

THE RIDDLE OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

Being An Exploit in the Career of Hamilton Cleek, Detective.
By MARY E. AND THOMAS W. HANSEW

(Continued from Yesterday)
CHAPTER IV

No red light showed itself at Miss Duggan's window that night—though Cleek sat up until the soft fingers of the dawn were wreathing the sky with lavender veils and the face of the morning peeped through like some goddess stepped down from Olympus to smile upon her lesser fellows. And it was then, and then only, that he sought his bed and the comfort of cool sheets at last.

Dollops, knowing his plan, did not disturb him. And so it came about that the clock upon the mantel, had chimed out ten before he opened an eye and looked about him, sleep still dimming his vision and making the unfamiliar room doubly strange.

"What the—how the—Gad! if it isn't ten o'clock, and I've been sleeping like a noodle ever since dawn," he said, springing out of bed and donning dress-jug-gown and slippers to have a first glimpse out of the window at that "fairy sight" which Mr. Fairnish had promised him with his cup of tea.

"Well, she is a beauty and no mistake! Good morning to you, fair Palace of the Mists. What secrets are locked away in your breast this morning, I wonder? Well, the night has passed tranquilly enough to be sure, and that poor girl's terrors are stilled for the present twelve hours, at any rate. I'll call there after breakfast and scrape acquaintance with the lot of 'em, and judge if Mr. Robert Fairnish is as good an observer as he is a talker."

And directly after breakfast that was exactly what he did do. Dollops, armed with fishing-tackle and rods, received his marching orders in full sight and the sound of the inn's proprietor, knowing full well that within five minutes of that time all that he had said and done would be ablaze over the village, if he knew aught of that garrulous tongue of his.

"Be off with you, Dollops, and have a look at the river," said Cleek from the shelter of the open door-way, as Dollops wended his way slowly down the path to the wicket-gate which led out to the road. "And see what fish are in those waters. And if you don't come home with a twenty-pounder, you're no angler, my lad!"

Dollops nodded and winked. "Right you are, sir. As Mr. Asquith says, better wait and see. And if I don't bring 'ome a twenty-pounder, I'll bring 'ome a twenty-yarder, at any rate. For I'm a fair dabbler for eels every time."

"Sounds more like box constrictors and the jungle than Highland rivers and modest eels," retorted Cleek, laughing heartily. "And I'm paying a call at the Castle and making my respects to Miss Duggan. So if I'm not back for lunch, Dollops, don't fancy dreadful things and imagine I've been consumed by the ghost-lady who haunts those lovely turrets and towers, but come home and wait for me."

Dollops stopped in his tracks and sucked in his breath hard, and the freckled brown of his Cockney countenance took on a queer drabish shade. He came back again along the path and stopped in front of his master, mouth hanging open, eyes wide.

"Ghosts, sir! Did I hear you use the word ghosts?" he ejaculated with a perceptible shiver. "Br-r-rr! I don't mind deslin' wiv any kind of 'uman—but wiv them in 'uman species, I'm a regular goner! You ain't askin' me ter meet the lady, are yer, sir?"

"Not yet, my boy," returned Cleek, with a laugh and a shake of the head. "So you needn't worry yourself about that. And if I do ask, you may be sure I'll be asking nothing that I would not—and will not—partake of myself. Get along with you, and don't bother your head. When I want you to call, I'll come, too. You can count upon that."

"Well, so long as I don't 'ave to call alone I don't mind so much," retorted Dollops. Then, swinging round in his tracks, he went off down the path-way, whistling that very hackneyed but popular tune, "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile!"

While Cleek, watching him for a moment, felt a sudden warmth of feeling toward the rough-mannered but warm-hearted youth who had followed him—wily-nilly—ever since that fa-la-day when Cleek had made himself responsible for the boy's safety.

A leisurely cigarette smoked in company with the worthy host, and then Cleek took up his soft "squash" hat, seized hold of his blackthorn stick, and with a nod and a smile to Mr. Fairnish, swung out into the roadway, monocle screwed into left eye, well-cut tweeds setting off the splendid figure of him, and looking for all the world like the leisurely, perfectly turned-out exquisites who journey so far out of their beaten track only in pursuit of a sport which vastly amuses him, and to whom the shelter of the open door-way, as Dollops wended his way slowly down the path to the wicket-gate which led out to the road.

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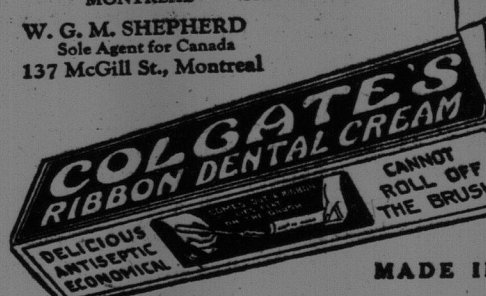
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walking was at time difficult. Half-way there, as Cleek turned the corner of a little ravine and came out upon a full view of the valley, with the Inn of the Three Fishers to the left and the Castle to the right, he heard more the third-third of a horse's hoofs, and in a moment more, drawing up against the bank to allow whoever was coming to pass, he saw a rider approach from the right and go through a gate which led apparently to the Castle grounds. As the rider passed, Cleek stepped out into the path with a sudden impulse and raised his hat.

