

# THE RIDDLE OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Being an Exploit in the Career of Hamilton Cleek, Detective

By MARY E. AND THOMAS W. HANSHEW

## CHAPTER I

### The Girl From Scotland.

Mr. Maverick Narkom, Superintendent of Scotland Yard, looked up from the letter he was perusing, a wrinkle in his brow and one hand spread out over the sheet to keep it open, as the sound of a soft knock broke through the stillness, and with an exasperation born of the knotty problem upon which he was at work, called out an irritated "Come in."

Inspector Petrie's head appeared in the aperture, stiff hand at the salute. "I know you wasn't to be disturbed, sir," he began apologetically, "but there's a lady come to see you. Seems distressed, and said it was urgent, and begged me for the love of 'even to let her in."

"And, being a religious man, you succumbed, of course," rapped out Mr. Narkom in a tone of exasperation. "Oh, well, where's her card? What with one thing and another, this morning's work has practically gone to blazes. Not a minute's peace, by James! What's the lady's name, Petrie?"

"Inspector Petrie came forward, a copy of pastboard in his hand upon which was engraved a name and something written in a woman's hand underneath. "Miss Maud Duggan. H'm. Scotch friend of Miss Allis Lorne—Alisa Lorne, eh? Haven't heard from her in a month of Sundays. Said her business was important—eh, Petrie?"

"Very important, sir." "Oh, well, then, show her up. This queer business requires entire quiet, and so long as I can't seem to enforce that, I might as well attend to the matter in hand." "Very good, sir," bowing, Petrie withdrew. Meanwhile Mr. Narkom slipped his arms into his coat—it was June, and the heat-wave had London in its grip, and allied with an equally warm problem he had thought himself fully justified in shedding it—and sat at his desk, drumming his fingers upon the top of it to the tune of "God Save the King."

A moment later "Miss Maud Duggan" was standing before him—a tall, dark-faced woman with dark-ringed eyes and a twitching, nervous mouth. She came toward him, hands clasped over her breast, entire body aflame with the intensity of her quest. Mr. Narkom, waving her to a seat with none too much cordiality, mentally labelled her "highly strung," and seated himself with an effort to interest himself in what she had to say.

"Miss Duggan, I believe," he began, with a creditable attempt at cordiality. "Friend of Miss Lorne's?" "That's right," she said in a hesitating voice, with just a trace of Scotch accent that told of the part of the British Isles which gave her birth. "I am a friend of Alisa's—an old school friend—although we haven't seen each other for a matter of five years. But I wrote to her—when the trouble began—and she told me to come to you."

Here is her letter, if you care to see it.

"I prefer to listen to your version of the story first, my dear young lady," returned Mr. Narkom, with a reassuring smile. She was palpably nervous. "You are in trouble, of course? No one ever visits these offices for any other reason. Now just set yourself at ease and tell me all about it. Is it a family matter, or what?"

"Yes, it is a family matter. And a very serious one at that, Mr. Narkom," returned Miss Duggan in her rapid voice. "And I am so worried I don't know which way to turn—and so, in desperation I came down—all the way from Scotland—to consult you. You will help me, I know. It is about my father. His life is in danger, in very grave danger, and I am afraid that even now, while I am here, something may happen to him, and that woman practise her cunning successfully at last."

"Is danger?" Mr. Narkom sat forward in his chair, his professional instincts awake at the word. "Who is the woman of whom you speak, Miss Duggan, and why should she have designs on your father's life? Begin at the beginning and tell me where you live, and all about it. There's plenty of time, you know. Things don't happen so rapidly as a lot of you young people imagine. You are Scotch, are you not?"

"I am. And my father is Sir Andrew Duggan, of whom you have no doubt heard. He—has large possessions in Scotland. A big landowner, you know." "And a hard one," said Mr. Narkom, mentally recalling certain paragraphs about the gentleman which appeared from time to time in the Scotch papers.

