THE ONION ADVOCATE WEDNESDAY, JULY 18 1966

STREET STREET STREET



week."

the ro

"Bully!" he said and clamo

would not have commen

asked anxiously.

words that I replied:

ince against a ruffian or two."

ably. As I am fond of laying my

right to protest, for the captain was a

pleasant fellow and so far as I knew

harmless, and, moreover, life at the cas-tle was not enlivening. But all the

same I was a little annoyed to find them upon such close terms with one

ward the little town. Here, as it chanc-

ed very oddly, whom should I meet but Greenstreet himself, driving out to the

castle upon the very point of business on which I was bound for Raymond.

Encountering thus we agreed to make a convenience of the locality, since 1

could not persuade him to turn back

with me, and we completed our con-versation over a pint of ale at the lit-

the hostelry in Llanellan. The transac-tion was comprised in a brief time, and

man, Williams, I walked back by way

of the park, skirting the western wing of the building. Upon this side, as I

have said, lay a dense shrubbery, through which the little brook stream-

ed over its pebbly bottom to the wa-

gin, and winding by several pretty spots, bordered with the rivulet, final-

tered quietly along the pathway. Sud-

Peer-

then ran quickly to the corner.

and disappeared.

stealing among the shrubs. It paused a

moment and then, as it seemed to me,

slipped stealthily through the bushes

The next instant I had recognized

Hood. There was nothing very remark-

forthright for home.

the room in a cheery fashion. I had already made up my mind not

to be too explicit with Montgomery.

many particular people. What I told him, therefore, as we rode back em-

braced but the general atmosphere of

intrigue in which I was involved. The

word that stuck in his mind was "bur-

"Shall we have the police over?" he

But, strangely enough, although the

thought had occurred to me more than once, it was almost in old Kesteven's

"There are none nearer than Ray-

glary," and it greatly excited him.

He was too recent an acquaintance, de spite my conviction of his fidelity, to

ntrust with a precious secret. Ind

I opened my dispatch box and spread out the paper on the table once more, poring over it with my pulse throbbing to my finger tips. The meaning was now plain, though the main secret was yet to find. The parchment was clearly the second sheet only of the docu ent which Mr. Kesteven had desired to bring down for my perusal. I sat up at a new and more alarming discovery. Where was the first sheet? the first occasion of our encounter

That open window now offered up its secret. That desperate cry was no longer now the scream of mortal agony, but an appeal for help. From the dead fingers I had taken the second sheet of the mysterious document, so pregnant with interest, but from the hands of the living I could not doubt that the first had been violently torn in the course of a struggle in that silent chamber. Terror had surprised the ras cal at his work-the terror of that sudden and fearful dissolution, of that humped and pitiful body fallen on the floor. And here now with two ends of the secret, whatever it might be, rent asunder and secluded in separate hands, the hoard of treasure still lay buried in its ancient hiding place as in tact and private as it had lain maybe through hundreds of years of silence. My riddle was read. That certainly

was a great step, and in the heat of my discovery, as I sat palpitating with strange emotions of adventure, avarice, even of ferocity, I had no intention to leave the matter where it stood. I was resolved to confront fate and to enter the lists against those undetermined So far they had kept very enemies, silent, working only in the dark, but I swore then and there to meet them, drag them forth into the broad daylight and contest my rights in the hidden treasure, if it existed, against a dozen sorry knaves. I am a patient man and not overquick to take a resolution, but I do not easily lay down a task which I have once undertaken. I swore upon the spot to undertake this.

In the circuit of my fancy I came uddenly upon this consideration, which pulled me up quite sharply, even with a fittle breathlessuess. These unknown antagonists were still banded in arm against me, and I was alone. I had had repeated evidence that I was pur sued by their ingenuity and in two ways. On the one hand I was to be evected from my own house, and simulways. taneously my bureau was rifled, as I could not now doubt, for the purpose of securing my remnant of the precious document. What would be the next step which these insolent tricksters would essay? I had no one in the casbeyond the estimable Mrs. Main and a neat housemaid, neither of whom was to be counted in a warfare such as the situation promised to my imagi

The one man that was daily visible about the place slept at Llanellan, as Mr. Kesteven had informed me. What puzzled me at this point was the isola-tion in which my host had enwrapped himself. He had teters

able in this, but what moved my blood was a more curious recognition. Swift as the flight of a swallow there darted into my mind the recollection of an-other vision. I identified the memory. It came back upon me with an odd sense of perplexity and a still stranger feeling of fear where and when I had first encountered that lean and stealthy body. I had seen the man disappear in the same furtive fashion upon the banks of the stream in the valley be-low, and what had then arrested my vague memory now also again attack-ed it, but this time with certain knowledge. This was the man who had been with Mr. Kesteven upon the day on which I had first encountered him in "Then fling your legs up and be of, the wood. and ask your servant to send on you The fact astounded me, thrilled through my warm limbs to the very bags. I'm going to keep you for a

marrow of my bones. And yet it seem-ed too absurd to be accepted on the spur of a moment's fancy. I stood pondering in a state of excitement and then, hastily turning about, ran in the direction of the castle.

