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The Diamond Block

A Case of Too Strong a "Detective Instinct"

By CLARISSA MACKIE

It happened in Chicago. The Diamond block stands on a corner formed by two principal thoroughfares, a tall building with buff stone walls rising above the crowded streets until the upper floors are a blur to the eye below.

Up on the twentieth floor are the offices of John Diamond, owner of this building and many others of the same kind in the big metropolis. Many and varied are the interests of this rich man and the transaction of his affairs requires the reservation of the entire twentieth floor for his offices.

All day long dozens of clerks pore over ledgers, typewriters and adding machines.

Mr. Diamond was seldom seen about the building. Most of his business was transacted through competent executives, of whom Henry Robinson was the chief. The Diamonds lived in a magnificent house on the lake front and went in for society. Helen Diamond, the beautiful daughter of the multimillionaire, had drifted through the offices once or twice to



"WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?" HE DEMANDED, see her father, and her coming and going had blazed a trail of fire in the heart of George Brown, the newest clerk on the force.

It was a singular fact that Mr. Diamond's rare visits to his offices were invariably on the eve of his departure for Colorado and Arizona, where he had extensive mining interests.

It was immediately after one of these periodical visits of John Diamond that young George Brown, the new accountant, did a bit of detective work that brought him to the personal notice of the great John Diamond himself.

Young Brown was a slim, dapper youth, who did not hate himself in the least and who was not in love with work of any sort. He read detective stories and knew positively that he was one of the chosen few. He possessed the "detective instinct." He believed himself quite fascinating enough to win his employer's daughter, Helen Diamond, flatterer himself that he was capable of becoming general manager of the whole business and so would be an acceptable son-in-law.

The morning young Brown entered the elevator and was sped up aloft with other workers. The car stopped at the eighteenth floor to let off passengers and again at the nineteenth to drop Trowbridge, who worked in the Dover Insurance offices. Up it shot to the twentieth floor, where Brown got off with a puzzled frown marring his innocent brow.

The empty car dropped down and as it went he watched it intently. Then he walked to another elevator and rode

Constipation

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down to the ground floor, counting each floor as he passed. When he axially mounted to the twentieth floor there was a strange light in his eyes and excitement tingling every nerve of his sensitive frame.

He was on the verge of a mystery, the solving of which would place him in the limelight of publicity and bring down upon his talented head the eternal approval and friendship of John Diamond.

Over his ledger Brown pondered the facts as he had stumbled upon them. Between the nineteenth and twentieth floors of the Diamond block there was an expanse of white wall quite unaccounted for—why, that blank wall was the height of any of the other floors in the building and yet there appeared no door to mar its surface. The elevators were of special construction, with walls of solid metal plates and a gridded door, and the passing of this fifteen feet of unaccounted for space might be quite unnoticed unless one was sharp eyed and sharp eared, like young Brown. Why should there be such a waste of space in this great building, where every foot of room was valuable?

That was the mystery, and George Brown resolved to solve it.

At noon, as he waited for the elevator, he saw the roof of the ascending car stop just below his floor level, and he distinctly heard Mr. Robinson's voice. When the elevator reached the twentieth floor it was empty.

"I thought Mr. Robinson was on the car," said Brown curiously.

The middle aged operator shook his head negatively.

Henry Robinson, the manager of the Diamond interests, was a martinet in discipline. George Brown despised him accordingly and knew with unerring certainty that he could fill Robinson's job with one hand tied behind him.

Brown argued thus: Henry Robinson had supervised the building of the Diamond block—what more natural than he should continue to have one of the floors sealed to public knowledge, yea, even the knowledge of his guileless employer, and use it to his own advantage? What sort of work was carried on secretly there? George Brown had it all figured out to a nicety; counterfeiting, of course.

Robinson, the counterfeiter! What a morsel for the amateur detective to roll under his tongue.

But George Brown wanted to be very sure that he was right before springing his information upon the unsuspecting John Diamond. Just at this time Mr. Diamond was in the west.

So George Brown entered the tall building across the street and surveyed the Diamond block from the outside and studied the Diamond block from an upper floor whose windows were on a level with the windows of the mysterious unnumbered floor of the Diamond block.

