

the stockings would have convinced me."

Amber nodded and met the policeman grateful glance with a grin.

"I don't think there is much use in waiting," said Amber. "Our friends have given the policemen the slip. There is a back entrance to the hotel which I do not doubt they have utilized. Your men could not have the power to make a summary arrest?"

The inspector shook his head.

"The charges are conspiracy and burglary, aren't they?" he asked, "that would require a warrant. A constable could take the responsibility for making a summary arrest, but very few would care to take the risk."

A messenger had brought Amber's shoes and great coat and he was ready to depart.

"I will furnish the Yard with the necessary affidavit," he said; "the time has come when we should make a clean sweep. I know almost enough to hang them without the bother referring to their latest escapade—their complicated frauds extending over years are bad enough; they are distributors, if not actual forgers, of spurious paper money—that's worse from a jury's point of view. Juries understand forgeries."

He had sent the car back to Maidstone to bring Sutton. He was not surprised when he came down to breakfast at his hotel to find that not only Frank, but his sister had arrived. Very briefly he told the adventures of the night.

"We will finish with them," he said. "They have ceased to be amusing. A warrant will be issued to-day, and with luck we should have them to-night."

Lambaire and Whitey in the meantime had reached the temporary harbour afforded by the Bloomsbury boarding-house where Lambaire lived. Whitey's was ever the master mind in moments of crisis, and now he took charge of the arrangements.

He found a shop in the city that opened early and purchased trunks for the coming journey. Another store supplied him with such of his wardrobe as was replaceable at a moment's notice. He dared not return to his hotel for the baggage he had left.

Lambaire was next to useless. He sat in the sitting-room Whitey had engaged biting his finger nails and cursing helplessly.

"It's no good swearing, Lambaire," said Whitey, "We're up against it—good. We're 'peleli'—as the Kaffirs say—finished. Get your cheque-book."

"Couldn't we brazen it out?" querulously demanded the big man, "couldn't we put up a bluff—?"

"Brazen!" sneered Whitey, "you're a cursed fine brazen! You try to brazen a jury! Where's the pass book?"

Reluctantly Lambaire produced it, and Whitey made a brief examination.

"Six thousand three hundred—that's the balance," he said with relish, "and a jolly good balance, too. We'll draw all but a hundred. There will be delay if the account is closed."

He took the cheque-book and wrote in his angular calligraphy an order to pay bearer six thousand two hundred pounds. Against the word Director he signed his name and pushed the cheque-book to Lambaire. The other hesitated, then signed.

"Wait a bit," growled Lambaire as his friend reached for the cheque, "who's going to draw this?"

"I am," said Whitey.

Lambaire looked at him suspiciously.

"Why not me?" he asked, "the bank knows me."

"You — you thief!" spluttered Whitey, "you dog! Haven't I trusted you?"

"This is a big matter," said Lambaire doggedly.

With an effort Whitey mastered his wrath.

"Go and change it," he said. "I'm not afraid of you running away—only go quickly—the banks are just opening."

"I don't—I haven't got any suspicion of you, Whitey," said Lambaire with heavy affability, "but business is business."

"Don't jaw—go," said his companion tersely. If the truth be told, Whitey recognized the danger of visiting the bank. There was a possibility that a

warrant had already been issued and that the bank would be watched. There was a chance, however, that some delay might occur, and in his old chivalrous way he had been willing to take the risk.

Lambaire went to his room before he departed, and was gone for half an hour. He found Whitey standing with his back to the fire in a meditative mood.

"Here I am, you see," Lambaire's tone was one of gentle raillery. "I haven't run away."

"No," admitted Whitey. "I trust you more than you trust me—though you half made up your mind to bolt with the swag when you came out of the bank."

Lambaire's face went red.

"How—how do you know—what d'ye mean?" he demanded noisily.

"I followed you," said Whitey simply, "in a taxi-cab."

"Is that what you call trusting me?" demanded Lambaire with some bitterness.

