

THE RIDDLE OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Being An Exploit in the Career of Hamilton Cleek, Detective
By MARY E. AND THOMAS W. HANSHEW

(Continued from yesterday)
"Hardly that, Lady Paula. And—well, I don't happen to be well up on these matters at all, the law, y'know, and all that—only the law of criminals, and that's an altogether different thing. No doubt one of the family has put it away. It will turn up in time. Now, please go away before the rest of the constables arrive. You want every atom of your strength to see this appalling thing through, believe me, and therefore I insist that you harbour it."
She smiled up at him sadly, and turned upon her heel, her trailing pink negligee whisking across the thickly carpeted floor like the tail of some sinuous snake, weighted as it was with one heavy beaded tassel.
"Very well—if you wish," she said quietly, with an arch glance at him; but as she went something white fluttered to the ground in the wake of her, and Cleek, waiting until she had gone, closed the door softly, and then bent and whisked it up.
It was a handkerchief—a mere wisp of gossamer, with Duchesse lace edges, and the name Paula written in embroidery across one corner of its fragile square.
A little twisted smile flitted across his face as he looked at it, and then suddenly his mouth went grim. This was obviously the handkerchief in question—and she had had it upon her person every moment of the time! So that excuse was a false one, from the start-out. Then, too, a woman who

could look archly at another man over her own husband's dead body was surely no woman at all, but a harpy in woman's guise. It was ghastly, horrible! . . . And if the excuse were false, what did she come for—in the early hours of the morning, when servants were only just astir in the other wing of the house, and she knew that there was that dead thing who had been her husband to be confronted? Would a woman face a murdered man for a mere handkerchief? . . . She would lose a thousand such sooner, from what he knew of the feminine sex.
No, there was some other reason, and that was already gone. Was it the fact that she was a murderer? Was it to remove some distinguishing clue which she feared might be found to connect her with this crime?
What was it?

CHAPTER XI A New Clue

It was a silent, horror-haunted breakfast-table that morning at which, however, every member of the family appeared, as though driven downstairs for the mere comfort of being among familiar things, and with one another, in this time of tragedy. Cleek partook of breakfast with them, but the black looks which Ross directed at him would have made a weaker man lose his appetite.
He smiled to himself now and again, missing nothing of what went on about

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him, yet seeming, indeed, to see nothing at all but his own plate, which was plentifully filled in response to a hearty appetite.
He found Cynthia Debenham a boy, yet very obvious in her expressions, as just such a normally healthy girl of her generation usually is. Her cousin, Catherine Dowd, was on the contrary a black-haired witch with slanting eyes and close mouth and the finely chiselled nostrils of a thoroughbred mare. He did not take to her upon sight. There was so much concealed behind those closed lips, so much that was secretive in the whole type of her. But she was obviously very fond of them all, and upon excellent terms with every member of that ill-assorted family. So that at least Miss Dowd of the black locks was endowed with the mixing spirit, which was very much in her favour. Cyril, large-eyed and serious, sent his glance roving from one face to another,

other, as though seeking for the secret of this horrible thing that had taken place here in the midst of them, and Cleek could not refrain from a pang of pity for the white-faced boy. He looked so frightened and miserable, and now and again his eyes roved up to Ross's face with something of inquiry in them, as though he felt that this big stepbrother must surely hold the key to the tragic happenings of last night.
Ross, indeed, ate nothing and said, less, although his fiancée did all in her power to bring some sort of a smile into his morose face. While upon the other side of him Maud Duggan sat in a silence which was fraught with all the dreadful happenings of that dreadful night, showing a face to the world which spoke mutely of the fact that sleep had not visited her during the long dark hours. Lady Paula alone tried to make some sort of desultory conversation, aimed at random at each member of the party, and missing its mark each time.
It was as though a pall had been dropped over them, shutting out the possibility of speech.
Breakfast at length over, Cleek took the situation quietly in hand, and turning toward them in the open doorway, made his desires known.
"If you will all be so kind as to step into the library in an hour's time," he said blandly, "I should like to reconstruct the scene of last night's tragedy in the presence of all those who took part in it. . . . No, Miss Duggan, you need not be afraid. Your father's body will have been removed by then. But if any one of you have any knowledge whatever to impart to me—representing, as I do, Scotland Yard in the absence of Mr. Narkom (who is already upon his way here) I shall be only too pleased to speak with you in the little ante-room close by. I may use that as a sort of office for the time being, may I not, Lady Paula? You've no objections, I trust?"
She shook her head at him, flashing him a killing glance from under her full lids. The flattery of his choice of her as principal of the bereft family pleased her immensely.
"None whatever."
"Thanks very much."
Then he withdrew to the said ante-room, took out pen and paper, and began figuring out something upon it which caused him not a little worry, by the look of his face.
Five minutes brought a gentle tap upon the door, and without raising his head from his work he called, "Come in."
Catherine Dowd stood in the aperture, looking more like the Mona Lisa than he had ever seen a living person do before. "There was something of the same inscrutable smile lingering upon her lips, the same mysterious impassivity in her quiet countenance."
"I've brought you something, Mr. Deland," she said in a soft purring voice. "Something which I imagine has great bearings upon last night's tragedy, and which I found hidden in the left-hand curtain of the window. It was stuck carelessly into the inner lining of the green silk, and hung there. Here it is."

