

"Ethel!" he gasped in surprise. "You here! Why—"

"Don't go to the house!" She led him the opposite way. "There is a cab stand at the corner. Get one there and take me to this Mr. Trant! I will tell you everything. The man came again last night. Auntie is sick in bed from it. Howard still says it is his affair and will do nothing. I had to come to you."

Caryl ran to the corner for a cab and returning with it, half lifted her into it. Forty minutes later he led her into Trant's office in the First National Bank Building, in the heart of Chicago's business district.

"This is Mr. Trant, Ethel," Caryl spoke to the girl a little nervously as she took a seat. "And Mr. Trant, this is Miss Waldron. I am Henry Caryl, who telephoned you an hour ago. We must see you at once or we may be interrupted—unpleasantly, by Mr. Axton. I have brought Miss Waldron to tell you of a mysterious man who has been pursuing Howard Axton about the world, and who, since Axton came home to her house two weeks ago, has been threatening her."

"Axton—Axton!" the young psychologist repeated the name which Caryl had spoken as if assured that Trant must recognize it. "Ah! Of course, Howard Axton is the son." He frankly admitted his clearing recollection and his comprehension of why the face of the girl had seemed familiar. "Then you," he addressed her directly, "are Miss Waldron, of Drexel Boulevard?"

"Yes; I am that Miss Waldron, Mr. Trant," the girl replied, flushing at the recognition, but raising her head proudly and meeting his eyes directly. "The step-daughter—the daughter of the second wife of Mr. Nimrod Axton! It was my mother, Mr. Trant, who was the cause of the Axton divorce suit twenty years ago. The first Mrs. Axton obtained the exclusive custody of her son. My mother, just before Mr. Nimrod Axton's death last year, required that that son—the first Mrs. Axton was then dead—should be cut off in the will, absolutely and entirely, without a cent, and that Mr. Axton's entire estate be put in trust for her. So—you doubtless remember the reopening of all this again six months ago when my mother, too, died—I am now the sole heir and legatee of the Axton properties of, they tell me, upward of sixty millions. Yes; I am that Miss Waldron, Mr. Trant!"

"I recall those accounts, but only vaguely," Trant replied, quietly. "I remember the comment upon the disposition of the estate both times. It was from the pictures published of you only a week or two ago that I recognized you. I mean, of course, during the recent comments upon the son, Mr. Howard Axton, whom you have mentioned, who has come home at last to contest the will."

"You do Miss Waldron an injustice—all the papers have been doing her a great injustice, Mr. Trant," Caryl corrected, quickly. "Mr. Axton has not come to contest the will."

"No?"

"No. Miss Waldron asked him to come home, that she may turn over to him, as completely as possible, the whole of his father's estate. If you can recall in any detail the provisions of Mr. Axton's will, you will appreciate, I believe, why we have preferred to let the other impression go uncorrected. For the second Mrs. Axton so carefully and completely cut off all possibility of any of the property being transferred in any form to the son, that Miss Waldron, when she went to a lawyer to see how she could transfer it to Howard Axton, found that her mother's lawyers had provided against every contingency except that of the heir marrying the disinherited son. So Ethel sent for him, offering to establish him in his estate, even at that cost."

"YOU mean that you offered to marry him?" Trant questioned the girl directly. "Has he come to gain his estate in that way?"

"You must be fair to Mr. Axton," the girl replied. "When I first wrote him, almost a year ago, he refused point blank to consider such an offer. In spite of my repeated letters it was not till six weeks ago—after a ship-wreck in which he lost his friend who had been travelling with him for some years—that he would consent even to come home. Even now, I—I remain the one urging the marriage."

The psychologist looked at the girl keenly and questioningly.

