as the poet fellow says. He didn't waste a minute. It came driftin' up to the trail from a hollow down amongst the hills, and he followed up that scent like a hound dog after a rabbit.

"He couldn't wait to get his teeth into that pork. He was more'n half loony by that time from wanderin' round alone, and he went as careful as though he was on eggs for fear that roast pig would hear him comin' and sneak off 'fore he got to it. He wasn't far wrong about that, either.

"The last part of the trip he went on his belly through the grass, stalkin' that pig like it was alive and kickin'. The smell of it as he come closer drove him wild, and when he got within sight of it nothin' could 'a' held him. If he'd been in his right mind he'd 'a' backed off into the brush and made long, healthy tracks in the other direction, but by that time, with the hollow in his stomach and the long crawl through the grass, and the smell of the roast pig, he was plumb nutty and didn't care.

"Down there in the hollow was a little fire, and over it hung the little pig all brown and crisp and sizzly, with the juice runnin' out and spittin' in the flames, and around it, waitin' for it to get good and done, sat five little devil niggers on their ham bones.

"I don't believe Kitson saw a livin' thing but the pig. Anyhow he jerked a cratridge into his krag, meanin' to shoot the animal if he made any break to get away, an' givin' one scandalous yell, he come out o' them bushes like a full-blooded buck on the warpath. He had his krag on his hip, and that side-of-a-house face o' his was all tore open with hunger and eagerness, and I'm willin' to bet he was some furious lookin'.

"If they'd left him the pig, all five o' them little brown boys might 'a' slipped into the jungle and he'd never bothered 'em. But he had the drop on 'em clean, and they didn't take any chances. They just huddled together in a bunch, surprised clean off their feet.

"That seems to be about the first time Kitson took any notice of 'em at all. Bunched together, they sort o' made an impression on him, and he got a sudden idea they was aimin' to euchre him out o' that pig.

"I bet his language that mornin' would 'a' burnt holes in a hemlock board. It's a wonder he didn't pump them insurrectos full o' lead. He had 'em good and plenty skairt, him wayin' the muzzle of his krag round under their chins, whilst his fingers worked careless like about the trigger guard. They was pleadin' pitiful for mercy, and he was bullyraggin' 'em outrageous, both in languages the other didn't understand. And whilst he kept 'em covered with the gun in his right hand he was a-hookin' the pig off the fire with his left.

"It had a stick run through it lengthwise, and he jammed one end o' that in the ground and dropped down cross-legged contiguous to the pig.

"'Sit down!' he yells to them poor little devil niggers, motionin' with his rifle, and they squatted down, blue-gilled and obedient, in front of him. Then he digs out his clasp knife and sails into the pig.

"Well, it happened that the company was a-hikin back that mornin', still followin' them fool guides. We'd come ten miles since midnight, and was humpin' along the trail, half asleep and swearin', when we got the order to halt, and quit talkin', and keep quiet. eW didn't know what was doin' for a minute, and then from down the hill on our left comes up a horrible streak o' blue vitriol language. It seemed to come from a hollow a ways below us, but the jungle was too thick to see anything, so we waited, kind o' speculatin' in our minds, while Chislett and a couple of guides slipped down to investigate.

"Directly the cataract o' cuss words sort o' died out in bubbles, and everything was quiet. Then it begun again, but seemed a little bit dammed in its flow.

"Then we got an order to deploy and circle round to come in on that hollow. At last it looked like there was somethin' doin' besides hikin' the soles off our feet, and it wasn't five minutes 'fore we had that place surrounded, and were movin' in, expectin' a rush.

"Didn't any rush come through, and directly we broke through from all sides and then pulled up, and just stood starin'. There in the centre see Kitson, with his case knife in his hand, a-slicin' off sections of his pig and jammin' them into his mouth. He had his krag on his knees all ready for business, and opposite him sat five little devil niggers, skairt to move an eyelid till he gave 'em the word.

"Son as he got a mouthful of pig chewed down so he could talk, he'd begin revilin' them five. He had 'em cowed to a standstill. They sure thought he was their king. Just as I came through into the clearin' he chucked at 'em a handful o' ribs he'd picked clean.

"'Eat 'em,' he roared at 'em, and the way they scrambled to get their teeth into his leavin's was something to look at.