What was Hodd's business there? I usked myself the question without the ce of an answer. There was really but little to arouse my suspicions, and yet I was agog with curiosity. I entered the castle courtyard and opened the door of the dining hall. The first object that met my eyes was Montgomery sprawling upon the table and stertorous with drunken sleep. Plates were laid for two, and empty bottles upon the table testified to a generous lunch. Leaving him for a moment. I ran upstairs and pushed open my door silently. As I did so there was an exelamation, and I entered and came face to face with Captain Sercombe.

Montgomery sprawled upon the table in a drunken sleep.

toned coat and looked at me with a watchful eye.

lie as a spaniel, submitting readily, I suppose, to the superior will, and I had no complaint to make of him save for action was come.

had no comparent to make of him save that he wearied me a good deal. He himself, however, had a complaint, for he was grievously disappointed that there had been no bloodshed. We saw not a show of a burglar, and I fancy he thought me in his private mind something of an impostor, which possibly was the very reason which

possibly was the very reason which made him strike up an acquaintance with Sercombe. I certainly had no

ly as himself, "I think we had better understand each other at once." A slight smile ruffled his puffy face,

I assure you," he rejoined. "I fear I am a bad hand at crib cracking."

may possibly find it more difficult to

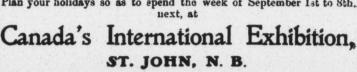


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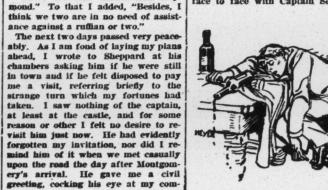
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he said, "though I The Automobile Show will alone be worth going that far to see, and it is only one of a bunch of new features.



greeting, cocking his eye at my com-panion in his good humored, cynical way, and when we had passed, on looking back, I saw him standing at the crossroads, rod in hand, gazing in-tenty after us. Seeing me do so, he waved his hand and moved off upon his journey. Montgomery was as doc-lie as a spanial approximation readily.

He held one hand in his tightly but

"This is very regrettable, Mr. Great-

The apology sounded so ludicrous in my ears that I broke into a tiny laugh and thereby relieved myself. The time

"I must apologize," said I, "for my unexpected return, the more particularly as I have no doubt interrupted you

y as I have no unserverse." "Not at all," he said pleasantly; "not "Not at all," he said pleasantly; "not

"Then if you have been successful, Captain Sercombe," said I as pleasant-

but he kept his hand in its hiding place. "That will be unnecessary, sir,

himself. He had taken no pains to protect himself. Exposed, as he must have known he was, to the treachery of an unscrupulous foe, he was thrown be an unscrupping for he was thrown absolutely upon his own resources un-less indeed he relied upon the near proximity of Hood in times of emer-gency. But Hood perplexed me, recurring in my thoughts, a haunting fig-ure, provoking only a vague uneasiness and a great uncertainty. And once again the odd conjunction of the capiain and the innkeeper returned before may eyes. One thing was certain to any newly awakened wits - I must bave some companion in my confidence. There were several friends among my old acquaintances who would serve me, but the year was drawing on and the holiday season was at his height. The odds were that I should discover Pengelly or Rogers or Sheopard was far enough from London by this. I wanted aid forthwith, and forthwith must have it. So it fell that my mind recurred to Montgomery. He was not very mich to my taste, secretainly not congenial company, but the was obviously honest, and I could swear that he would be faithful.

And so indeed he proved. I rode over next morning to the farm which conintituted now all that was left of the old estate of the family. He was plaiting a whip in his dining room-a high wainscoted shamber, very dingy and mutidy and heaped with all the un-Imaginable rubbish of a young man's fancy. On my entrance he rose, his stile ing red, and grasped my bane on the an awkward sentence of welcome.

"It's good of you to come so soon," said b

"I've come to take you back," said I. gateway by a leafy avenue of limes. He stared at me. "Oh, all right." he wald, as if this mission of mine had been a matter of course. "Come and have a dvink."

It was but 11 in the morning, though the breakfast things still cumbered his table, and so I refused his hospitality, a refusal which did not prevent his pouring himself out a glass of beer.

"Montgomery," said I, "leave that alone and keep your head clear. I want you.'

The boy bounded to his feet sheepishly enough to what he doubtless con-sidered my rebuke, but with a show of eagerness which pleased me, "Got your horse?" I asked.