"Our home is at Aygon—Aygon Castle, in Argyllshire. And there are two of us by our father's first marriage—my brother Ross and me. Ross, as you know, is heir to the estate, of course as eldest son of the line (that part of them which is entitled), but some seventeen years ago my father married again, an Italian woman whom he met upon one of his periodical journeys abroad."

"That is the woman in question?" "It is!" Her voice ran up a tiny scale of excitement. She shut her hands together and breathed hard, and leaning forward in her seat, let her big dark eyes dwell a moment upon his face. "That woman is a wicked, wicked, fend incarnate, prompted to heaven knows what awful action by her ambitions for her son Cyril!"

"Your father's child?" "My father's child. Cyril is sixteen this birthday—a nice lad, but with all the Latin traits of his mother's race—our Scotch character, Mr. Narkom. Paula has planned this thing from the beginning—slowly, secretly, steadily. She has planned to treat the estates from Ross, to turn his own father against him, so that at the last he will renounce his will and leave all that he possesses to Cyril—and rob Ross of his rightful inheritance!"

"My dear lady, have you any foundation for believing this?" put in Mr. Narkom at this juncture, as she paused. "An ambitious woman is not necessarily a potential murderer, you know." "But this one is. One can see it in her eyes when she looks at Ross, and one can read it in every gesture and every thought that passes across her face. She is a dangerous woman, Mr. Narkom, who will stop at nothing. Her own father, I believe, had a cancer that was shrouded in mystery, so far as we can trace, but there was theft in it, and crime, too—that much I have ascertained. His daughter is the fitting descendant of the family. I repeat there is nothing she will stop at—noting!—and now that Ross has taken up with this electricity installation, he has been mad on engineering ever since he was big enough to toddle, but Father would not permit him to go in for it—Lady Paula has used it to her own desperate end, and has practically succeeded in turning Father against Ross, so that the two hardly speak when they meet, and avoid each other as much as possible in the daily round of life."

"And what, my dear young lady, makes you think that—Lady Paula would wish to murder your father?" "My eyes—and my ears, too. Both of which are sharper than one might imagine. When Paula mixes my father's food—he is an old man and full of whims and cranks, Mr. Narkom, and he has been much attached to his second wife and trusts her absolutely—and at night he takes bread-and-milk for supper, nothing else. And no one but Paula makes it. She has a little sitting-room of her own, just off my father's study, where there is a little gas-stove and all the necessary paraphernalia for mixing an invalid's food, and last week I made a point of going in to watch her—found an empty cage to get some notepaper and stepped into the room quietly. She was sitting at her desk, and in her hand was a little phial of some whitish powder which she was just about to empty into it when the sound of my father's footsteps arrested her. She swung round, went as pale as death, and clasped her hand to her heart. 'How you startled me!' she exclaimed. 'You should not stir the room. I have promised his interest in the case. I have given him but the barest outlines. It is for you to fill in the story in the manner that you have filled it in for me. Sit down, Mr. Deland, now, Miss Duggan, please begin all over again.'"

She looked into this strange man's eyes with her own anguished ones, and bit her lip a moment to keep back the tears that had been impending since the beginning of her story. Her lips spoke again for a few moments in the same low tone into his ear. Mr. Deland's expression changed from feigned interest to the real thing. The two men spoke again for a few moments in the same low-toned voices, and then Mr. Narkom addressed her.

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"He has. And in my presence," actually volunteered that statement, Miss Duggan?

"And how does your brother Ross take it?" "Ross has the family temper, Mr. Narkom. Ross said hot words which should never have uttered, and then dashed off to his fiancée's house, three miles distant—a sweet girl, whom we all love—and did not come back until the next afternoon."

"I see, I see. A very unpleasant affair altogether. And you, naturally loving your brother, Miss Duggan, have placed things together, and have now come to me to see what I can do for you? I must have a few minutes to think this over." A finger touched the bell at his side. Almost immediately a head appeared and Mr. Narkom gave his orders. "Tell Mr. Deland to come here, Petrie. I want to speak to him."

