

THE MAELSTROM

By Frank Froest

Late Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department of New Scotland Yard. (Copyright)

(From Friday's Daily.)
Meanwhile Detective-Sergeant Congreve had routed out a colleague in the division, and was more actively engaged. Together they walked along the Commercial Road until they reached a corner shop. The lower half of the big plate-glass windows had been blackened, and staring white letters announced:

DR. KARL STEINGURT
Dispensary

Hours: 8 till 10 a.m. 7 till 9 p.m.
The pair pushed their way into the room, bare save for a cupboard and table and a series of hard wooden forms. Women crowded the latter, some within children, some without, and a shrill clatter of tongues died away for the instant as they took stock of the newcomers. An anemic young man, busy juggling with bottles and pill-boxes, nodded abruptly to the vacant end of a bench.

"I want the doctor." Sit down there and take your turn." He returned his attention feverishly to his dispensing. "That'll be thruppence, Mrs. Isaacs—to be taken as before. Eh? No, you know very well what the rules are. If you ain't got the money you shouldn't have come. Now, who's next? Don't you hear the doctor calling?"

Indeed, a querulous, guttural voice from the top of the stairs which led out of the dispensary was shouting fiercely, and two or three women pushed forward. The anemic dispenser shrilly demanded quiet—an order of which not the slightest notice was taken. The argument as to precedence threatened to develop to physical violence, and Congreve's colleague stepped forward and took hold of the dispenser's thin arm.

"That Doctor Steingurt up-stairs?" he demanded.
"Why the blazes don't you go and sit down?" demanded the assistant, feebly wrathful. "He can't see 'em all at once, now can he? Here, let go my arm!"

"It's Mr. Hugh—a rozzer," said some one, and the tumult stilled. The assistant lost his air of authority as a pricked toy balloon collapses. "You can see the boss is busy. Won't I do? What do you want?"

"You won't do, son," said Hugh. "We're going right up to the doctor now, and you'll have to get these ladies to excuse him five minutes." Congreve meanwhile had pushed himself to the stairs. Hugh released the dispenser and followed. A dozen steps brought them to the consulting room and face to face with a swarthy little man in a frock coat which barely concealed the dirtiness of his linen. Heavy circular spectacles gave him something of the appearance of an owl.

"Doctor Steingurt?" asked Congreve. Hugh had softly closed the door behind them.
The doctor glanced at them through his gold-rimmed spectacles. "You're the man with you, eh?" he demanded briskly. "Speak up now, you see I had a lot of people waiting, as I only charge sixpence."

Hugh muttered something below his breath. Congreve cut in. "We're not patients. You'll have to give us a little of your attention without any fee this time, doctor. We're police officers."

"It is most inconvenient that you come at this time," protested Steingurt. "I told the goroner—he waved flabby hands at them—that I should not come again. It was legal—oh, I know the law—I am not a jary. The child would have died anyway, and the man which called me didn't had my fee. Why should I give up a night's rest for nothing? Here is the hospital for paupers. He grew more excited. "I tell you

will not come to that goroner's court any more. I will see my solicitor. I will not come."

Both detectives remembered the standing feud—it was continually being reported in the newspapers—between the coroner of the district and Steingurt. The doctor held that he was justified in demanding cash in advance when called to see a sick person, and more than once the patients had died before the money could be procured.

Steingurt, moreover, demanded a fee for giving evidence in such cases as these, and literally snapped his fingers at the reiterated censure of coroner and jury alike.

The visit of the police, therefore, he associated with the recent case, and considered that a new ruse had been hit upon by his enemy to annoy him.

"It is most highly inconvenient," he repeated, "to come in my consultations and drag me down to that nasty court youst to talk nonsense."

"Steady, doctor," remonstrated Congreve. "We've nothing to do with that. You were called out last night for a trickery. This morning, that's what we want to talk about."

Steingurt blinked behind his spectacles. "I am always being called out. I will look at my book, if you like. Here is nothing wrong?"

"Trickery," thought Congreve, well on his guard. Hugh was swinging a heavily shod foot thoughtfully. "We'll know that when you've told us," said Congreve sharply. "You went to Levine Street. Who did you see? Why were you called?"

"That's so," agreed Steingurt. "It was a little girl—bad case of diphtheria."

"Really?" The detective's voice was sibilant and how much wery you paid to keep your mouth shut?"

The doctor glared at him, and suddenly advancing a step, shook a list in his face. Congreve delicately extended the tips of his fingers and touched the others chest, pushed him backward. Hugh was looking on with passive indifference, save that his foot still twitched backward and forward.