"About then we rushed in and spoiled the show, and, you can believe it or not, but them little heathen who'd sat there and let Kitson browbeat 'em to a finish fought like wildcats when it come to bein' tied up by the rest of us.

"Kitson was clean off his head. He didn't even know us at first, and wanted to fight the crowd to save the pig.

"Well, now, he'd eat everything but the head. That much was still on the stick, and somehow or other the ears of it looked kind o' peculiar to me. So I walked up and twisted it round, and I'm a pigeon-toed highbinder if it wasn't the head of a nice, little, fat, yellow dog.

"That fellow was certainly a wonder. He'd et all o' ten pounds o' that roast, and he never turned a hair when he found out what it was. Chislett choked us off after a bit, but Kitson never heard the last o' that pig, and he never will.

"The laugh was on us too, only he didn't have brains enough to see it. One o' those five that he captured was Kola, the chief, and the others were all that was left of the bunch of a dozen that we'd been racin' over the skyline after for two weeks. And if it hadn't been for Kitson and his appetite we'd 'a' a worn our feet off half way to our knees 'fore we'd ever come up with 'em.

"But it shows what I was tellin' you, that a man don't even know what he'll do in a tight hole till the hole begins to pinch him. And it's a good bet he won't do what he's figured out he would."

THE CIRCULAR STUDY.

By Anna Katherine Green.

Mr. Gryce was melancholy. He had attained that period in life when the spirits flag and enthusiasm needs a constant spur, and of late there had been a lack of special excitement, and he felt dull and superannuated. He was even contemplating resigning his position on the force and retiring to the little farm he had bought for himself in Westchester; and this in itself did not tend to cheerfulness, for he was one to whom action was a necessity and the exercise of his mental faculties more inspiring than any possible advantage which might accrue to him from their use.

But he was not destined to carry out this impulse yet. For just at the height of his secret dissatisfaction there came a telephone message to Headquarters which roused the old man to something like his former vigor and gave to the close of this gray fall day an interest he had not expected to feel again in this or any other kind of a day. It was sent from Carter's well-known drug store, and was to the effect that a lady had just sent a boy in from the street to say that a strange crime had been committed in ——'s mansion round the corner. The boy did not know the lady, and was shy about showing the money she had given him, but that he had money was very evident, also, that he was frightened enough for his story to be true. If the police wished to communicate with him, he could be found at Carter's, where he would be detained till an order for his release should be received.

A strange crime! That word "strange" struck Mr. Gryce, and made him forget his years in wondering what it meant. Meanwhile the men about him exchanged remarks upon the house brought thus unexpectedly to their notice. As it was one of the few remaining landmarks of the preceding century, and had been made conspicuous moreover by the shops, clubhouses, and restaurants pressing against it on either side, it had been a marked spot for years even to those who knew nothing of its history or traditions.

And now a crime had taken place in it! Mr. Gryce, in whose ears that word "strange" rang with quiet insistence, had but to catch the eye of the inspector in charge to receive an order to investigate the affair. He started at once, and proceeded first to the drug store. There he found the boy, whom he took along with him to the house indicated in the message. On the way he made him talk, but there was nothing the poor waif could add to the story already sent over the telephone. He persisted in saying that a lady (he did not say woman) had come up to him while he was looking at some toys in a window, and, giving him a piece of money, had drawn him along the street as far as the drug store. Here she showed him another coin, promising to add it to the one he had already pocketed if he would run in to the telephone clerk with a message for the police. He wanted the money, and when he grabbed at it she said that all he had to do was to tell the clerk that a strange crime had been committed in the old house on —— street. This scared him, and he was sliding off, when she caught him again and shook him until his wits came back, after which he ran into the store and delivered the message.

There was condor in the boy's tone, and Mr. Gryce was disposed to believe him; but when he was asked to describe the lady, he showed that his powers of observation were no better than those of most of his class. All he could say was that she was a stunner, and wore shiny clothes and jewels, and Mr. Gryce, recognizing the lad's limitations at the very moment he found himself in view of the house he was making for, ceased to question him, and directed all his attention to the building he was approaching.