He nodded, all attention now, and I continued:

He shrugged his shoulders. I left the castle shortly before lunch. you persuade me," he returned jaunt-The mag was a steady creature, though

not very handsome to the eyes, and shortly I was upon the other side of "Fishing," I resumed, "is a more equanimous pastime, Captain combe, I have heard." Llanellan and cantering down into the long stretch of forest which lies to-

"No doubt," he responded equably and glancing at the window. A twitching of his mouth belied his calm appearance, and I was disposed to believe that he contemplated a desperate move. I sat down upon a chair by the door and surveyed him coolly.

"May I ask," said I, "if you have found this sort of thing usually profitable?" I nodded at my bureau.

"I was in hopes this would prove so," he answered smoothly. "I am not an old hand at it." ue "But you have able assistants?" I

that finished I turned my horse's head asked. As I drew near the park gates it wanted a little of 4 by my watch. The "Come, come, Mr. Greatores," he re-

plied, with a touch of impatience in sun beamed sharp'y overhead, and the great ilex by the stone pillars of the gateway threw a black blot of shadow his voice, "let us get to business!" "By all means," said I. "You will find me a most reasonable man. In across the drive. I headed the horse my profession I have had occasion sevacross the sward, making for the sta-bles which lay among the farm build-ings to the north of the castle. Leav-ing the animal in charge of the handy eral times to deal with your profession.'

If I had expected him to wince at this undisguised thrust I was doomed to disappointment. A smile flitted over his face, and that was all. He withdrew his hand from the breast of his coat. "May I sit down?" he inquired in his most courteous manner.

"Come," said I, "it is rather I who terfall upon the southern declivity of the hill. A pathway ran circuitously should apply to you for permission.' "We will not stand upon ceremony," through this growth of laurel and box, evidently of comparatively recent ori-

he observed, whipping a chair deftly beneath him. "A very natural sentiment upon your ly emerged upon the boundary of the

part," I retorted ironically. "Mr. Greatorex," said he, with his

park and joined a cross track from the smile and now thoroughly in charge of himself, "there is one thing I pride my-. As it was early and I was in no mood self upon, and that is command of my to face Montgomery all at ouce, I struck into the shrubbery and sauatemper.'

"A very useful trait-in your professlon," I remarked.

denly at a bend before me and slipping The captain took a cigarette from his case. "You will not mind," said he. "The window will air your bedroom." softly round the elbow I beheld the figure of a man, but it was gone ere my senses were fully awake in that And he puffed the smoke from his nossultry afternoon. I stood still a motrils, and it hung about his ragged red ment, stirred somewhat strangely, and mustache. I waited, my eyes fastened on him. ing round, I caught sight of a figure

"What are you going to do?" he asked presently.

His own expression carried not a trace of anxiety.

"In these cases," I made answer, "there is a natural course with which

prevent your earlier resolution "I am entirely in your hands," said I, smiling to him, for indeed I was now chuckling to myself not only at the man's equanimity, which was quite to

I nodded, and a slow smile illumined

"I think I can persuade you to forego

his red face.

then

that satisfaction,"

my taste, but at my own mastery of the situation. - He looked at me inquiringly, and I was amazed to see the difference in his eyes now. They were tense, sharp, and every trace of idle indifference had left "You are aware, Mr. Greatores, what

we are quarreling over?" "I assure you, my dear sir," said I, "that I am quarreling over nothing. I am sitting at your feet. Pray contin-

"I think," he said dryly, "that we are

beating about the bush. This game of tierce and carte is very well for novices, but we are got beyond that and come to actual quarters. Come, I think this air of yours is a mere affectation which has played its part.'

I said nothing save, "I am waiting to hear you, Captain Sercombe." "You are aware," said he, "what you have in this house." He was watching

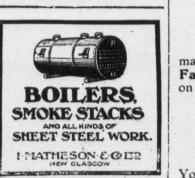
me very carefully, ready, I did not doubt, to cry off in another direction if I showed my ignorance of his meaning. "I know what you and your friends are after." said I.

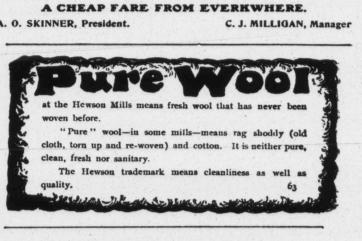
He heaved a sigh of relief. "Then I table my cards," said he. "You have a piece of paper which I

want." "Exactly," I answered, casting a look

at my open bureau. He laughed. "Oh, I will admit you have the better of me so far," he exclaimed. "But we are not yet at the end of the campaign."

(To be continued.)





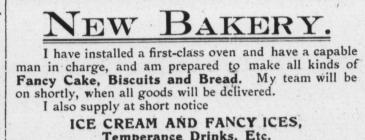
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