"I need scarcely say how little urging he would need, entirely apart from the property," Caryl flushed, "were he sensitive enough to appreciate Miss Waldron's position. I—her friends, I mean, Mr. Trant, have admitted that at first there was nothing about him to prohibit the possibility of her marrying him if she considers that her duty. Now, this mys-

tery has come up about the man who has been following him—the man who appeared again only this morning in Miss Waldron's room and went through her papers—"

"And Mr. Axton cannot account for it?" the psychologist helped him.

"On the contrary he says he can but he doesn't; and he has opposed in every possible way every inquiry or search made for the man—except such as he chooses to make for himself. Only this morning he forbade Miss Waldron, with a veiled threat, to attempt to summon the police and 'take the man out of his hands!'"

"But how do you know, if Mr. Axton is so reticent about this affair, that this latest visitor is the same man who, according to his story, has been following him?"

THE girl took from her bosom the bundle of letters she had brought from her room. "I told you I wrote Mr. Axton about a year ago to come home and he refused to consider it. He always wrote in reply to my letters in the half serious, friendly way you shall see. These four letters I brought you are almost entirely taken up with his adventures with the mysterious man." She handed them to Trant. "He wrote on a typewriter, because on his travels he used to correspond regularly for some London newspaper syndicate."

"London?"

"Yes; the first Mrs. Axton took Howard to England with her immediately after she got her divorce. This is his first return visit to America."

Trant already was glancing over the contents of the first letter hastily; it was post-marked at Cairo, Egypt, some ten months before. He then reread more carefully this part of it:

But a strange and startling incident has happened since my last letter to you, Miss Waldron, which bothers me considerably. We are, as you see, at Sheppard's Hotel, in Cairo. We could not get communicating rooms which it is our custom to have. It was after midnight, and the million noises of this babel town had finally died into a hot and breathless stillness. I lay trying to sleep when I heard distinctly soft footsteps come down the corridor on which my room opens and stop, apparently, in front of my door. They were not, I judged, the footsteps of a European, for the walker was either barefooted or wore soft sandals. I turned my head toward the door, expecting a knock; but none followed. Neither did the door open, though I had not yet locked it.

I was on the point of rising to see what was wanted when it occurred to me that it was probably not at my door that the steps had stopped, but at the door directly opposite across the corridor.

I dozed off. But half an hour later, as nearly as I can estimate it, I awoke and was thinking of the necessity for getting undressed and into bed, when a slight, a very slight, rustling noise attracted my attention. I listened intently to locate the direction of the sound and determine whether it was inside the room or out. Then I heard a slighter sound which could be nothing else than breathing. Some living creature, Miss Waldron, was in my room!

The sounds came from the direction of the table by the window. I turned my head silently and saw a man holding a sheet of paper under the light of a lamp. He was at the table, going through the papers in my writing desk. But the very slight noise I had made in turning on the bed had warned him. He rose, with a hissing intake of the breath, his feet pattered softly and swiftly across the floor, my door creaked under his hand, and he was gone before I could jump up to intercept him.

I ran out into the hallway, but it was empty. I listened, but could hear no movement in any of the rooms near

me. I went back and examined the writing desk, but found nothing missing; and it was plain nothing had been touched except some of my letters from you! In the morning I reported the matter to the hotel office. The only description I could give of the intruder was that he had certainly worn a turban, and one even larger, it seemed to me, than ordinary.

The turban and the absence of European shoes, of course, determined him to have been an Egyptian, Turk, or Arab. But what Egyptian, Turk, or Arab could have entered my room with any other object than robbery—which was certainly not the aim of this intruder, for the valuables in the writing desk were untouched. That same afternoon I had had an altercation amounting almost to a quarrel with a Bedouin Arab on my way back from Heliopolis; but if this were he, why should he have taken revenge on my writing desk instead of on me? And what reason on earth can any follower of the Prophet have had for examining with such particular attention my letters from you? It was so decidedly strange a thing that I have taken all this space to tell it to you, one of the strangest sort of things I've had in all my knocking about; and Lawler can make no more of it than I.