Nothing in the exterior, bespoke crime or even disturbance. A shut door, a clean stoop, heavily curtained windows (some of which were further shielded by closely drawn shades) were eloquent of inner quiet and domestic respectability, while its calm front of brick, with brownstone trimmings, offered a pleasing contrast to the adjoining buildings jutting out on either side, alive with signs and humming with business.

"Some mistake," muttered Gryce to himself, as the perfect calm reigning over the whole establishment struck him anew. But before he had decided that he had been made the victim of a hoax, a movement took place in the area under the stoop, and an officer stepped out, with a countenance expressive of sufficient perplexity for Mr. Gryce to motion him back with the hurried inquiry: "Anything wrong? Any blood shed? All seems quiet here."

The officer, recognizing the old detective, touched his hat. "Can't get in," said he. "Have rung all the bells. Would think the house empty if I had not seen something like a stir in one of the windows overhead. Shall I try to make my way into the rear yard through one of the lower windows of Knapp & Co.'s store, next door?"

"Yes, and take this boy with you. Lock him up in some one of their offices, and then break your way into this house by some means. It ought to be easy enough from the back yard."

The officer nodded, took the boy by the arm, and in a trice had disappeared with im into the adjoining store. Mr. Gryce remained in the area, where he was presently besieged by a crowd of passers-by, eager to add their curiosity to the trouble they had so quickly scented. The opening of the door from the inside speedily put an end to importunities for which he had as yet no reply, and he was enabled to slip within, where he found himself in a place of almost absolute quiet. Before him lay a basement hall leading to a kitchen, which, even at that moment, he noticed to be in trimmer condition than is usual where much housework is done, but he saw nothing that bespoke tragedy, or even a break in the ordinary routine of life as observed in houses of like size and pretension.

Satisfied that what he sought was not to be found here, he followed the officer upstairs. As they emerged upon the parlor floor, the latter dropped the following information:

"Mr. Raffner of the firm next door says that the man who lives here is an odd sort of person whom nobody knows; a bookworm, I think they call him. He has occupied the house six months, yet they have never seen any one about the premises but himself and a strange old servant as peculiar and uncommunicative as his master."

"I know," muttered Mr. Gryce. He did know, everybody knew, that this house, once the seat of one of New York's most aristocratic families, was inhabited at present by a Mr. Adams, noted alike for his more than common personal attractions, his wealth, and the uncongenial nature of his temperament, which precluded all association with his kind. It was this knowledge which had given zest to this investigation. To enter the house of such a man was an event in itself; to enter it on an errand of life and death —— Well, it is under the inspiration of such opportunities that life is reawakened in old veins, especially when those veins connect the heart and brain of a sagacious, if octogenarian, detective.

The hall in which they now found themselves was wide, old-fashioned, and sparsely furnished in the ancient manner to be observed in such time-honored structures. Two doors led into this hall, both of which now stood open. Taking advantage of this fact, they would have left the place as unnearly opposite the top of the staircase they had just ascended, and found themselves in a room barren as a doctor's outer office. There was nothing here worth their attention, and they would have left thep lace as unceremoniously as they had entered it if they had not caught glimpses of richness which promised an interior of uncommon elegance, behind the half-drawn folds of a portiere at the further end of the room.

Advancing through the doorway thus indicated, they took one look about them and stood appalled. Nothing in their experience (and they had both experienced much) had prepared them for the thrilling solemn nature of what they were to be called upon to contemplate.

Shall I attempt its description?

A room small and of circular shape, hung with strange tapestries relieved here and there by priceless curios, and lit, although it was still daylight, by a jet of rose-colored light concentrated, not on the rows and rows of books around the lower portion of the room, or on the one great picture which held the attention, but on the upturned face of a man lying on a bearskin rug with a dagger in his heart and on his breast a cross whose golden lines, sharply outlined against his long, dark, swathing garment, gave him the appearance of a saint perpared in some holy place for burial, save that the dagger spoke of death, and his face of an anguish for which Mr. Gryce, notwithstanding his lifelong experience, found no name, so little did it answer to a sensation of fear, pain, or surprise, or any of the emotions usually visible on the countenances of such as have fallen under the unexpected stroke of the assassin.

MYSTERIES.