"This is a conspiracy to insult me!" protested Steingurt. "I don't believe you are police officers. You had better go, or I will have you thrown out!"

"Was it ten pounds or twenty?" persisted Congreve steadily. "It looks to me as if you knew there was something fishy on, or you wouldn't be so unwilling to talk."

"I cannot talk about my patients. It is professional ediquette. I know very well Steingurt seemed to have lost a little of his confidence. "You've got no right to question me."

"Just you listen to me, doctor!" Hugh, big overbearing, threatening, pushed his way into the dialogue. "We know all about professional etiquette, but we know a lot more about crooks—and those who get mixed up with them. Savvy? We ain't here for lip-trap, as don't you try us too far. Suppose we take him along on suspicion, eh, Congreve?"

Hugh was admirably suited for his work in the East End—big, absolutely fearless, direct. He knew exactly how to adopt the customs and language of his surroundings, and his peremptory aid had its effect.

SIDE TALKS

BY "THE EDITOR"

THE WET BLANKET PARENT

A little friend of mine had a perfectly glorious plan for building a tiny tea house. It was to consist entirely of a verandah and an open fireplace "because those are things people like best."

She took her plans to the carpenter and he told her he could build for the sum she was willing to use. She stopped at my house on the way home radiant with excitement and hopes. She is a clever little cook, she had an excellent location. Her one fear had been that the carpenter work would be beyond her.

She fairly bubbled over with hope and happiness. I must run home and tell mother," she said as she went out.

"People Aren't When They Get Older." The next day I met her and asked what her mother said. "Oh mother just said, 'they'll promise anything,' when I told her about the carpenter. She sighed. "Mother isn't very enthusiastic. I am sure she'll be disappointed when they get older."

"The rancid was gone from her face and voice. I could just picture the way her mother looked when she said that. I know her mother, not like the what kind of a wet blanket she can be."

Isn't "Wet Blanket" A Good Phrase. "What an excellent description of service. The ordinary person is always at a loss in attempting to truthfully convey a portrait. It needs high training to enable a man to give the salient points of any person's appearance—and even then the result is not always satisfactory."

"Well, good-by, doctor," said Congreve. "We'll call and see her on Outside, Congreve hustled his companion along the wet pavement. "Come along," he said. "I want to telephone to Mr. Menzies. I've got an idea."

CHAPTER XXIV
Baiting A Trap.
Although his right arm hung limp and the set of his well-cut morning coat was somewhat spoiled by the bulge of the bandages on his shoulder, Cincinnati Red looked almost as spruce and debonair as ever. He listened with immobile face to Menzies's expression of sympathy.

"I'm right sorry," the detective was saying, "but I had no luck on you. You didn't guess he was wise to the gag or it might have been different. I'd back you against Ling every time."

A whimsical, humorous smile lighted Cincinnati's faded face. "I get you," he drawled. "You're handing out the soothing syrup dope. I'm on to those curves. What you giving me?"

"Would you like to have another cut at Ling?"

"The 'com' man drew his shaggy brows together and observed Menzies narrowly. "Would a duck swim?" he commented shortly. "Wait till my shirt and trousers are dry, and I'll be at some more stool-pigeon business. I'm not hankering after it; but I might be tempted—if it sounded good."

"Well"—Menzies crossed his knees and passed the cigar box to Cincinnati. "You'll be pleased to learn that he found a rough-house after he gave his little show. He got man-handled at a place called 'The East End' and they had a doctor. Cincinnati rubbed his hand. "That's all to the good, chief. Say, I'd like to buy the guy who did it something."

"That was only a knockout," explained Menzies, "and unluckily we did not get on to it till this morning. We believe he got away in the night, but we're not dead sure. Anyway, he can't be far from the house we've located, and we know there are some other toughs in it. Would you care to call on the house and see who's there? There'll probably be some one who knows you and you'll be all right."

"Yep," said the other crisply. "Likely Ling. What chance would I stand walking into a wasps' nest like that? It's no bet, chief. Call it off." "Why, I didn't think there was a yellow streak in you, Cincinnati," said Menzies. "I wouldn't ask you to do it if I thought there was any danger. There'll be plenty of my people on hand, but you're not likely to get into any trouble. Didn't I tell you that Ling had slipped out. I'd go myself or get one of my chaps, only it would be better if it wasn't a stranger. I'm asking as a favor."