"Very good, sir." "And now, to look the thing straight in the face. You can bring me no actual proof of guilt upon your step-mother's part, but your own love for your brother and your woman's intuition, added to what you have seen. One can bank upon a woman's intuition who watched him spoke a few words in the daily round of life."

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choked back a sob, covering her face with her gloved hands, and for a moment Deland sat looking at her, eyes narrowed, and the curious little one-sided smile so characteristic of the man travelling up his face. There was very evident distress indeed. And real, too, where was the evidence, the intention to murder, as she had suggested? There was absolutely nothing to be grieved, I know, but as Mr. Narkom has just told me, you have nothing to go upon but—actually—your own intuition. My friend here does not always bank on that, I do. A woman's intuition is often a great deal safer than a whole chain of circumstantial evidence. It is when Mr. Narkom, at any rate, as there is another case besides yours up in Argyllshire awaiting my investigation, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll come up to Scotland tomorrow—tonight, in fact, by the mid-night train—and look into both cases at once. And if I can find anything requiring my assistance I'll gladly give it. How will that do?"

Mr. Narkom stifled an exclamation of surprise. Here was an interest in the case, and a moment of looking down into his face. Then he gave a short, sharp laugh, and let his hands drop. "A dollar to a duce but there's more in that than meets the eye," he said, with a lift of the shoulders and a twitch of the lip. "There's a woman who has been written upon her soul, but hasn't a jot or tittle of actual evidence to offer you. Your method would be to send her home again, until she brought you the poison bottle or the cork of it, or the bread-and-milk into which the stuff had been poured—eh, old chap?"

"And mine—what?" He spread out his hands, and shrugged his shoulders, and swung upon his heel with a laugh for the rueful expression upon Mr. Narkom's face. "Oh, I say, old fellow—began the Superintendent excitedly, but Cleek's uplifted hand silenced him. "Familiarity breeds—the best of comradeship!—my friend. And a little dig in the ribs now and then should never be read amiss. I owe all I have to you, Mr. Narkom. You know the depths of my gratitude. And if I am not permitted something to tease you, Oh, you silly old booby! You'll never be a policeman to the end of your days. There are too many sensitive nerves running round underneath that plump and portly exterior of yours. And your heart's too soft! But don't let us stray from our business in this ridiculous fashion, for time slips by and the hour isn't half long enough for what must be done in it. Tell me briefly what she told you, and in as near her own words as you can remember, and then I'll be off and away to make arrangements for tonight's journey. If there's nothing in this thing, I'll send you a wire. 'You'll understand. If there is, then the word 'Full' will answer quite satis-

factually, without giving away our plans, to any interested persons. As for the whiskey-still business, what more perfect harbour for it than those craggy, heather-covered hills of Scotland? I'll have news for you, my friend, never fear; and immediately I hit upon anything, Dollops shall send it travelling over the wire in our own special code, you."

"What a man you are, Cleek! What a fund of restlessness, untiring interest and intelligence!" said Mr. Narkom, as he laid a fond hand upon Cleek's sleeve and looked up into his smiling face. "Glad! The Yard would go to pieces with you nowadays. You saved us from collapse in the old days of that Maunsel business, when the whole country seemed to have run amuck—and blamed the police for it! And you're saving us every time now. What we'd do without your brains and your pluck and your wonderful birthright, which disguises you so successfully that even I, your best friend, don't know you. But my blessing with you, Cleek, and the best of luck! You'll find what you're looking for, I have no doubt!"

"Yes, I'll find what I'm looking for, Mr. Narkom; I'm certain of that," said Cleek quietly, the queer little one-sided smile travelling up his cheek once more. "I don't wish to sound egotistical, but there are few things can beat your humble when his mind's made up. Else how would I have travelled back from the underworld into such a position of trust and uniqueness as this? Only that a woman's eyes lit the way for me, and a man's great heart opened to me, and the crook determined to become the gentleman, and pitched into it forthwith all he was worth. Cussed—that's me!"

