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## Shadowing Sheila

Written for The Western Home Monthly By Edith G. Bayne

against the stone coping where it formed a kind of short flying buttress on the garden side of the house. He was early, for just as he had accomplished this feat of squeezing his stalwart form into a very unsatisfactory niche a clock somewhere near at hand boomed nine. Thereafter for a time he looked out at intervals upon the approach of footsteps or at any untoward sound but the real object of his expectations failed to appear.

He pulled his cap closer over his eyes. Then he consulted his luminous-faced watch. Quarter past nine.

'Almost any time now!" he muttered. Three people had left the house in this period, all by way of the servants' entrance Two were evidently the cook and a housemaid going to a party to judge from their attire. The other was the butler, familiar enough to McCartney even in the velvet gloom, leaving with leisurely calm for an evening stroll, his pipe alight and his hands in his pockets. The psychological moment for Miss Sheila's advent was at hand.

McCartney stepped out and viewed the windows of the old mansion. They were all dark. He cast a searching glance

CARTNEY drew further back previous occasions she may have thought into the shadows and en- it best to allow some days to elapse before deavored to flatten himself making a third attempt. By George, but she had lots of nerve! And such a slender little creature, too. And her eyes! They were the eyes of a saint absolutely without guile. McCartney fell into a deeply reflective mood here.

Presently he fetched a sigh, ponderous and tinged with despair and altogether a thing at variance with the stern, self-imposed task that was his, namely, the tracking down of a clever criminal.

Everything comes to him who waitsif only he has patience to wait long enough. At a quarter past ten she glided like a silver shadow into his ken and he started up broad awake, he had been dozing a little, and held his breath while she passed within four feet of him. Then, very warily he followed her—her and her leather bag.

She skirted some bushes, crossed the driveway and mounted the terrace and the steps. He gumshoed his way along the edge of the verandah, crouched behind a big stone lion and waited while she inserted a key, skeleton, of course, he said to himself, into the great door. She disappeared and he darted up the steps and tried the lock. It yielded! (Last night she hadn't achieved entrance). were all dark. He cast a searching glance It was a simple matter to insinuate over the moonlit driveway that swept mimself through a nine-inch opening and



A scene in Regent Street, London, where progressive steps have been taken to prevent the spread of the influenza epidemic. Zinc masks are obtained at a public distributing depot. The masks are perforated, a sponge on the inside being saturated with disinfectant.

away in a long curve toward the acacias and the big stone lodge gates. He kept an eagle eye on the shadow-dotted lawn and the edge of the shrubbery. There was a little spinney beyond and next to that a deep green mass that looked like a series of cedar hedges and it was this that puzzled McCartney most. He watched it suspiciously. It was too low for a wood and too high for a shrubbery and it wasn't a garden for that was in

plain view, just beyond the conservatories. Last night, for example, how had she gotten in? Not by way of the lodge gates for he had been concealed there behind a rhododendron, and had only sprung up when he had heard her light tep on the gravel at the piazza. And from his varied reading and his observation he knew that the true Englishman's grounds are always fenced in and generally impregnably so. These, for instance, were bounded by a high stone wall. Nothing more insular could well be imagined. McCartney had always thought it a splendid idea to have one's home and lawn and flower-beds all to oneself and protected from the ravages of the neighbors' children and dogs, but in the amateur sleuth game this custom presents drawbacks. He had a pair of skinned knuckles and a near-sprain in the ankle from having gained access somewhat as Jean Valjean gained the convent grounds when the inspector was but a few vards behind. In McCartney's case, however, there was only the roundsman

or "bobby" to evade. Perhaps Sheila had become apprehen-Bold as she had been on the two to close the door as noiselessly as it had opened. He stood a moment in the hushed darkness of the big vestibule,

listening. He could hear a slight click-clicking as of little heels on hardwood floors. Then he caught a dull beam of light. He entered the hall. The light came from a room beyond. His feet encountered fur rugs and he discovered a great newelpost at the bottom of a broad flight of stairs that curved upward out of sight. A shaft of moonlight poured down from a leaded-glass window on the stairway and made a pool of rich light at his feet, and by the aid of this and his outspread hands he managed to avoid several tall chairs, a pedestal surmounted by a winged victory and a number of objets d' art which otherwise he would have tripped over. As it was he knocked against a squat brass coal basket and a pair of andirons and drew hastily back against the portieres until assured that the other occupant of the mansion had not heard.

She was moving about quietly but busily in the adjacent room, which, by creeping carefully up to the partly-open door, he ascertained to be a library. She had switched on a wall light and was kneeling before a safe in the oak panelling putting out papers and placing them in the big grip which lay open beside her. A jade vase, a cloissone jar, a marble Venus and a couple of small framed oil paintings were grouped on the rug beside the grip. Then McCartney through the crack of the door caught the gleam of jewels. Miss Raffles was holding