"I say," said he in his London drawl, as the rider dismounted and, removing his hat, stood before him—a fine figure of a man in Scotch tweeds, measuring a good six-feet-two of staunch muscle and bone, with the shoulders of a giant and a big-featured, kindly face, and the blue eyes and high hooked nose of the typical Scotsman; the all-observing eye of Cleek noticed that one of the stranger's fingers was bandaged, as if it had recently been cut. Cleek instinctively liked him. "Can you tell me," he said—"awfully sorry to stop you and all that—but can you possibly tell me if this is Aygon Castle? Looks like it from the pictures, b' Jove, but

photography's frightfully deceptive—what? Friend of mine—a Miss Duggan—Miss Maud Duggan, I think the name is—lives there, doesn't she? happened to come up here yesterday for the skin—awfully fond of it and that sort of thing—and promised to call whenever I was out this way. I'm right, am I not?"

"Perfectly right," Cleek liked the

deep, ringing voice which answered him, as he liked the shrewd blue eyes that travelled so rapidly over his tweeds. Liked, too, the hard, grim mouth which broke into such a charming smile, transfiguring the whole face as though a light had been set behind it. "And Miss Duggan does live here. You're keen on fishing, I take it. Well, so am I. It's a man's sport, and there's few Scotsmen who don't like it. My name's Tavish—James Tavish—and I'm agent for Sir Andrew Duggan's estates. We'll possibly meet each other up the river some time, for I spend most of my spare time there."

"Thanks. I'd like it immensely. Fishing's a lonesome game, alone. And though I've brought my man wiv me, and he's a dab hand with the tackle, one gets a bit bored sometimes. I'll probably see you up at the Castle, Mr. Tavish, and we'll improve our acquaintance. Many thanks for your courtesy."

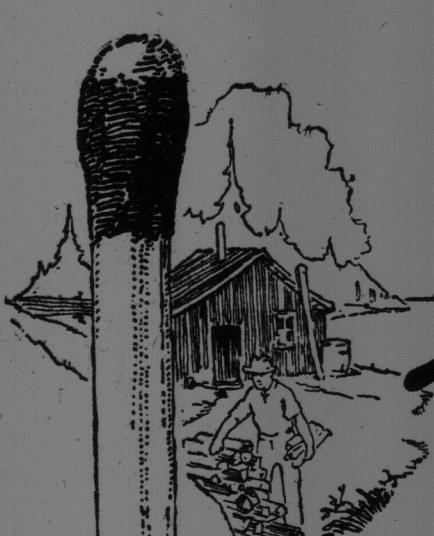
So saying, Cleek passed on up the rough road, the little chestnut mare he rode so magnificently, and went galloping off up the incline, making a fine picture against the rugged scenery of which he seemed such an inseparable part.

Cleek reached the Castle gates at last, rang the huge bell, and waited while the lodge-keeper unfurnished them for him and inquired his name, went with him up the long sweep of gravelled driveway with its bordering yew and young pine trees lending an air of picturesque gloom to the place even upon that bright morning. And having reached the great oaken front door—a monstrous affair scarred by the ruthless hand of Time as much as by the mailed fists which must have thrudded upon it in far-off days, or by the spears of the bell, and waited while the jangling echoes of its noise died away into silence before his summons was answered.

At length the door opened. He caught a glimpse of a dim interior, lofty as a church and dark with the panellings of old oak which flanked it upon all four sides, and then gave his name to the pompous old butler, and was taken into a little ante-room redolent of age—that mothy, curtained colour of a room but rarely opened and still more rarely used—and within a moment or two Miss Duggan was standing there before him.

"Mr. Deland! How good of you to have come so soon—how very good!" she said warmly, extending a hand to him in greeting. "You must surely stay and lunch with us, now that you have come all this distance. And I want you to meet my father."

Her voice dropped a tone or two. "Paula is with him now, going over the house-keeping accounts—it is a daily matter upon which he is very insistent. Ross is in the laboratory, tinkering over something to do with the lights, but he'll be out in a minute. I told him I had met you on the train, and found we had got into conversation and found



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we were congenial friends through Ailsa Lorne. You know her well, don't you, Mr. Deland?"

He smiled, and for a moment his eyes softened. "Rather well, I fancy, as she has consented some day to throw in her lot with me and marry," he returned in a happy, low-pitched voice. "And that is why any friend of hers, you know, must be a friend of mine as well. I'd live very much to have a look at the Castle, if I might be so permitted. Architecture interests me immensely. It's a hobby of mine. And this is surely one of the grandest old stately homes that Scotland possesses!"

(To be Continued)

FIFTY PER CENT UNFIT FOR COLLEGE

Commission Reports on Intelligence Tests in High Schools—Girls Make a Poorer Showing Than the Boys.

(Boston Herald)
Intelligence tests given to 9,333 pupils in the senior classes of Massachusetts public schools during the present school year revealed that forty per cent. of the boys and nearly 60 per cent. of the girls were poor college material, according to the special commission on higher education appointed by Gov. Cox.

In the survey it was found that the psychological ratings of the girls were consistently lower than those of the boys. For the two sexes combined the tests indicated that 50 per cent. were not suitable college material.

Employ Brown Examination.

The Brown University psychological examination was employed as the instrument for the mental survey. A somewhat lower average intelligence among the girls in the senior classes of public high schools in this state than among the boys students was indicated by the tests. However, the commission found that it is probable that as a rule more girls of a given mental ability will succeed in school and in college, than will boys of the same ability, because the former usually show greater seriousness in their studies and a greater willingness to work at tasks they do not find agreeable. Hence, the commission declares, it is quite likely that less girls are bad college risks than the figures seem to indicate.

Members of the commission are President Lemuel H. Murlin of Boston Uni-

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versity, chairman; the Rev. William Devlin, S. J., president of Boston College; Mrs. George M. Baker, Felix Vorlege; Mrs. Jeremiah F. Driscoll, Carlton D. Richardson and Hector L. Belisle, secretary.

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