Canada's Queen of Beauty. (By Eryn Bruce MacKinnon.) She already knows possessors Of beauty, who wears Beauty's tresses. Nor circus of corrupting gem Could add to nature's diadem. The long-lashed, subtle lids enshrine The jewels of the soul, that shine In purest ray, nor earth so rare A treasure hath which could compare. 'Neath Cupid's arch of cherry-glow Gleam milk-white pearls in matchless row. As fun-fall dimples, all the while, Like playful pucks, attend each smile. The coyish cheeks, that needs comply, Would tint the rose—for beauty's shy—As blushing nature adds a grace Of innocent hue to the lively face. To prove her charms are Beauty's quite All beauty lessens in her sight. Nor turtledove tinsel more adorn So perfect flows the motion born. Ah, such an one of modest mien The Maid of Milos may have been! Nor Canada lost the precious mould, For beauty lives as in Greece of old.

Whitney-Norton Wedding In Paris March 5; Dancer's Suit Forgotten

Paris, March 3.—Despite the vicious tongues of gossip, despite the recently defeated suit of Evan Burrows Fontaine, a dancer, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and Miss Marie Norton will be married on March 5. The banns were published on February 19, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, the young man's parents, have sailed for France to be present at the wedding of their only son. Young Whitney was recently made the defendant in a suit brought by the dancer, who asked damages for breach of promise, declaring she acted only to "safeguard the future" of her son, whom she called Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, Jr.

The suit was defeated because it was shown by Whitney's attorneys that the Fontaine woman, while representing herself as unmarried, had obtained annulment of her marriage through fraudulent representations that she and her husband had never lived together. The husband, since dead, left an affidavit in which he told of an dancer's plan to secure an annulment of their marriage by collusion. This testimony caused the suit to be thrown out of court.

Washington, Iowa, March 3.—"Whistling Lydia" Hutchison, the same plucky girl who last year carried the colors of "Smoky" Gaston, put out of the race for injuries, to a spectacular finish with her own, came in just too late for the money in the 1923 Dog Derby run off here on Washington's birthday.

Though "Smoky" Gaston won the purse, no money could have bought the welcome which greeted the girl as she brought her team of "hustles" across the finishing line. "Whistling Lydia" is the most famous of the very few girl dog-sled drivers in the world. She won her name from the shrill chirrup with which she urges on her dogs, a whistle such as few girls are able to achieve.

Gaston, winner of the derby this year, made the twenty-five miles over snowy mountain trails in two hours nine minutes and 38 seconds, clipping twenty-six minutes off the 1922 mark. Had it not been for several bare spots on the trail, where the dogs were obliged to drag the sled over ground from which the snow had melted, Gaston would have beaten the world's record. As it was he came within eight minutes of beating it.

Ten drivers drew places, of whom two were women, Lydia Hutchison and Clara Colwell.

And so it came about that when Cleek left the offices in Scotland Yard that afternoon, and strolled leisurely down toward his diggings in Clarges Street, he was in possession of the full story, just as Maud Duggan had told it to Mr. Narkom, and had gleaned thereupon one or two incidental conclusions upon his own account.

The journey to Scotland was likely to prove a fruitful one. And he was to see the gaunt crags of that most majestic and rugged country under more interesting conditions than he had at first bargained for.

But how interesting and how tragic!—enthralling, even Cleek himself was not able to foresee.

(To Be Continued.)

REV. DR. MYERS SAYS SWEEPING REVIVAL IN RELIGION NEEDED

(Boston Herald.) The Rev. Dr. Cordelia Myers of Los Angeles, former pastor of Tremont Temple, preaching last evening at Symphony hall, declared that the present time is a perilous one for the world, the nation and the individual and that the only remedy for such a condition lies in a sweeping revival of religion. The United States calls itself a Christian nation, but it is not, he said, because one-half of the people in it have never crossed the threshold of a church.

