

chief sub entered the room together. Cardyce turned to the latter first with a look of inquiry. The expression of horror on the sub's face told him that something extraordinary had happened.

"It's true," Manson gasped. "Found dead to-night. Poison suspected. Police already on the spot. No one seen to enter the house. In fact, he has had no visitors all day."

"Curse my luck!" exclaimed Cardyce. "I've just given the *Morning Star* the news because I thought it was a fake. What a fool I am! This thing has unnerved me. Excuse me, inspector, you must think I am demented. This is too horrible for anything."

"May I see the letter you received, Mr. Cardyce?" returned the inspector calmly. "Thanks. And now, please, tell me all about it."

The astounding assassination of another millionaire held London spellbound. The police had not only failed to find any clue to the murderer of the dead steel king, except a glass and a sample bottle in which the dregs of poison remained, but as the days passed the mystery of Abraham Tregennis' death also remained unsolved. No letter or clue of any kind was forthcoming, and common gossip began to speculate as to who would be the next to go.

A MONTH passed, and no further tragedies occurred. The great armies of commerce began to churn their way forward again. Staggered they had been for the nonce; but the death of these two men had not affected the pockets of those who toiled in the factories and stuffy offices of the firms involved, save that in the case of the Red Moon Line the employees realised that out of evil had come good, and that ere long they would profit by the generosity of their dead master.

It was a blustering April night when Cardyce entered the sub-editor's room, to find the juniors gathered together in a group and speaking quickly. He saw at a glance that something was toward, and as he approached, one of them thrust a small pocket-book into his hand.

"Rather odd thing to send to us, sir," said Rogers. "It was received in a sealed envelope addressed to this office, and arrived a few moments ago."

Cardyce, with growing apprehension, turned the book over and then opened it. His eyes met column after column of pencil notes, armies of figures stared at him from every page, figures, and private memoranda. Then he stopped, and his jaw fell as he noticed the name of the owner written in a flowing hand on the fly-leaf.

"Thomas Masterman Goodyear, Riverside Drive."

HE went into his own room at length, taking the pocket-book with him, but not before he had sent to the machine room, whither his chief sub had gone, to bring that individual back.

As Manson entered, he held out the book, and in a few words explained the mysterious facts relating to its receipt. "Are we on the threshold of another tragedy, or are we not? That's the point," he said; "but it's no good wasting time. You'd better take the book up to police headquarters at once. Use my auto. Don't be long."

"Very well," said Manson. "I can get up and back in an hour, or less if they don't keep me. I don't like the look of it at all."

He turned to leave the room, and as he did so the door opened and a messenger boy, followed by Inspector Taylor from Scotland Yard, entered.

Cardyce jumped up with an exclamation of pleasure.

"You're the very man we want, and you've come in the nick of time," he said. "Sit down and tell us first if you came about anything important."

"There's another tragedy brewing, and we haven't a moment to lose," said the inspector.

"No, thanks, I won't sit down. I got a message through from the *Morning Star* saying they had received a letter prophesying that another millionaire would be destroyed to-night. No name was given in the letter, but the message said we were to go to the office of the *Daily Wire* and we should know who had been chosen."

"Heavens above!" Cardyce leapt to his feet, white and trembling. In his hand he clutched the pocket book, then he held it out to the inspector.

"This came to-night . . . sent in a sealed envelope," he began excitedly. "I found the subs looking at it as I came in. It belongs to Goodyear, the colliery owner. What in God's name is going on? Can't you stop it?"

"A letter, sir."

Cardyce looked at the open door and saw the

boy holding out a grimy note. "I was told to bring it up at once."

"Here, stop!" The boy had turned to go when the editor's command brought him to a halt.

Cardyce wrenched the letter open as if he knew what it contained. With strained eyes he scanned it, then the paper fluttered from his nerveless fingers to the floor. The inspector bent and picked it up, and this is what he read:—

"Ring up Thomas Goodyear's house at midnight precisely. Keep the line open exactly five minutes, and you will hear something! Don't be later than twelve to the minute. You will then have an exclusive piece of news for your paper."

Both Cardyce and the inspector looked at the clock together. It was four minutes to twelve.

"Get the telephone book quick, and be back here within ten seconds!" Cardyce shouted to the astonished boy.

The urchin vanished, and Cardyce went across to the 'phone in the corner of the room, while the inspector studied the typewritten letter carefully. A moment more, and the boy had returned. Cardyce snatched the book from his hand and began turning over the leaves wildly.

"Fe . . . Fo . . . Fu . . . Ga . . . Ge . . . Gollard . . . Goodyear. Here it is!" he exclaimed. "2705 West."

He jerked down the receiver and almost shrieked the number to the Exchange. "I want the line for a quarter of an hour. For God's sake, don't cut me off till I tell you," he said. "Can't get through," he added to the inspector, who was standing quivering with suppressed excitement by his side. "Oh, yes, here we are! Who are? This Mr. Goodyear's house? Thanks!"

The clock on the mantelpiece stood at a minute to twelve.

"Here, Taylor, you had better tackle this," Cardyce said. "It's a police job, anyway. Don't forget I want to publish every word you hear."

The inspector snatched at the 'phone and forced it well back against his ear. With a wild expression on his face he listened. Not a sound broke the silence except the smothered rumble of the printing machines below, and the heavy breathing of the man beside him.

