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Why Mrs. Burbank Ran Away

Continued from page 15)

Astro's expression had changed wonderfully as he heard the news. He hastened to offer his sympathy anew to his client, and assured him that it was only a question of a few hours before his wife would return. This promise seemed to quiet the old man's distress. Astro went back into the studio with a new expression, at once determined and jubilant. He sat down, wrote a note, and despatched it by a messenger boy. This done, he set the phonograph carefully at the beginning of the strange exclamation that interrupted the song

on the record, and waited.

In a half-hour Buttons opened the heavy portieres, announced "Colonel Trevellian!" and a man walked in.

Trevellian!" and a man walked in.

The visitor looked about scornfully. He was a lean, yellow, bony faced man, with deep set eyes and a drooping mustache. He spoke with a drawl. "I believe you requested to see me on a matter of importance and of a confidential nature," he observed languidly.

"I did," Astro replied. "I am about to make a request of you."

"Indeed, you do me a great honour."
The man's tone was sarcastic.

The man's tone was sarcastic.
Astro scarcely looked at him. "1 would be infinitely obliged to you, Colonel Trevellian, if you would consent to pack up your things, leave New York, and not return for five years."

The Colonel scowled, took a step nearer, and clenched his fist. "You infernal charlatan! if you'll take off that nightgown and sweeping cap, I'll see that you don't desorate this cozy corner any longer! What the deuce do you mean? By Jove! I'll thrash you and pitch you out of your own window!"

Astro yawned. Then he brought his two hands down on his knees, and his two hands down on his knees, and his handsome head was outstretched toward the Colonel, on whom he turned two blazing eyes. "Colonel Trevellian," he said in a voice like the rattling of paper, "you have persecuted Mrs. Burbank long enough! If you fancy you understand the art of hypnotic suggestion, I can show you that you're a fool as well as a cur. For her sake I consent to permit you to leave town without inmit you to leave town without informing the Major exactly what kind of a cad you are; but you'll have to leave quickly!"

The Colonel had already lost the

The Colonel had already lost the most of his nerve; but he made a last attempt to bluster. "What do you mean, sir? I've done nothing at all, I assure you. You're quite mistaken. Why, the Major is my best friend!" "And do you not wish to supplant him as husband of your old sweet.

him as husband of your old sweet-heart, Mrs. Burbank?"
"Of course not. It's absurd." The

Colonel's face was ashen now.

"And you did not suggest, after hypnotizing her and getting her somewhat under your influence, that she

The man stared hard at Astro, and s jaw had dropped. "That she his jaw had dropped. "That she—what?" He almost whispered it.
Astro touched the phonograph. "Kellem, kellem, kell—" it ground

out raucously.

The Colonel stared first at the mechanism, then at the palmist. He dropped a step back, undecided, then, turning suddenly, bolted out of the room.

Astro dropped again into his chair folded his arms, and drew a long

The hansom drew up at No. 234. A woman got out, paid the driver, and looked curiously at the front door. Apparently puzzled, she drew a telegram from her purse and read it over. She was a fine looking woman of thirty-five, dressed all in black, even to her furs, though she wore no mourning veil. Her only luggage was a small travelling bag. Everything about her stamped her as a woman of culture and influence; if not rich, at least comfortably off. Yet her demeanor was timid, almost irightened.

As she started to ascend the steps, a private brougham, driving furiously, came down 34th street, and drew up suddenly before her. A young girl, fresh and pretty, smartly dressed, and with an air of jaunty confidence, immed out

fidence, jumped out.

The woman who had first arrived stared at her in astonishment. "Why,"

stared at her in astonishment. "Why,' she said, "how do you happen to be here?" The look of perplexity and timidity in her eyes deepened now into positive alarm. "Oh!" she breathed, "you're not a detective?" Valeska took her hand affectionately. "No, my dear Mrs. Burbank, only a friend who wants to help you. I knew that if I told you on the train, you'd never come here; so I didn't dare to explain that we had really imposed upon you. Bobby is quite well, I assure you. You needn't worry on his account. And I hope on no other account either; for I'm sure that by this time the Master has been able to straighten things out."

been able to straighten things out."
"The Master!" Mrs. Burbank

gasped. "Yes. Astro the Master of Mysteries, my employer and my friend, as I'm sure he is yours. Your husband secured his services; for no one else would have been able to find you and help you without danger of you have been able to go with the come right up and you'll publicity. Come right up, and you'll hear from him that everything is all right."

'Oh, if it only was!" The woman followed Valeska hopelessly.

Ten minutes after that Mrs. Burbank sat smiling in the studio. Astro had told her that there would be nothing more to fear from the persecutor who had made the last few weeks hideous. She had herself confessed everything: how, after that first hypnotic sleep, the Colonel had given her persistently, so often that it drove her almost distracted, the it drove her almost distracted, the horrible suggestion that she kill her husband. She had struggled hard against it; but the iteration of the words "Kill him!" so distorted as to be unintelligible to appropriate be unintelligible to anyone else, coming now in letters, now over the telephone, now from the innocent lips of her own child, had finally unstrung her mind; and, for fear lest in her distress she should actually

commit the crime, she had run away to get out of the Colonel's power.

"When I went away," she concluded, "I thought I had destroyed every evidence that might enable my husband to know how I had been tormented; that is tormented; that is, every piece but one—the phonograph cylinder. I was afraid I could not destroy that, and feared to leave it in the house. I took it with me when I went to see Edward, hoping that I should find some place to conceal it. But everysome place to conceal it. But everyone seemed to be watching me, and
I was too nervous to risk throwing
it away. So, when I got to Edward's
apartment I left it there in the ash
barrel. I had intended to tell him
everything and ask his advice; but
the poor fellow was so blue that I didn't have the heart to worry him with my own troubles, and I left him without saying anything." She looked curiously at Astro. "I

can't imagine how you ever found out. It's wonderful!"

Astro's look was cryptic. "My dear Mrs. Burbank," he replied, "such a nervous force as yours is intensely dynamic, it effects a discontinuous force. intensely dynamic; it effects a dis-turbance of the ether, and to one sensitive to such vibration the mes-

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