

# —THE— SLEUTH

### CHAPTER VIII.

The net result of Neil's stormy scene with Laura was to fix him in the resolve to unravel the mystery of Casper Tolson's murder on his own account. He did not doubt that the girl's skirts were clean, though there was so much to be explained, but he felt that being a woman, she very likely required to be saved from herself. At any rate for the sake of his peace of mind he must know the truth.

There was, moreover, the healthy instinct of self-preservation, which even a young man in love may not ignore. He had no notion of allowing himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter—with the dim figure of another man in the background profiting by the sacrifice.

Having made his resolve, the next thing was to debate ways and means of carrying it into effect. He acknowledged frankly to himself that he was not the ideal detective, though like nearly every man he had rather fancied himself in the role until he was called upon to play it. The impressive and expansive nature of the artist, while it may conceive of a marvelous detective story in the abstract, is not fitted to the relentless, single-minded pursuit of the concrete.

However, his great need would have to supply this lack in his nature. It would have to supply many another lack as well. The hunted one is not in the best position to hunt on his own account.

Though Neil's head was smooth though to pass in a crowd, the professional eye of the barber he visited next morning was not deceived.

"Who cut your hair?" he asked in scorn.

"Fellow in a little country town," said Neil carelessly. "Though I was stuck there for a couple of weeks, so I let him do it. And this morning the house wired me to come in."

"He wasn't no barber, he was a butcher, he was. It's lucky you come to me. I'll fix you up good."

The newspapers with their fresh crop of rumors hourly afforded Neil more entertainment than information. He was becoming hardened now to the liberties they took with his name. This amazing figure of a Neil Ottaway had now built up a like somebody else now, a distant relation, possibly, but not the inviolable "me." No tale concerning him was too wild to be printed. Lacking any real testimony, they were free to endow him with a splendid lurid past. All the unsolved murders of ten years past were ascribed

## A MOTHER'S WORK

Is Too Often Followed by Nervous Debility and Shattered Health.

Mothers as a rule spend so much time in looking after their children and in household work that they overlook the absolute necessity for that rest and relaxation upon which their health depends. The consequence is that soon they find their health breaking down. The daily drumming of household cares quickly thin the blood and weaken the nerves. Then follow headaches, pains in the side and back, swollen limbs, palpitation, a constantly tired feeling, and often an inclination to fretfulness. These symptoms are the signs of poor blood, and are the inevitable penalty of overwork and over anxiety in the care of children and the affairs of the household.

Whenever a mother finds her health failing and household duties becoming more than she can comfortably manage, whenever extra demands are made upon her strength, she should adopt the safe and simple expedient of enriching her blood with Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. These pills are especially valuable to the nursing mother and the woman worn out with household cares. They renew her blood supply, strengthen her tired limbs, and drive away the headaches and backaches that have made her so miserable. They have restored thousands of despondent women to good health and bright spirits, and will do for you as much as they have done for others if you will give them a fair trial.

Mrs. W. F. Burns, Guelph, Ont., says: "A few years ago we had three children born in three years which left me so run down and nervous that I was not able to do my work. The last baby lived only two weeks and the worry that added to my weak condition shattered my nerves. Our family doctor for several months tried to build me up, but nothing seemed to benefit me. I suffered agony with my head and since I suffered would leave me completely prostrated. During one of these spells I went to another doctor, who advised a change of scene. I went away for a few weeks, but was disappointed and wanted to be back home, so my husband came and brought me home again. A few days later my sister came to me and asked me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I had used three boxes and by the time I had used them all I was completely well, could do all my own work without feeling tired, and was like a new woman. This was five years ago, and since then two other children have come, and I am still enjoying perfect health."

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to him. Evidently he had commenced his career of crime in knickerbockers. His principal concern with the morning editions was to learn what had become of his young friend. One account ran:

The sleuths on the trail of Neil Ottaway last night liberated a boy who said that the desperate young criminal had imprisoned him in an unoccupied building on Dickson street, where he was found. The boy gave his name as Kid Doty, sixteen, no home. He was discovered tied hand and foot in a vacant room filled with debris, and overruled with rats.

For a long time the police could get nothing out of him. Apparently he had been terrified into silence. But when he learned that they were already well informed as to all the movements of Neil Ottaway, he reluctantly told his story.