Cleek was on his feet in an instant, face alert. She handed him the object, and then nodded at his exclamation of surprise.
"Yes. A stiletto. And in the face of the fact that Sir Andrew was stabbed as well as shot, something of importance."
"I should think so, indeed!" Cleek's face fairly radiated excitement as he bent over the object that lay in his open palm, touching it with light, nimble fingers. "Gad! yes! A stiletto—and a South American one at that! See the curiously squared blade? If that isn't the identical instrument that stabbed Sir Andrew's breast, I'll eat my hat! Miss Dowd, you have brought me a clue which may lead to the tracing of the murderer himself—or one of 'em, as there must have been two. Now, tell me exactly the circumstances in which you found it, and why you kept the fact hidden until now?"
She came a little nearer to him and leaned against the edge of the desk, a sort of secretive nonchalance in her attitude.
"I don't say everything I know, Mr. Deland," she said smoothly. "For a person who tells everything he knows leaves nothing within to show that he has anything of interest left for the next person who comes along. It was

shortly after the tragedy had taken place. Everything, as of course you know, was absolutely in confusion. People rushing about here, there, and everywhere, as though they had gone mad, which indeed they must surely have done in such tragic circumstances. I was as bad as the rest, and with Cynthia searched the room for any clues or anything which might lead to the tracing of the murderer. I had just gone to the open window and—"
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"Yes—about half-way up from the bottom. The centre one, Mr. Deland. Someone had asked me to shut it—it was Ross, I think, poor distracted boy!—which I immediately proceeded to do, and brushed against the curtains—the big green plush ones which hang at the outer edges of the bay window—when something clattered lightly to the floor. Cynthia was at the other side, looking out into the darkness, everyone else was occupied with Sir Andrew himself, so I bent down quickly and picked the thing up. And there it is."
Yes, there it undoubtedly was. And undoubtedly, too, the weapon which had stabbed Sir Andrew so cruelly, if Cleek knew aught of such things. He frowned a moment over it, and then looked up into Miss Dowd's dark face through narrowed lids.
"And you know to whom it belongs?"
"I cannot say for certain, but I fancy it is Lady Paula's. She had one similar, I know, but whether it is the same one I am not prepared to say."
"Showing yourself a very wise young lady," put in Cleek with a smile. She acknowledged the compliment gracefully.
(To be continued)

To clean sinks and drainpipes
Dissolve 1/2 to 1 package in a pail of boiling water, and pour slowly down sink.
Snowflake
THE FULL STRENGTH
Ammonia 10¢

Sale After Stock-Taking By the Senior Shoe Firm

Ladies' Footwear of undeniable reputation well under today's factory prices—Men's and Boys' Boots at prices that stand alone—that is the meaning of mark-downs made at Francis & Vaughan's After-Stock-Taking Sale. Many were bought at our own price from makers who needed cash more than anything after the way they were hit by a falling market and failures. So today you find your fit in the height of style and the lowest level of price.

The Best of the Batch in Ladies' Oxfords, \$5
Blatchford goodyear welted fine Black Vici Kid Oxfords of \$9.50 value and with medium toe—yours here at \$4.00.
Same Kid in Smardon's, medium heel and toe, goodyear welted and today's style, \$11 quality and your size in these two groups, \$5.00.
Blatchford, Smardon and Classic Oxfords, goodyear welted in Black Kid, Black or Dark Brown Calf with medium toe and low heel, that are right in the front rank of Fashion and worth up to \$11.50—here, any pair, \$5.00.
And what is more, many higher priced ones in odd sizes at the same odd price. The new five eyelet Oxford, with the right toe and heel, in Black or Brown Calf—\$4.75 and \$5.50 quality—Sale, \$3.95.
Street Shoes in Mahogany Calf of semi-brogue cut, strap and buckle, medium heel. \$5.50 value for \$3.95.