"No," said Whitey without shame, "that's what I call takin' reasonable precautions."

Lambaire laughed, an unusual thing for him to do.

He pulled from his breast pockets two thick pads of bank-notes.

"There's your lot, and there's mine," he said, "they are in fifties—I'll count them for you."

Deftly he fingered the notes, turning them rapidly as an accountant turns the leaves of his ledger. There were sixty-two.

Whitey folded them and put them into his pocket.

"Now what's your plan?" asked Whitey.

"The Continent," said Lambaire. "I'll leave by the Harwich route for Holland—we had better separate."

Whitey nodded.

"I'll get out by way of Ireland," he lied. He looked at his watch. It was nearly ten o'clock.

"I shall see you—sometime," he said turning as he left the room, and Lambaire nodded. When he returned the big man had gone.

There is a train which leaves for the Continent at eleven from Victoria—a very dangerous train as Whitey knew, for it is well watched. There was another which left at the same hour from Holborn—this stops at Herne Hill.

Whitey resolved to take a tourist ticket at an office in Ludgate Hill and a taxi-cab to Herne Hill.

He purchased the ticket and was leaving the office, when a thought struck him.

He crossed to the counter where the money-changers sit. "Let me have a hundred pounds' worth of French money."

He took two fifty-pound notes and pushed them through the grill.

The clerk looked at them, fingered them, then looked at Whitey.

"Notice anything curious about these?" he asked drily.

"No."

There was a horrible sinking sensation in Whitey's heart.

"They are both numbered the same," said the clerk, "and they are forgeries."

Mechanically Whitey took the bundle of notes from his pocket and examined them. They were all of the same number.

His obvious perturbation saved him from an embarrassing inquiry.

"Have you been sold?"

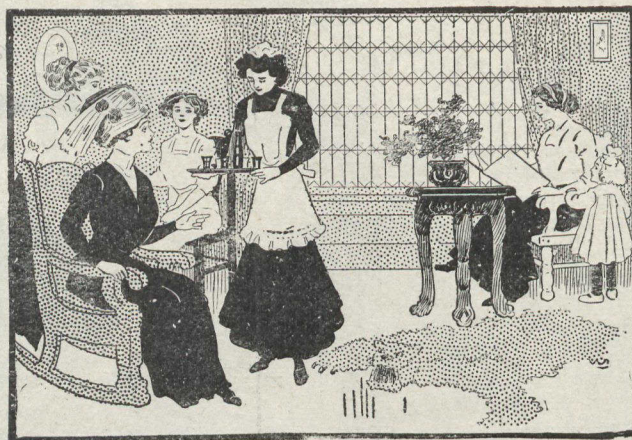
"I have," muttered the duped man. He took the notes the man offered him and walked out.

A passing taxi drew to the kerb at his uplifted hand. He gave the address of Lambaire's lodging.

Lambaire had gone when he arrived: he had probably left before Whitey. Harwich was a blind—Whitey knew that.

He went to Lambaire's room. In his flight Lambaire had left many things behind. Into one of the trunks so left Whitey stuck the bundle of forgeries. If he was to be captured he would not be found in possession of these damning proofs of villainy. A search of the room at first revealed no clue to Lambaire's destination, then Whitey happened upon a tourist's guide. It opened naturally at one page, which meant that one page

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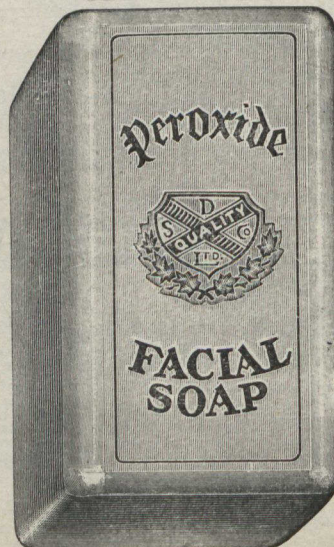
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