"The present-day tide is away from the church," said Dr. Myers. "The materialistic attitude of the time separates us from the spiritual and eternal things. Americans are guilty of presumption. We think we are different from the people in other parts of the world, and somehow God has marked us specially."

"We need a revival of morals, a sweeping ethical revival, but but of all morality must come down from God. The spiritual force is the greatest of all, and the church of God can save humanity by marshalling the forces of Christianity. If we would give God a chance He would startle the world."

Referring to the 18th amendment, Dr. Myers scored those who break it. Many citizens who claim to be leading men break the law and boast about it, he said.

Speaking of moral conditions in Los Angeles and Hollywood, he declared that there was nothing there worse than in New York or Boston. New York, he said, seems to be a repetition of Babylon, and may meet the latter's fate.

Throughout his sermon, Dr. Myers appealed to his hearers for an awakened spiritual sense.

1923 Dog Derby Won By "Smoky" Gaston; Girl Driver Places

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But how interesting and how tragic!—enthralling, even Cleek himself was not able to foresee.

(To Be Continued.)

Canada's Queen of Beauty. (By Eryn Bruce MacKinnon.) She already knows possessors Of beauty, who wears Beauty's tresses. Nor circus of corrupting gem Could add to nature's diadem. The long-lashed, subtle lids enshrine The jewels of the soul, that shine In purest ray, nor earth so rare A treasure hath which could compare. 'Neath Cupid's arch of cherry-glow Gleam milk-white pearls in matchless row. As fun-fall dimples, all the while, Like playful pucks, attend each smile. The coyish cheeks, that needs comply, Would tint the rose—for beauty's shy—As blushing nature adds a grace Of innocent hue to the lively face. To prove her charms are Beauty's quite All beauty lessens in her sight. Nor turtledove tinsel more adorn So perfect flows the motion born. Ah, such an one of modest mien The Maid of Milos may have been! Nor Canada lost the precious mould, For beauty lives as in Greece of old.

Whitney-Norton Wedding In Paris March 5; Dancer's Suit Forgotten

Paris, March 3.—Despite the vicious tongues of gossip, despite the recently defeated suit of Evan Burrows Fontaine, a dancer, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and Miss Marie Norton will be married on March 5. The banns were published on February 19, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, the young man's parents, have sailed for France to be present at the wedding of their only son. Young Whitney was recently made the defendant in a suit brought by the dancer, who asked damages for breach of promise, declaring she acted only to "safeguard the future" of her son, whom she called Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, Jr.

The suit was defeated because it was shown by Whitney's attorneys that the Fontaine woman, while representing herself as unmarried, had obtained annulment of her marriage through fraudulent representations that she and her husband had never lived together. The husband, since dead, left an affidavit in which he told of an dancer's plan to secure an annulment of their marriage by collusion. This testimony caused the suit to be thrown out of court.

Washington, Iowa, March 3.—"Whistling Lydia" Hutchison, the same plucky girl who last year carried the colors of "Smoky" Gaston, put out of the race for injuries, to a spectacular finish with her own, came in just too late for the money in the 1923 Dog Derby run off here on Washington's birthday.

Though "Smoky" Gaston won the purse, no money could have bought the welcome which greeted the girl as she brought her team of "hustles" across the finishing line. "Whistling Lydia" is the most famous of the very few girl dog-sled drivers in the world. She won her name from the shrill chirrup with which she urges on her dogs, a whistle such as few girls are able to achieve.

Gaston, winner of the derby this year, made the twenty-five miles over snowy mountain trails in two hours nine minutes and 38 seconds, clipping twenty-six minutes off the 1922 mark. Had it not been for several bare spots on the trail, where the dogs were obliged to drag the sled over ground from which the snow had melted, Gaston would have beaten the world's record. As it was he came within eight minutes of beating it.

Ten drivers drew places, of whom two were women, Lydia Hutchison and Clara Colwell.



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