"I can't hear anything. Yes. No. Great God!"

He dropped the receiver and fell back, his face white and set, horror unspeakable in his eyes, cold sweat beading his brow, his breath coming in short, quick gasps.

"What—what is it?" gasped Cardyce.

"Merciful Heaven! An explosion!"

The inspector sat down limply on a chair, and Cardyce crouched over him, trying to catch the words that came from the spent lips.

"I heard it all . . . an explosion . . . deafening. It must have wrecked the house."

In a moment he was on his feet and had shaken himself like a bear waking from sleep. The terror on his face vanished; he tried to smile.

"Let me ring up headquarters. They must send some men at once, while I go back and report. Red murder, that's what it is, and—the fiendish cunning!"

He turned to the telephone again and rang madly. Cardyce strode away and groped for the flask of brandy in the cupboard.

TWO days had passed, and Cardyce was busy writing a strong leader on the chain of unsolved crimes which had enslaved the city.

He paused as a knock came at the door, and a boy entered with a card.

"The lady says she must see you, sir. I told her you were busy, but she wouldn't listen. She said she must see you at once, on a matter of life or death."

Cardyce took the card and glanced at it with a frown.

"Did she say what she wanted?" he asked.

"She would give no message, sir. She said she must see you in private."

"Mrs. Stokes," Cardyce read the name again. "Wife of the great oil millionaire, I suppose," he muttered aloud. "Yes, show her up."

In two minutes a beautifully dressed woman, about thirty-three years of age, stumbled into the room, and almost fell into the nearest armchair. She put her hand to her breast. She was panting for breath. Her eyes closed and opened, a dull pallour was slowly growing over her face, and her lips moved as she struggled in vain to speak.

Cardyce rose from his chair, and fixed his eyes on her face in growing surprise.

"You don't remember me," she gasped. "You must have forgotten, you—"

"No; but I didn't know you had married, Gwen. You see, I cannot forget the old name."

"Oh, it's awful. I married Arthur in India. . . . It was quite a private affair: we did not want any fuss. We only came home a week ago. This morning he got that awful warning."

"What warning?" asked Cardyce.

"A letter saying he would be killed to-morrow, that he had been marked down by the man who was reforming the world, the man who was diverting money into the proper channels. That's what the letter said."

"Then it is the Socialists," Cardyce muttered, half aloud.

"Socialists? Whoever it is they mean to kill him. They told me your paper was the most influential in the country, and that it has been associated with all the previous attempts to solve the murders of this kind. I have been to the police, and now I come to you. You must—you *shall* save him!"

The words trailed off into a sob. She looked at him with strained eyes in which there was no trace of tears. The working of her lips and her obvious terror were pitiful to look upon.

"I really don't see that I can do anything," Cardyce returned. "The police will do all that is possible, but what on earth can I do?"

"Richard, you must—you *must*!" In her emotion she called him by the name she best remembered. "You loved me once!"

"I have had no cause to change my feelings," he said quietly.

"You never knew the truth. I was forced into this marriage, and we were only boy and girl lovers after all, you and I."

"You speak only for yourself. My regard for you is the same as it was then, and I fear it will never change. I am a busy man, and I live a busy life, but often in the midst of it—"

"Yes," she said, half rising from her seat, "and I am sorry."

"But by the arbitration of fate I am the odd man out," he said, with a short laugh.

"Yet you will help me," she exclaimed, her mind attuned anew to the object of her visit. "I know you will."

He got up and went across to her side. His face was strong and set, a smile almost of a new joy overspread it. He put his hand on her shoulder.

"You really love this man?" he asked.

"Love him? I worship the very ground he walks on. He is to me all the world. He has made my life splendid and glad."

He looked down at her upturned face and saw the love light shining there. In his look there was something of tenderness, of pity, of suffering. Then his lips set firmly, and he walked back to his desk.

"I will do all I can," he said, in a matter-of-fact voice. "If I can stop this awful crime I will. Yes, more—"

He paused, and she looked at him, a smile on her lips. He watched her, his eyes revelled in her beauty, wandered over the curves of her cheeks, the russet hair, the delicate contour of her lips.

"I promise you your husband shall live if all the strength in me can command it," he said.

A moment more and she rose to go. Now he saw in her all the fresh beauty of the years when he had known her best, when he had pressed his lips to hers on the threshold of his career, when he was setting out with her encouragement to urge him to make his place in life, to conquer through strange worlds which they knew but vaguely.

He touched the tips of her fingers as the door opened. Then she passed through and the door closed silently.

When she had gone he stood and looked at himself in the glass. His face was sadder than usual, and the contemplation did not please him, for he turned away, and, taking a cigarette from his case, he slowly lit it. Then he walked to the telephone and rang up police headquarters.

INSPECTOR TAYLOR was sitting discussing with his chief his interview of an hour ago with Mrs. Stokes when his telephone bell rang. Almost expecting a new development in the rapid chain of events, he rushed across to the receiver.

"Yes?" he said.

"Are you Inspector Taylor?"

"Yes, who is that?"

"Cardyce, of the *Wire*."

"Oh, good. Anything new?"

"Yes. I am going to tell you a strange story, and you've got to listen to every word, for you will never get another chance, d'you hear?"

"I do."

"It is this. It must be pretty obvious to you that the murders of these moneyed men have been