

# THE MAELSTROM

By FRANK FROEST.  
Late Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard.

Draftsmen made plans to scale of the room and every article in it. A fingerprint expert peered round searchingly, scattering black or gray powder on things which the murderer might have touched. In the top-most rooms Congreve, Menzies's right-hand man, had begun a hasty search of the house, that would become more minute the next day.

Menzies had occupied a morning room at the back of the house, and was deep in consultation with Sir Hilary Thornton, the grizzled assistant commissioner, and Heldon Foyle, the square-shouldered, well-groomed superintendent of the criminal investigation department. There was little likeness between the three men, unless it lay in a certain hint of humor in the eyes and a firmness of the mouth. A detective without a sense of humor is lost.

Now and again Menzies broke off the conversation to issue an order or receive a report. Thornton observed for the first time the characters in which he made a few notes on the back of an envelope.

"I didn't know you knew Greek, Menzies," he remarked.

The chief inspector twiddled his pencil awkwardly. "I used it now and again, Sir Hilary. You see, if I should lose my notes by any chance it's odds against the finder reading them. I used to do them in shorthand, but I save it up. There are too many people who understand it, see, what is it, Johnson?"

The man who had entered held out a paper. "Addresses of the cook and housemaid, sir. One lives at Potters Bar, the other at Walthamstow."

"Have them fetched by taxi," ordered Menzies curtly.

"Couldn't you have statements taken from them?" asked Sir Hilary mildly.

"It's rather a drag for women in the middle of the night," Menzies smoothed his moustache.

"We don't know what may develop here sir. We may want to put some questions quickly."

While thus Menzies was straining every resource which a great organization possessed to gather together into his hands the end of the case, Jimmie Hallett awoke once more.

The throbbing in his head had gone, and he lay for a while with closed eyes, listlessly conscious of the mutter of low voices in the room.

He sat up, and at once a dapper little man was by his side. "Ah, you've woken up! Feeling better? That's right. Drink this. We want you to pull yourself together for a while."

"Thanks. I'm all right," returned Hallett mechanically. He drank something which the other held out to him in a tumbler, and a rush of new life thrilled through him. "Are you Mr. Menzies?"

"No, I'm the police divisional surgeon. Mr. Menzies is in the next room. Think you're up to telling him what has happened? He's anxious to know the meaning of all this."

"So am I," said Hallett grimly, and staggered to his feet. "Just a trifle groggy," he added as he swayed, and the little doctor thrust a supporting shoulder under his arm.

The three in the next room rose as Hallett was ushered in. It was Foyle who sprang to assist Hallett and lifted him bodily on to the settee, which Menzies pushed under the chandelier. The doctor went out.

"Quite comfortable, eh?" asked Foyle. "Let me take that cushion a bit easier for you. Now you're better. We won't worry you at present more than we can help, will we, Menzies?"

The three great detectives, for all that their solitude seemed solely

for the comfort of the young man, were studying him keenly and unobtrusively. Already they had talked his over, but any suspicions that they might have held were quite indefinite.

At the opening stage of a murder investigation every one is suspected. In that lies the difference between murder and professional crime. A burglary, a forgery, is usually committed for one fixed motive, by a fixed class of criminal, and the search is narrowed from the start. A millionaire does not pick pockets, but he is quite as likely as any one else to kill an enemy. In a murder case no detective would say positively that any person innocent until he is absolutely certain of the guilt of the real murderer.

Hallett, whose brain was beginning to work swiftly, held out his hand to the chief inspector. "Please to meet you Mr. Menzies. I've got a letter of introduction to you from Pinkerton. That's how I came to ring you up. My name's Hallett."

Menzies shook hands. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Hallett. This is Sir Hilary Thornton—Mr. Heldon Foyle.

"And now," said Jimmie decisively, when the introductions were done, "do you people think I killed this man, Grege-Stratton?"

The possibility had been in the minds of every one in the room, but they were taken aback by the abruptness of the question. Weir Menzies laughed, as though the idea were preposterous.