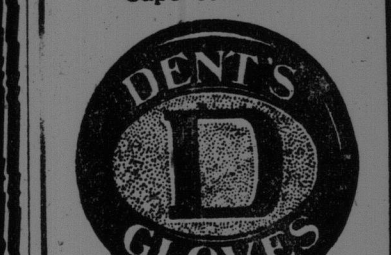
Lace Boots Below Half
\$11 and \$12 standards in Tan Calf and Black Gun-metal Calf Ladies' Lace Boots with Cuban heels and Blatchford and Smardon make, goodyear welt sewn. Grouped with odd sizes and styles that were marked quite higher for one price, \$5.00.
\$9.50 to \$11.50 standards in Classic and Educator Boots of the Foot-Trainer last, broad toe and low heel—another \$5.00 find.
Patent Boots with Fawn Suede tops and military heels, \$12.50 for \$5.00.

For Men—For Boy's
A \$9.85 choice for \$6. Men's Lace Boots in Black Vici Kid with cushion slip soles. Tan Calf, lined in Kid and double sole lined, goodyear welted. Fine Black Box Calf semi-brogue Bluchers with soft round toe and the new flat flanged heel stitched on. \$9.85 value for \$6.00.
Men's high-class Calf Boots in Black and some Brown, recede toes, goodyear welted and sold regularly at \$7.50, \$9.50 and \$11.50. After Stock-taking Sale, \$5.00.
Men's Black and Tan Calf Boots on full round toe last worth \$6.50 and \$7.95—Sale, \$4.00.
Boys' Mahogany and Black Box Calf Boots with new recede toe and sewn soles, dandies at \$2.95.

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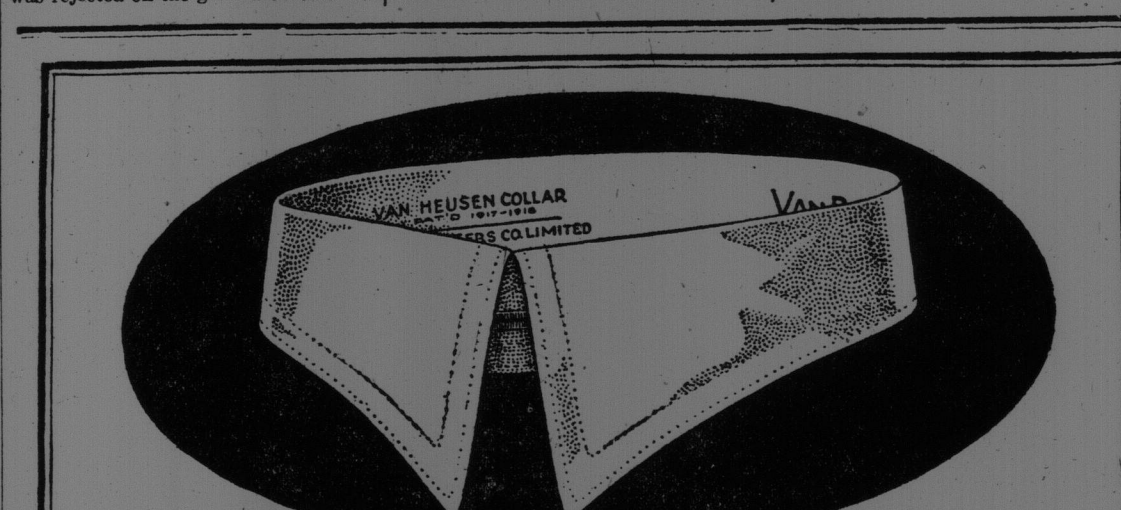


For Easter give Gloves
It's good taste and good sense to insist on DENT'S
Sold Everywhere!

Will Not Insure Bootleggers

Life Insurance Companies Say "Moral Hazard" Is Too Great.
Pittsburgh, March 15.—While the regularly constituted authorities are experiencing some difficulty in locating wealthy bootleggers, important life insurance companies report that they are finding them with comparative ease and, because of the "moral hazard" involved, are refusing to insure their lives.
Men who a few years ago were glad to carry policies covering a few thousands are now making applications for

policies ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and in some instances in excess of the latter amount. Unless they are well-known and have a high business standing they are carefully investigated, and if there is any suspicion as to the source of their incomes they are rejected, no matter how good physical risks the examining physicians decide they may be. Within the past few weeks one applicant who wanted a policy of \$50,000 was rejected on the ground that he was



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