

THE CRIMSON BLIND

BY FRED M. WHITE

"Well, that was hardly like Van Sneek. Our friend is nothing if not diplomatic. But when he did manage to get into the house again the picture was gone."

"Excellent!" Henson cried. "How dramatic! There is only one thing required to make the story complete. The picture was taken away by Hatherley Bell. If you don't bring that in as the denouement I shall be utterly disappointed."

"You needn't be," Littimer said, coolly. "That is exactly what did happen."

Henson chuckled again, quite a parody of a chuckle this time. He could detect the subtle suggestion of triumph in Littimer's voice.

"Did Van Sneek tell you all this?" he asked.

"Not the latter part of it," Littimer replied, "seeing that he was in the hospital when it happened. But I know it is true, because I saw Bell and David Steel, the novelist, come away from the house, and Bell had the picture under his arm. And that's why Van Sneek's agent couldn't find it the second time he went. Check to you, my friend, at any rate. Bell will go to my father with Rembrandt number two, and compare it with number one. And then the fat will be in the fire."

Henson yawned affectedly. All the same he was terribly disturbed and shaken. All he wanted now was to be alone and to think. So far as he could tell nobody besides Littimer could tell anybody of the matter. And no starved, cowed, broken-hearted puppy was ever closer under the heel of his master than Littimer. He still held all the cards; he still controlled the fortunes of two ill-starred houses.

"You can leave me now," he said. "I'm tired. I have had a trying day, and I need sleep; and the sooner you are out of the house the better. For your own sake and for the sake of those about you, you need not say one word of this to End Henson."

Littimer promised meekly enough. With those eyes blazing upon him he would have promised anything. We shall see presently what a stupendous terror Henson had over the younger man, and in what way all the sweetness and savor of life was being crushed out of him.

He closed the door behind him, and immediately Henson sat up in bed. He reached for his handkerchief and wiped the big beads from his forehead.

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PATTERN DEPARTMENT, LONDON ADVERTISER.

"So the danger has come at last," he muttered. "I am face to face with it, and I know I should be. Hatherley Bell is not the man to quietly lie down under a cloud like that. The man has brains. Now, does he suspect that I have any hand in the business? I must see him when my nerves are stronger and try and get at the truth. If he goes to Lord Littimer and my position perilously. What a fool I was not to get it away. But, then, I only escaped from the Brighton police in those days by the skin of my teeth. And they had followed me from Hyddersfield like those cursed bloodhounds here. I wonder

he paused, as the brilliant outline of some cunning scheme occurred to him. A thin, cruel smile crept over his lips. Never had he been in a tight place yet without discovering a loophole of escape almost before he had seen the trap.

"Splendid," he whispered. "Worthy of Machiavelli himself! Provided always that I can get there first. If I could only see Bell's face afterwards, Littimer ordering him off the premises. The only question is, am I up to seeing the thing through?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

End Learns Something.

Reginald Henson struggled out of bed and into his clothing as best he could. He was terribly weak and shaky, far more weak than he had imagined himself to be, but he was in danger now, and his indomitable will-power pulled him through. What a fool Littimer had been to tell him triumph over his powerful foe for a few minutes. But Henson was planning a little scheme by which he intended to repay the young man tenfold. He had no doubt as to the will-power of his tool.

He took a bottle of brandy from a drawer and helped himself to a liberal dose. Walker had expressly forbidden anything of the kind. The grateful Henson drank his immediate effect. Then Henson rang the bell, and after a time Williams appeared.

"You are to go down to Barnes and ask him to send a cab here as soon as possible," Henson said. "I have to go morning."

Williams nodded, with his mouth wide open. He was astonished and not a little alarmed at the strength and vitality of this man. And only a few hours before Williams had learnt with deep satisfaction that Henson would be confined to his bed for some days.

Henson dressed at length and packed a small portmanteau. But he had to sit on his bed for some little time and sip a further dose of brandy before he could move farther. After all there was no hurry. A full hour was sure to elapse before the leisurely Barnes brought the cab to the lodgings.