It appears that young Doty aspires to be a detective. Reading in a newspaper of how Neil Ottaway had secured a disguise as a stoker he started out to find him on his own account. By a remarkable coincidence he did actually run into him on West street, and shadowed him to the empty house on Dickson street. There the boy, according to his own story, attempted to arrest the fugitive with a rusty revolver, but was overpowered and tied up as described.

Thus, if the tale is true, the plans of the police who have Neil Ottaway under surveillance, narrowly escaped being frustrated by the amateur. There is a strong suspicion, however that

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the whole thing may be the product of an imagination overheated by dime novels and a course of sensational motion pictures.

This suspicion is lent additional color by the fact that the boy would not or could not carry his tale any further. No amount of questioning would induce him to tell what went on in the empty house during the time that he says he spent there with the fugitive. He seemed to take the pose that the police were his rivals, and made believe that he intended to use whatever evidence he had secured to further his own game. The police were much amused by the youthful would-be sleuth.

At a late hour last night his father called for him at police headquarters, and it transpired that his name was really Percy Randall, son of Hayward Randall, of Meigs, Thorley & Randall, lawyers with offices in Nassau street.

The boy was given into the custody of his father, who undertook to produce him in court any time his evidence might be required, but it is not supposed that young Percy will be asked to figure in the limelight again. It may be hazardous that a somewhat painful interview took place in the Randall domicile last night which may have the effect of discouraging the detective ambitions of young hopeful.

Neil smiled upon reading this. "Good old Kid Doty," he thought. "True blue."

All the newspapers expressed the same confidence on the part of the police. They were still promising to arrest Neil Ottaway within an hour or two. The inference was that they could put their hands on him at any moment, and were waiting only until they had secured a certain mysterious piece of evidence. Neil felt somewhat uneasy. Was it possible that the police were really cognizant of every move he made? He looked uncomfortably around the lobby of the big hotel, where he sat.

A moment's reflection reassured him that it was simply that time-honored expedient of a baffled antagonist, a bluff. He remembered other cases that he had followed. They would arrest him fast enough—if they could. Moreover, there was internal evidence in the newspaper story that they were still at sea. Neil's own part in telephoning the police was supposed to be true, they had had to discredit it to save their own faces. In the cautious discussion of the Tolson case reference to his funeral was not overlooked. It was to be held that same morning. Back and forth in his mind Neil played with the idea of attending it. Of course it would be a foolhardy thing to do, the crowd would be larded with detectives; still, sometimes the most foolhardy-appearing act proves in the outcome to have been prudent. If his disguise was sufficient to carry him through; if it was not, he might as well be arrested soon as late.

It was the chance that he might learn something to further his own search that impelled him. He was not unmindful of the morbid attraction the occasion would have for the real murderer. Since he could not work upon the terrors of Laura, and he had nothing else to go on, he must make a start somewhere.

He examined himself in a full-length mirror. The loss of his bold, upstand-

ing that he viewed with a sigh; he cherished it. Still it made an extraordinary difference in his appearance. His hair had been his leading motive; people remembered him by it. He could not believe that any one would be able to identify the careless, unconventional artist as the smooth, smug young man-about-town who faced him, elegantly tapping a cigarette on the back of his chamois-gloved hand.

Neil had changed his expression to suit his clothes, too. The round shell-rimmed glasses provided the last touch of affectation.

"I wouldn't know myself, if I didn't know it was me," he thought.

Besides, the police were still looking for a stoker. Neil decided to go to the funeral.

The late Casper Tolson's address in the east Twenties, a block between Second and Third Avenues, near Cramer Park. As he turned the corner from Third Avenue he caught his breath in astonishment. He was prepared for the grewsome trappings of woe and for vulgar curiosity; but here was a crowd of thousands of white faces, completely filling the street from wall to wall. A cordon of po-

## SMOKE TUCKETS T&B PLUG

lice was required to keep a clear space around the hearse.

Moreover, every stoop and window was full, bodies hung precariously to every projecting ledge and every rail, and heads stuck over the edge of the roofs.

"This is fame," thought Neil. "Lord, what a yell would go up if I were exhibited in front of them." Neil was inclined to beat a retreat. However, as his startled nerves quieted, it suggested itself as the safest place in the world for him. He smiled, remembering his confident hope of picking out the real offender. To mix with such a crowd wiped personal identity out clean.