"The 'com' man stroked his mustache in irresolution. He was really bitter about Ling and would cheerfully have contributed any effort that would add to the discomfort or peril of his erstwhile colleague—so long as he ran no avoidable hazard himself. He was under no illusion in regard to Menzies's honeyed efforts to persuade him. He knew that the chief inspector had little bias toward him; that he regarded him merely as a crook—a crook who happened to be yellow and who might be coaxing into helping the law by fulfilling an instinct of revenge. Not that he had any compunction as to paying off old scores that way. It was just the question of risk."

And considering that my little friends' enthusiasm had passed through that process what wonder it had faded in a day? One of the nicest mothers I know—and one of the busiest—has been squeezing out some extra time to help her little girl get subscriptions in a pony contest. "No," she said, "I don't think she'll get it, and her father thinks it's all nonsense but when she came to me all enthusiastic and wanted me to help I just couldn't bear to be a wet blanket. I know too well what that's like."

Like Pushing a Dead Weight. Another girl who has accomplished quite a little in a rather unusual business told me that every step she took was taken to a family chorus of "You can't possibly do that." "That's no kind of work for a woman." "It will be too much for you," etc.

It was like pushing a dead weight at a place like this, she said, "and if I ever have any children I'm going to try above all things not to hang back. Of course I'll try to give them good advice but I'll give them sympathy and encouragement first."

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"Are you likely to be going back there again?" asked Congreve. Steingurt shook his head. "Not unless they send for me."

"It was dark when you were called out. Do you think any of those people would recognize you?"

The doctor was doubtful. "Would you recognize any of them? Give us a description."

Although the officers palatstaknely took down the descriptions which the little doctor strove to furnish, it was plainly hopeless to expect them to be

Courier Daily Recipe Column

SAVORY POTATOES.

Eight large potatoes, 1 large onion, 2 ounces dripping, 1 1/2 pint water, salt and pepper; pare potatoes and slice them, chop onion and put both into saucepan with close-fitting lid; add dripping, water, salt and pepper and cook moderately quickly. It may be necessary to add a little more water; stir thoroughly before dish.

MACARONI AND TOMATOES.

Break 1-2 pound of dry macaroni into lengths and boil in salted water until tender drain and put a layer of the macaroni in the bottom of a greased pudding dish, sprinkle with pepper, salt, onion juice and grated cheese, and cover all with a layer of stewed and strained tomatoes which have been previously seasoned to taste. On these goes another layer of macaroni, and so on, until the dish is full; the topmost layer must be of tomatoes, with crumbs and good-sized bits of butter set in a hot oven, covered for 20 minutes, and the bake uncovered until the crumbs are well browned.

Good Night Stories

By Blanche Silvert

BUSY BOBBY
Bobby sat on the porch waiting for the rain to stop. Over on the bench lay a big red kite. Every little while Bobby went over to see that it was all right.

"I can't see why it has to rain so much. I suppose it rains all day so I can't fly my new kite," complained Bobby to his mother.

"Maybe not, dear. Isn't there something you can do until it stops?" asked his mother.

"There's nothing to do on horrid days like this," replied Bobby as the rain pattered down harder than ever. "I wonder, Bobby, if you'll empty the ashes from the kitchen stove for me?" asked Mother.

"Oh, shoot. I want to fly my kite," said Bobby with a pout.

"Well, I thought you might do that while you are waiting for the rain to stop," replied Mother.

Bobby took the ashes to the barnyard. The old rooster saw him coming and ran from the coop. He stretched his wings and cawed. The white hen began to sing in a loud voice and before many seconds the whole barnyard joined in the noisy chorus. Bobby emptied the ashes into their pen and the hens with a joyous cackle soon had ashes flying everywhere as they dusted themselves.

"You folks don't care how hard it rains," said Bobby, as he watched them.

"Give them 'corn and water while you're there," called his mother.

Bobby threw in the 'corn and filled up their pan with water. The rooster crowed his thanks and Bobby had to laugh at the way he strutted around the water. Bobby called Mother.

"So Bobby filled the ash pan with 'sticks and went to the house whistling.

"Would you mind sweeping off the steps while they're wet? Then I won't have to scrub them," said Mother.

Bobby, still whistling, found the broom and before long the porch and steps were nice and clean. Then he went into the kitchen, took up the dish cloth and dried the dishes for his mother. Just as the last cup was wiped the rain stopped and the sun burst forth from behind the clouds.

"Well, of all things!" said Bobby with a laugh.

"If you had sat around waiting for it to stop, the time would have seemed long, but you were so busy helping me that the minutes flew quickly. Now there's a lovely breeze for your kite," said Mother with a glad cry. Bobby gathered up the red kite and ran down the walk. He soon had it soaring among the fleecy white clouds that looked like white sails flapping in the wind.



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