"Who is this Lawler who was with Mr. Axton then?" Trant asked.

"I know only that he was a London friend of Howard's, an interesting man who had traveled a great deal, particularly in America. Howard was lonely after his mother's death, and Mr. Lawler and he—they were about the same age—struck up a friendship and traveled together."

"An English younger son, perhaps?"

"I don't know anything else except that he had been in the English army, in the Sussex Royals, but was forced to give up his commission on account of charges that he had cheated at cards. Howard always held that the charges were false; but that was why he wanted to travel."

"You know of no other trouble which this Lawler had?"

"No, none."

"Then where is he now?"

"Dead."

"Dead?" Trant's face fell.

"Yes; he was the friend I spoke of who was lost, drowned in the wreck of the Gladstone just before Howard started home."

TRANT picked up the next letter, which was dated and postmarked at Calcutta.

Miss Waldron, I have seen him again; my Moslem friend with a taste for your correspondence! You see I can joke about it; but really, it was only last night, I am in a perfect funk. It was the same man, shoeless and turbaned and enjoying the pleasant pursuit of going through my writing desk for your letters. Did he follow us down the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean, over three thousand miles of ocean travel? I can imagine no other explanation. I would take oath he is the very same man I saw at Cairo; here he is in this Great Eastern Hotel at Calcutta, where we have two rooms at the end of the most noisome corridor that ever caged the sounds and odours of a babbling East Indian population, and where the doors have no locks.

I had the end of a trunk against my door, notwithstanding the fact that an Indian servant I have hired was sleeping in the corridor outside across the doorway. I prefer a trunk to a servant as a door-bolt; rightly, as you shall see. Lawler, who had the next room, had neglected to fasten his door in any way, trusting to his servant, who occupied a like strategic position outside the threshold. The door between our two rooms was open. I had been asleep in spite of everything—in spite of the snores and stentorian breathing of a floorful of sleeping humans; in spite of the distant bellowing of a sacred bull, the minor howl of a very far from sacred dog, and a jingling of elephant bells which were set off intermittently somewhere close at hand whenever some living thing in their neighbourhood, animal or human, shifted its position.

I was awakened, at least I believe it was this which awakened me, by a creaking of the floor boards in my room; and, with what seemed a causeless but certainly most oppressive feeling of chilling terror, I started upright in my bed. He was there—again at my writing desk and rustling the papers. For an instant I remained motionless; and in that instant, alarmed by the slight sound I had made, he fled noiselessly, pattered through the door between the rooms and loudly slammed it shut, slammed Lawler's outer door behind him, and had gone.

I pulled the door open, ran across the creaking floor of the other room—where Lawler, awakened by the slamming of the doors, had jumped out of bed—and opened the door into the corridor. Lawler's servant, still dazed with sleep, blubbered that he had seen no one, though the man must have stepped over his very body. A dozen other servants, sleeping before their masters' doors in the corridor, had awakened likewise and chorused shrilly that they had seen no one. Lawler, too, though the noise of the man's passage had brought him out of bed, had not seen him.

When I examined my writing desk, I found, as before at Cairo, that nothing had been taken. The literary delight of looking over your letters seems to be all that draws him. Of course, I am joking; there must be a real reason. What it is that he is searching for, why it

CANADA

By Gunner E. G. Black, No. 312853, 41st Battery, 11th Bde., C.F.A., Military Post Office, London.

FOUR words there be in our old English tongue,

That make our hearts beat fast and pulses throb,

Words that the poet oftentime has sung,
Words that no paltry rhymster e'er can rob.

Mother is one, an angel from above;
And home beloved by men shall ever be;
Sweetheart speaks of rapture and of love,
And homeland is the birthplace of the free.

When men from Canada are overseas,
On pleasure bent, or business, or war,
There is one word that speaks of all of those,
With meaning that it never held before.

The word was but a name when spoke at home,
But Canada means all to those who roam.