It was the tall end of a fashionable street, over the dead line of Irving place. Old-fashioned middle-class dwellings lined each side; there was but the one design of house in the entire block. Hideous respectability was the keynote. The decorative horrors of thirty years ago were still naively displayed within the parlor windows.

Neil seized every opportunity that offered to edge himself unobtrusively forward. A waiting crowd is passive; none opposed him. Faces flashed on his consciousness and faded out; fresh and wrinkled, hairy and shaven, rosy and sallow, clean and dirty. Here the differences ended; for individually had been surrendered to the crowd. It was one huge gape centred on the hearse. No emotion was suggested save a primitive curiosity.

Neil, who had a vital interest in the matter, studied in self-defence to show a face as blank as the others. Occasionally he identified a detective by his size or air of officialdom.

Neil finally succeeded in worming himself into the first rank but one of the spectators. He did not care to show himself quite in front. Apparently this crowd was prepared to wait all day. At intervals the police with a concerted effort forced the encroaching circle back. In the midst of the pushing and shoving there was much good-natured banter.

KEEP YOUR SHOES NEAT

2 IN 1

WHITE SHOE DRESSING LIQUID to CAKE

Mrs. W. in Chicler shoes

There was nothing to indicate that the occasion of the gathering was the funeral of a man foully murdered. The black-clad driver of the hearse lolled on his seat with his elbow supported on his crossed knees, and looked down from his point of vantage with a sneer. Conscious of his importance in the scene like a free citizen he showed his contempt for it. The horses slept. Neil wondered behind which stolid face in the front rank lay guilty knowledge. Nothing showed on the surface.

After an interminable wait the door of the house opened, and a stir passed through the crowd. The bustling undertaker appeared, ushering the coffin borne by six solid husbands and fathers, perspiring and oppressed by self-consciousness. Neil had a vivid mental picture of what lay within the long black box. It was thrust in the hearse, the pallbearers meanwhile glancing over their shoulders with much the same uneasy suspicion that royalty has of the mob.

Next appeared a long procession of floral offerings borne by the undertaker's brisk, well-fed young assistants. There were crosses, anchors, wreaths, an open book, a broken column. All these were placed in proud array in an open carriage preceding the hearse. The cortege moved on a few steps at a time to give place to carriage for the mourners.

A stronger thrill passed through the crowd as the shrouded widow appeared on the top step, supported by her relatives. This was the note of human interest that for the crowd gave relish to the show. Neil regarded her with compassionate interest. Whatever the truth of this confused matter, here at least was an innocent sufferer.

This was the climax of the scene. Pretty soon the crowd began to stir and break up. A large number remained staring fixedly at the house as if they got some subtle emotional satisfaction out of its stone face.

Neil was not quite ready to leave the spot. He found a refuge out of the press in a street-level doorway near the corner, where he could watch the faces float by. The other corner of the doorway was already occupied by a youth of his own age, who threw him the half smile of one admitting an equal among the crowd of the unwashed.

Neil nodded to him, and sized him up. An easily recognizable type, he decided, the slender, good-looking and utterly worthless young male that every large city produces in such numbers nowadays. His well-cut clothes set off his graceful limbs admirably, and he displayed a nice taste in haberdashery, particularly in a cinnamon-colored tie which "vent" with his sallow skin. His face, while vacuous and

sneering, yet had a boyish comeliness which recommended him even to one who saw the evil, so potent is the harmony of feature.

As in all men of his kidney the predominant note of him was an immense scorn for all the world.

"Huh!" he said for Neil's benefit, indicating the passing crowd with a nod, "the G. A. R. has certainly turned out in force to-day."

"G. A. R.?" asked Neil.

"Grand Army of Rubber-Necks. Lord! what a bunch of worm-eaten nuts!"

"Well, we're here, too," said Neil, good-humoredly.

"I got something better to do, I can tell you," returned the other, loftily. "But I got caught in the blame crowd and I can't get out of it."

"I see," said Neil. "What do you think of this case, anyhow? I suppose you read the papers?"

"Don't think anything of it. A common kind of crime. A guy croaked for his sparkler and his roll. I don't see why they make such a fuss about it."

"Well, it's a kind of mystery," suggested Neil.