"Not unless you've swallowed the pistol, Mr. Hallett. We've found no weapons of any kind. You were locked in, you know. Now tell us all about it. I couldn't hear a word you said on the telephone."

They all listened thoughtfully until he had finished. Thornton elevated his eyebrows in question at his two companions as the recital closed.

"Where are those checks?" asked Foyle. "They may help us."

Hallett patted his pockets in rapid succession. "They're gone!" he exclaimed. "They must have been taken off me when I was knocked out!"

"Him," said Foyle reflectively. "Can you make anything of it, Menzies?"

The chief inspector was gnawing his moustache, a sure sign of bewilderment with him. He shrugged his shoulders. There's little enough to take hold of," he returned. "Could you recognize any of the people you saw again, Mr. Hallett? The girl, the man who was running after her or the chap in the house?"

"I haven't the vaguest idea of what the face of either of the men was like," said Hallett.

"But the woman—the girl?" persisted Menzies.

Hallett hesitated. "I—I think it possible that I might," he admitted. Then an impulse took him. "But I'm sure she's not the sort of person to be mixed up in—"

The three detectives smiled openly. "In this kind of mess, you were going to say," finished Menzies. "There's only one flaw in your reasoning—she is."

Wrung as dry of information as a squeezed sponge of water, Hallett was permitted to depart. The courtesy of Sir Hilary Thornton supplied him with a motor-car back to his hotel, the forethought of Menzies provided him with an escort in the shape of a detective sergeant.

Hallett would have been less pleased had he known that the before-mentioned detective sergeant was to be relieved from all other duties for the specific purpose of keeping an eye upon him. Weir Menzies was always cautious, and

though his own impression of the young man had been favorable enough, he was taking no chances.

All through that night Weir Menzies drove his allies hither and thither in the attempt to bring the end of the raveled threads of mystery into his hand. No one knew better than he the importance of a first hot burst of pursuit. An hour in the initial stages of an investigation is worth a week later on.

His irritation at being kept out of bed had all vanished now that he was on the warpath. He could think would be forced to absent himself.

Scores of messages had been sent over the private telegraph and telephone systems of the Metropolitan Police before, at seven o'clock in the morning, he took a respite. It was to an all-night Turkish bath in the neighborhood of Piccadilly Circus that he made his way.

At nine o'clock, spruce and ruddy, showing no trace of his all-night work, beyond a slight tightening of the brows, he was in Heldon Foyle's office. The superintendent nodded as he came in.

"You look fine, Menzies. Got your man?"

The other made a motion of his hand deprecatory of badinage. "Nope," he said, "but I've got a line on him."

Foyle sat up and adjusted his pipe. "The deuce you have. Who is he?"

"His name is Errol," said Menzies. "He's a stepson of Grege-Stratton, and was pushed out of the country seven years ago."

"Menzies," said Foyle, laying down his pipe. "You ought to be in a book."

(To be continued.)

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## POEMS You Should Know

### JERUSALEM, THE GOLDEN.

Jerusalem, the golden,  
With milk and honey blest,  
Beneath thy contemplation  
Sinks heart and voice oppressed;  
I know not, O, I know not,  
What joys await me there,  
What radiance of glory,  
What bliss beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,  
As jubilant with song,  
And bright with many an angel,  
And all the martyr throng;  
The Prince is ever in them,  
The daylight is serene;  
The pastures of the blessed  
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;  
And there, from care released,  
The shout of them that triumph,  
The song of them that feast;  
And they who, with their Leader,  
Have conquered in the fight  
Forever and forever  
Are clad in robes of white.  
—Translated from the Latin, by John M. Neale.

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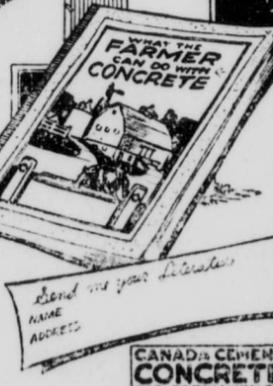
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