Henson crept downstairs at length and trod his catlike way to the library. Once there he proceeded to make a minute inspection of the telephone. He turned the handle just a fragment of an inch and a queer smile came over his face. Then he crept as silently upstairs, opened the window on to the leads. There were a couple of insulators here, against the wire of one of which Henson tapped his knuckles gently. The wire gave back an answering twang. The other jangled limp and loose.

"One of the wires cut," Henson muttered. "I expected a deal too clever. I suppose this is some suggestion of her very astute friend, David Steel. Well, I have given Mr. Steel one lesson in minding his own business, and if he interferes further I shall have to give him another. He will be in jail before long charged with attempted murder and robbery with violence, and so exit Steel. After that the girl will perhaps be chary of seeking outside assistance. And this will be the third I have had to get rid of. Heavens! How feeble I feel, how weak I am. And yet I must go through this thing now."

He staggered into the house again and dropped into a chair. There was a loud buzzing in his ears, so that he could hardly hear the murmur of voices in the drawing-room below. This was annoying, because Henson liked to hear everything that other folks said. Then he dropped off into a kind of dreamy state, coming back presently to the consciousness that he had fainted.

Meanwhile Frank Littimer had joined End in the drawing-room. The house was perfectly quiet and still by this time; the dust-cloud hung on the air and caused the lamps to burn with a spitting blue flame. End's face looked dead against her black dress.

"So you have been seeing Reginald," she said. "Why—why did you do it?"

"I didn't mean to," Frank muttered. "I never intended him to know that I had been in the house at all. But I was passing his room and he heard me. He seemed to know my footsteps. I believe if two mice ran by him twice in the darkness he could tell the difference between them."

"You had an interesting conversation. What did he want to use the telephone for?"

"I don't know. I tried to manipulate it for him, but the instrument was out of order."

"I know. I had a pretty shrewd idea what our cousin was going to do. You see, I was listening at the door. Not

a very ladylike thing to do, but one must fight Henson with his own tools. When I heard him ask for the telephone directory I ran out and nipped one of the wires by the bathroom. Frank, it would have been far wiser if you hadn't come."

Littimer nodded gloomily. There was something like tears in his eyes.

"I know it," he said. "I hate the place and its dreadful associations. But I wanted to see Chris first. Did she say anything about me before—before—"

"My dear boy, she loved you always. She knew and understood, and was sorry. And she never, never forgot the last time that you were in the house."

Frank Littimer glanced across the room with a shudder. His eyes dwelt with fascination on the overturned table with its broken china and glass and wilted flowers in the corner.

"It is not the kind of thing to forget," he said, hoarsely. "I can see my father now—"

"Don't," End shuddered, "don't recall it. And your mother has never been the same since. I doubt if she will ever be the same again. From that day to this nothing has ever been touched in the house. And Henson comes here when he can and makes our lives hideous to us."

"I fancy I shook him up tonight," Littimer said, with subdued triumph. "He seemed to shudder when I told him that I had found Van Sneek."

End started from her chair. Her eyes were shining with the sudden brilliancy of unveiled stars.

"Where have you found Van Sneek?" she whispered. "Where?"

(To Be Continued.)

CAPSIZED IN MID STREAM

Three Sulphite Mill Employees Drowned Near Watertown, N. Y.

Watertown, N. Y., May 19.—Three men, one an American, and two Hungarians, were drowned in Black River at Dexter, 6 miles west of this city, last night. The victims are: Frank Ellis, aged 25, unmarried; Frank Povlish, aged 22, and Joe Mulach, aged 23.

All the men were employees of the Dexter Sulphite Pulp and Paper Company, and in company with John Povlish, a small rowboat. The current at that point is very strong and the overloaded craft capsized in midstream, throwing the occupants into the water. John Povlish clung to the overturned boat and was rescued soon after. The bodies have not yet been recovered.

FLEEING FROM PLAGUE DIES BY A TONIC

Venezuelan Millionaire the Victim of a Drug Clerk's Mistake.