"Mystery nothing! This fellow OE to-day did it, all right. I suppose the poor fool will let the police nab him directly. These fellows have no nerve. Why, anybody could stall off the police if they put their mind to it."

A feeling of resentment stirred Neil against this cock-sure young idler.

"Well, what would you do if you were in his place?" he asked, quietly.

"Oh, they'd never get hold of me," said the young man confidently, but vaguely.

"Yes, but what would you do?" insisted Neil.

"I wouldn't do anything!" returned the other triumphantly. "That's just where they make a mistake. They run, and naturally somebody takes after them. I'd stay right here and bluff it out."

"Pretty good advice," observed Neil, dryly.

"A man never gets caught till he loses his nerve," the young man with the cinnamon tie continued. "When he begins to slink along and look guilty the first cop that sees him just naturally has to take him in. Look a cop square in the eye and he doesn't touch you."

"You seem to know," said Neil.

"The other favored him with a sharp glance, suspecting ridicule. But Neil's face was bland. Their further talk on the subject was interrupted by a heavy, red-faced man, who struggled out of the crowd and edged himself between them. He turned around and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

Something vaguely familiar in his aspect made Neil anxious. Naturally he did not want to see any acquaintances just then. Presently the man took off his derby hat to mop his forehead, and Neil saw with a great inward start that it was no other than Officer Hartigan.

Civilian virtues changed him greatly, and he had shaved off the noble mustache; but it was he. Neil felt that the slightest untoward movement would instantly have betrayed him. He remained staring calmly out of his corner, while the alarm bells clanged deafeningly inside him.

Hartigan turned to him. "Scuse me if I seemed to crowd you," he apologized. "I got to wait here awhile."

Neil tested himself. This was the acid test of his disguise. "Plenty of room," he said, offhand.

Hartigan turned to the other. A silent breath of relief escaped Neil. He had passed! Hartigan was ingratiating himself with the young man with



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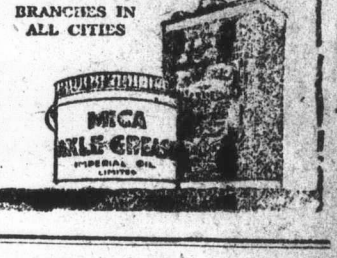
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the cinnamon tie. Neil determined to stay where he was. Once established his new character in Hartigan's mind and the danger of identification by him was over forever.

The three of them fell into conversational crowds.

"Beats me where they all come from!" said Hartigan. "Any little thing'll raise 'em any time—a fire, a fight, or a guy in a fit. A fellow'd think nobody in New York never had to work for a livin'."

"Ahh! they're all bugs!" said the young man with the cinnamon tie, scornfully. "Crazy as wood-ticks, every mother's son of them!"

"I suppose that's what they'd say about us," observed Neil.

"Oh, well, sometimes a man's got a purpose in foolin' around," Hartigan was portentous.

(To be continued.)

### IN THE INTEREST OF EFFICIENCY

It may be of general interest to the Canadian public to know some examples of the way in which the railways, through the Canadian Pacific Association for National Defence, are exchanging traffic in the interests of efficiency.

In one case the C. P. R. diverted by way of the Soo Line one thousand cars of freight so as to relieve the north shore of Lake Superior. These cars passed south from Winnipeg to Minneapolis and by way of Sault Ste. Marie into Ontario. They consisted chiefly of grain for domestic consumption in Canada.

One hundred cars of freight per day are being diverted from the C.P.R. at Quebec and travelling by way of the National Transcontinental to Halifax. While there is no saving in mileage this, in the interest of the country, relieves the C. P. R. main line to St. John for classes of export freight more urgently required there.

In Toronto an arrangement was successfully carried out whereby one hundred and twenty cars of freight eastbound for Montreal were turned over from the C.P.R. to the C. N. R. every day.

The Grand Trunk has also diverted season has been diverting one hundred and fifty to two hundred cars of coal per day to the C.P.R. and T. H. & E. to lessen the congestion on the Grand Trunk from Niagara frontier to Toronto and other points.

The Grand Trunk has also diverted fifty cars per day to the C. N. R. at Toronto.

In Western Canada the Canadian Northern has on several occasions transferred surplus traffic to the sister railways in the West.

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