A moment of indecision, of awe even, elapsed before Mr. Gryce recovered himself. The dim light, the awesome silence, the unexpected surroundings recalling a romantic age, the motionless figure of him who so lately had been the master of the house, lying outstretched as for the tomb, with the sacred symbol on his breast offering such violent contradiction to the earthly passion which had driven the dagger home, were enough to move even the tried spirit of this old officer of the law and confuse a mind which, in the years of his long connection with the force, had had many serious problems to work upon, but never one just like this.

It was only for a moment, though. Before the man behind him had given utterance to his own bewilderment and surprise, Mr. Gryce had passed in and taken his stand by the prostrate figure.

That it was that of a man who had long since ceased to breathe he could not for a moment doubt; yet his first act was to make sure of the fact by laying his hand on the pulse and examining the eyes, whose expression of reproach was such that he had to call up all his professional sangfroid to meet them.

He found the body still warm, but dead beyond all question, and, once convinced of this, he forbore to draw the dagger from the wound, though he did not fail to give it the most careful attention before turning his eyes elsewhere. It was no ordinary weapon. It was a curio from some oriental shop. This in itself seemed to point to suicide, but the direction in which the blade had entered the body and the position of the wound were not such as would be looked for in a case of self-murder.

The other clews were few. Though the scene had been one of bloodshed and death, the undoubted result of a sudden and fierce attack, there were no signs of a struggle to be found in the well-ordered apartment. Beyond a few rose leaves scattered on the floor, the room was a scene of peace and quiet luxury. Even the large table which occupied the centre of the room and near which the master of the house had been standing when struck gave no token of the tragedy which had been enacted at its side. That is, not at first glance; for though its large top was covered with article of use and ornament, they all stood undisturbed and presumably in place, as if the shock which had laid their owner low had failed to be communicated to his belongings.

The contents of the table were various. Only a man of complex tastes and attainments could have collected and arranged in one small compass pipes, pens, portraits, weights, measures, Roman lamps, Venetian glass, rare porcelains, medals, rough metal work, manuscript, a scroll of music, a pot of growing flowers, and—and—(this seemed oddest of all) a row of electric buttons, which Mr. Gryce no longer touched than the light which had been burning readily in the cage of fretted ironwork overhead changed in a twinkling to a greenish glare, filling the room with such ghastly tints that Mr. Gryce sought in haste another button, and, pressing it, was glad to see a mild white radiance take the place of the sickly hue which had added its own horror to the already solemn terrors of the spot.

"Childish tricks for a man of his age and position," ruminated Mr. Gryce; but after catching another glimpse of the face lying upturned at his feet he was conscious of a doubt as to whether the owner of that countenance could have possessed an instinct which was in any way childish, so strong and purposeful were his shapely cut features. Indeed, the face was one to make an impression under any circumstances. In the present instance, and with such an expression stamped upon it, it exerted a fascination which disturbed the current of the detective's thoughts whenever by any chance he allowed it to get between him and his duty. To attribute folly to a man with such an expression stamped upon was to own one's self a poor judge of human nature. Therefore, the lamp overhead, with its electric connection and changing slides, had a meaning which at present could be sought for only in the evidences of scientific research observable in the books and apparatus everywhere surrounding him.

Letting the white light burn on, Mr. Gryce, by a characteristic effort, shifted his attention to the walls, covered, as I have said, with tapestries and curios. There was nothing on them calculated to aid him in his research into the secret of this crime, unless—yes, there was something, a bent-down nail, wrenched from its place, the nail on which the cross had hung which now lay upon the dead man's heart. The cord by which it had been suspended still clung to the cross and mingled its red threads with that other scarlet thread which had gone to meet it from the victim's wounded breast. Who had torn down that cross? Not the victim himself. With such a wound any such movement would have been impossible. Besides, the nail and the empty place on the wall were as far removed from where he lay as was possible in the somewhat circumscribed area of this circular apartment. Another's hand, then, had pulled down this symbol of peace and pardon, and placed it where the dying man's fleeting breath would play across it, a peculiar exhibition of religious hope or mad remorse, to the significance of which Mr. Gryce could not devote more than a passing thought, so golden were the moments in which he found himself upon this scene of crime.