New York, May 19.—Fleeing from plague-stricken Venezuela, Eduardo De Erazo, a coffee planter, and reputed multi-millionaire, came to his death in a fashionable New York hotel early today through taking what he believed to be a harmless tonic. His wife, who also took some of the medicine, is in a serious condition at the moment. In the hotel, the refugees are without a directing head. Whether they will now continue their journey to Europe where they had planned to remain until the danger period from the yubonic plague in Venezuela has passed is yet to be determined. It is alleged that a drug clerk who prepared the medicine for Mr. De Erazo made an error in compounding the drugs, using atropine, a deadly poison, instead of asphenerina, which the prescription called for.

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GIRL WAS A VICTIM

The Remains of Jennie Olsen, Murdered by Mrs. Guinness, Identified.

Laporte, Ind., May 19.—The issuing of a certificate of death of Jennie Olsen and the turning over of the body of Coroner Mack to her relatives in Chicago puts the official stamp of identification upon one of the bodies found at the Guinness farm regarding which there has been much controversy. Although identified by the brother and sister, many refused to believe that the girl was dead, as Mrs. Guinness had informed a number of persons that Jennie had gone to Los Angeles to attend school, and had arranged little incidents that would help to make this point strong. A letter was received, saying that a girl answering her description had been seen in a convent near Los Angeles. This, however, was not substantiated. The grand jury resumed its sessions today. The seven unidentified bodies, one female, and the other bary, exhumed from Mrs. Guinness' barnyard were today buried in the potter's field.

SIR L. CASALUT DEAD

Noted Jurist Passes Away After a Distinguished Career.

Quebec, May 18.—Sir Louis Casault, one of the foremost citizens of Quebec and a noted jurist, who had been ill for some time, died at noon today.

The late Sir Louis Napoleon Casault was son of the late Louis Casault, who was born at St. Thomas in 1823. He was called to the bar in 1847, and was for years head of the firm of Casault, Langlois & Angers. He was professor of commercial and maritime law in Laval University from 1858 to 1891, and was created a Q. C. by Viscount Monck in 1867. At the bar he was counsel for the province of Quebec in the arbitration for the delimitation and adjustment of the debts, provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and afterwards appointed one of the three arbitrators charged with one of the settlement of the accounts between the Dominion and provinces. He sat for Montigny in the Canadian Assembly, 1854-57, and for Bellechasse in the Commons from 1867 until elevated to the bench as justice of the superior court, Quebec, 1870.

He received the honor of knighthood in 1894, and became chief justice of the superior court the same year.

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Step into our Millinery Department some day this week. The new 24th of May Hats are ready to receive you. The charm and attractiveness of the Hats unexpectedly reposes in their prices.

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STATION AGENT HELD UP

Fort William, May 18.—Agent Forrester, of the Canadian Northern Railway, at Atikokan, resigned on Friday night. Early on Saturday morning he returned to the station and told the night operator that he was going to take the cash out of the safe. His statement was backed up by two revolvers, and the operator could not object.

About \$600 was secured. Then Forrester marched the operator over to his (Forrester's) boardinghouse and compelled him to help him pack up his belongings. This done, Forrester returned to the station and then made off northwards. The night operator was afraid to return to the station and walked 19 miles to the next station and gave the alarm.

Forrester, however, made a clean getaway, and has not been located.

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Ladies' Oxfords, ranging in price from 88¢ to \$1.98. On most of these you save 45c pair.

Ladies' Dongola Gaiters, easy fitting, worth \$1.75. Sale price \$1.18

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This is a true statement, for we were in a most unique position in the matter of buying, for which we feel in a great measure indebted to the loss sustained by Messrs. Pocock Bros. & Co., Toronto, whose stock of shoes was damaged by water—only slightly, 'tis true, but enough to bring them to us at a price much below regular. The ill-wind that was theirs blew us good; otherwise we would not have been able to have attracted so many new customers our way in so short a time. The stock came to us at a time when money was hard to get—when times were very dull—a time most acceptable to us and to the public—and now when we are beginning to see the end of this special stock, we desire to advise those who need Shoes, whether in the city or country, to make a special point not to miss getting every need supplied at once. Secure some of our great specials for

Men's Heavy Work Shoes, ranging in price from \$1.18 to \$1.98. On most of these you save 50c pair.

Men's Fine Shoes ranging in price from \$2.28 to \$3.48. On these you save 75c to \$2.00 pair.

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