Counting carefully he found the nineteenth floor, gold lettered windows of the Dover Insurance company quite distinct—then another set of windows unlettered, closely curtained, then above them the wire screened windows of the Diamond offices, known as the twentieth floor.

At last he decided to consult a detective.

So one evening at 6 o'clock the elevator carried up five passengers—George Brown, Allen, the detective, and two policemen in plain clothes and a reporter from the Daily Dishup, for Brown did not want his triumph to pass unnoticed.

When they had risen several stories Allen placed his hand on the arm of the elevator man and showed a revolver.

"You are my prisoner," he said coolly. "Now, my man, no fuss. Just stop at that unnumbered floor between the nineteenth and twentieth."

White of face and with muttered protests the man brought the car to a standstill before that mysterious, unnumbered space that had attracted the attention of keen young Brown. Instead of opening the usual door, the man turned and slid back a door in the rear of the elevator, disclosing a corresponding doorway in the wall.

That was the entrance to the unnumbered floor.

George Brown was a-tremble with excitement.

The five entered the door and found themselves at once in a narrow passageway, softly lighted and thickly carpeted. As they passed from one lux-

uriously furnished room to another Brown pictured the downfall of the guilty manager when his secret should be disclosed to Diamond.

Handsome library, luxurious smoking room, billiard room and then the murmur of voices from an adjoining room brought the five to a standstill before a closed door.

Then with one movement the five pushed into a small, lighted study, where sat Robinson, the manager, in intimate conversation with—John Diamond himself!

The millionaire sprang to his feet and stared angrily at the invaders. "What does this mean?" he demanded.

The detective, Allen, was quite unwilling to share the honor alone. He grasped George Brown by his coat collar and pushed him to the front. In picturesque words he explained the situation.

"And this young pinhead"—he ended in a gasp of rage as he shook George Brown as a terrier shakes a rat.

Mr. Diamond was smiling austere. "Gentlemen," he said at last, "this private suite of rooms is the only refuge of a man weary of the noise and clutter of the world and the hollow thing called 'society.' Here I can hide for weeks at a time, absorbed in my books and in my experimental work in the laboratory yonder. Now that you have spied me out I can no longer remain unless I have your word of honor that my secret shall remain unpublished."

Freely they gave the promise, all save George Brown, who was too crushed for utterance. He merely nodded his head in a broken hearted way and was glad that he knew of another job that he might have for the asking, a job where there was so much work to be done that there was no time for the development of the detective instinct.

But the reporter of the Daily Dishup yielded to temptation one day and published the whole story, and to the end of it he appended the announcement of the engagement of Miss Helen Diamond to Henry Robinson, general manager of the Diamond interests.

And George Brown, sticking manfully to his new job, smiled bitterly when he read the announcement and took to his breast the one crumb of consolation it afforded him.

He had been right in his argument that a millionaire's daughter sometimes marries her father's general manager.

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The Isle of Yachts.

Cowes had many ups and downs before it finally attained its destiny as the headquarters of yachting. Sir John Oglender, writing in Stuart times, says, "I knew when there was not above three or four houses at Cowes," but he had counted 300 ships at anchor there, "and I was and am persuaded that if our wars and troubles had not unfortunately happened it would have grown as famous as Newport." The wars, complained of were the civil wars. Foreign war had been a fine thing for Cowes, since the warships bought the island's produce there. But the civil wars struck the gentry hard, and Sir John adds the coming of lawyers as another curse. The first attorney was expelled from the island by the governor as a public danger. "Now peace and law hath beguiled us all," says Sir John—London Chronicle.

Books by Weight.

Many years ago in San Francisco there was a bookseller who had an intimate knowledge of fiction prices, but who was all astray when it came to general literature or scientific works. A customer having selected a volume would ask the price and, without so much as bothering to look at the title, if he saw that it was not a novel, the seller would roughly weigh it on his hand and name the sum. Many a bargain was picked up in that way, but as the bookseller also bought on the same principle, he never lost anything to speak of.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Bracelets.

Bracelets have been worn from time immemorial, but few wearers of the golden bands of the present day know that they were once used to distinguish the insane. Before lunatics were confined to insane asylums they wore an armband for distinction.

Top of the Rhine.

Mrs. Robinson—And were you up the Rhine? Mrs. de Jones—I should think so, right to the very top. What a splendid view there is from the summit!—London Tit-Bits.

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