Behind the table ahd half-way up the wall was a picture, the only large picture in the room. It was the portrait of a young girl of an extremely interesting and pathetic beauty. From hair, it had evidently been painted her garb and the arrangement of her about the end of our civil war. In it was to be observed the same haunting quality of intellectual charm visible in the man lying prone upon the floor, and though she was fair and he dark, there was sufficient likeness between the two to argue some sort of relationship between them. Below this picture was fastened a sword, a pair of epaulettes, and a medal such as was awarded for valor in the civilwar.

"Momentoes which may help us in ous task," mused the detective.

Passing on, he came unexpectedly upon a narrow curtain, so dark of hue and so akin in pattern to the draperies on the adjoining walls that it had up to this time escaped his attention. It was not that of a window, for such windows as were to be seen in this unique apartment were high upon the wall, indeed, almost under the ceiling. It must, therefore, drape the opening into still another communicating room. And such he found to be the case. Pushing this curtain aside, he entered a narrow closet containing a bed, a dresser, and a small table. The bed was the narrow cot of a bachelor, and the dresser that of a man of luxurious tastes and the utmost nicety of habit. Both the bed and dresser were in perfect order, save for a silver-backed comb, which had been taken from the latter, and which he presently found lying on the floor at the other end of the room. This and the presence of a pearl-handled parasol on a small stand near the door proclaimed that a woman had been there within a short space of time. The identity of this woman was soon established in his eyes by a small but unmistakable token conecting her with the one who had been the means of sending in the alarm to the police. The token of which I speak was a little black spangle, called by milliners and mantuamakers a sequin, which lay on the threshold separating this room from the study; and as Mr. Gryce, attracted by its sparkle, stooped to examine it, his eye caught sight of a similar one on the floor beyond, and of still another a few stps farther on. The last one lay close to the large centre-table before which he had just been standing.

The dainty trail formed by these bright sparkling drops seemed to affect him oddly. He knew, minute observer that he was, that in the manufacture of this garniture the spangles are strung on a thread which, if once broken, allows them to drop away one by one, till you can almost follow a woman so arrayed by the sequins that fall from her. Perhaps it was the delicate nature of the clew thus offered that pleased him; perhaps it was a recognition of the irony of fate in thus making a trap for unwary mortals out of their vanities. Whatever it was, the smile with which he turned his eye upon the table toward which he had thus been led was very eloquent. But before examining this article of furniture more closely, he attempted to find out where the thread had become loosened which had let the spangles fall. Had it caught on any projection in doorway or furniture? He saw none. All the chairs were cushioned and—But wait! there was the cross! That had a fretwork of gold at its base. Might not this filagree have caught in her dress as she was tearing down the cross from the wall and so have started the thread which had given him this exquisite clew?

Hastening to the spot where the cross had hung, he searched the floor at his feet, but found nothing to confirm his conjecture until he had reached the rug on which the prostrate man lay. There, amid the long hairs of the bearskin, he came upon one other spangle, and knew that the woman in the shiny clothes had stooped there before him.

Satisfied on this point, he returned to the table, and this time subjected it to a thorough and minute examination. That the result was not entirely unsatisfactory was evident from the smile with which he eyed his finger after having drawn it across a certain spot near the inkstand, and also from the care with which he lifted the inkstand and replaced it in precisely the same spot from which he had taken it up. Had he expected to find something concealed under it? Who can tell? A detective's face seldom yields up its secrets.

He was musing quite intently before this table when a quick step behind him made him turn. Styles, the officer, having now been over the house, had returned, and was standing before him in the attitude of one who has something to say.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Gryce, with a quick movement in his direction.

For answer the officer pointed to the staircase visible through the antechamber door.

"Go up!" was indicated by his gesture.

Mr. Gryce demurred, casting a glance around the room, which at that moment interested him so deeply. At this the man showed some excitement, and, breaking silence, said:

"Come! I have lighted on the guilty party. He is in a room upstairs."

"He?" Mr. Gryce was evidently surprised at the pronoun.

"Yes; there can be no doubt about it. When you see him—but what is that? Is he coming down? I'm sure there's nobody else in the house. Don't you hear footsteps, sir?"

Mr. Gryce nodded. Some one was certainly descending the stairs.

(To be continued.)